

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
FACILITIES PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

CLASSROOM IMPROVEMENT PLANNING STUDY

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00 TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**
- 02 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**
- 03 STUDY CONTEXT**
- 04 CLASSROOM UTILIZATION**
- 05 SAMPLE CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT**
- 06 IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**
- 07 APPENDIX**

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01 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Iowa State University is taxed to meet the current general university classroom needs. It is anticipated that demand on scheduling will increase as enrollment grows, classroom technological advancements are made and trend-forward pedagogies are implemented. Larger and additional course sections, scheduling within core time frames and the desire to allow flexibility for traditional and alternative teaching methods have all contributed to pushing the current scheduling matrix to its extreme. The Classroom Improvement Study seeks to provide recommendations to alleviate these scheduling challenges and to provide a sound approach to implementation.

To support an active and evolving pedagogy at Iowa State University, general university classrooms need to be designed and renovated to allow flexibility between traditional lectures, small group work, large group discussion and collaborative problem solving. The ability to ebb and flow between these instructional methods is critical in sustaining a healthy and active pedagogy on campus, to engage the faculty and to provide an exceptional learning opportunity for students. In addition to flexibility, the classrooms require access to adequate and appropriate technology to support a diverse learning community.

Recommendations of this report are based on an assessment of the general university classrooms to identify their current utilization and quality of space. This data is used to outline: increased learning opportunities; strategies for improvements; developmental costs and phasing tools. These strategies and tools will assist the University in planning short-term and long-term programmatic space decisions and allow for advancement of existing and new pedagogies. The key goal of the study is to ensure that resources can be wisely and appropriately deployed to make a meaningful impact on the overall learning environment at Iowa State University.

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE ANALYSIS:

- » 1952 is the median year of construction for buildings containing general university classrooms.
- » The average classroom capacity is 78.
- » The average seat utilization is 67.2%. Room sizes of 75+ are significantly higher in seat utilization and hours/week.
- » The average existing square footage per student is 15.8 SF. Modern standards recommend 20 -25 SF/student.
- » Nearly 50% of the general university classrooms are recommended for finish and technological upgrades within the next 5 years.
- » The University actively pursues and completes classroom improvement projects, and current allocations for general university classroom improvements make a significant impact on the campus learning environment. However, the analysis of the current utilization and quality of space completed in this study produced a list of recommendations that exceeds current annual funding levels.

Additionally, technology and pedagogy continue to rapidly evolve, moving the demands of renovation beyond maintenance and increasing the demand for additional funding. It is anticipated that responding to the most basic requirements of colleges, departments, faculty and students requires an annual allocation of approximately \$2,500,000-3,000,000. At this funding level, a sustainable and systematic classroom improvement approach can be developed.

Iowa State is at a critical junction in the planning and maintenance of the general university classrooms. The current problem-solving culture at Iowa State will not be able to continue to meet student and faculty needs for scheduling and flexibility within the classroom given the current scheduling demands and anticipated student growth. There are multiple solutions to alleviate taxing demands and to create at least some of the flexibility desired in the existing classrooms.

Based on the insight gained from observation, assessment and focus group meetings, the following recommendations are provided as a summary of this report:

- » Strategically plan to upgrade all general university classrooms on a regular 10-year cycle. A phasing plan has been developed to provide one method of developing this cycle.
- » Fund multiple large-scale classroom improvement projects across campus. Prioritize 75-150 capacity classrooms, which are the most utilized and most in demand for scheduling.
- » Promote conversation between faculty and the administration on pedagogy. Diversity and flexibility increase the quality of the learning experience on campus.
- » Actively plan for general university classrooms in future capital projects.
- » Improve information-sharing within the classroom by developing a help-desk for on-call, real-time assistance; develop a system to communicate improvements and classroom design guidelines.
- » Implement technological upgrades throughout all of the general university classrooms to allow for flexible student learning opportunities.
- » Utilize tools developed through this study to strategically plan future projects to provide the most value to the University.
- » Promote collaboration throughout campus by actively programming space outside of the classroom for informal discussion and student/faculty interaction. Create additional work and study nodes outside of the classroom for small group work and conversation.
- » Significantly reduce back-to-back scheduling - develop a culture of matching appropriate classrooms with class sizes and instructional methods.