University *of* Richmond

Classroom Master Plan

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BACKGROUND AND GOALS

The University of Richmond launched its first Classroom Master Plan (see Appendix: Context for Analysis) process in 2004. The 2004 Classroom Master Plan was a successful initiative. Approximately 63 classrooms were upgraded between 2005 and 2012 using the principles developed during the plan. In order to continue to maintain a first-class classroom and learning spaces infrastructure that supports the goals of our faculty and students, the University undertook a project to develop a new classroom program study in light of evolving curricula, new buildings, and technological developments.

In the summer and fall of 2012 members of the Classroom Master Plan Committee (see Appendix: Commitee Structure) developed a Request for Proposals (RFP) to engage an expert planning partner. The RFP was released in August, 2012 and proposals were received from six architectural firms. Those proposals were evaluated and the firms were interviewed. Ayers Saint Gross was selected as our partner for this project because their approach to helping the University develop a vision for learning spaces and engaging the faculty best matched our expectations.

The goals for this new initiative include those from the previous study, but have been expanded:
- Further improve overall quality and consistency of general-purpose classrooms, in accordance with the latest knowledge of successful learning environments
- Identify specific needs for specialized teaching environments
- Introduce new incubator learning spaces that facilitate innovation and new pedagogies, and a process to incorporate successful discoveries into the broader renovation program
- Preserve the ongoing execution of a comprehensive renovation program that incorporates technology upgrades, furnishings, and environmental updates
- Recommend a process to identify and enhance informal learning spaces for collaboration and individual scholarly work
- Coordinate campus capital expenditures on general purpose classrooms

Each of the schools appointed a liaison to serve as their representative in the process.

The process proposed by ASG included the following aspects:
- Provide an audit/survey of each existing classroom (see Appendix: Classroom Audit Report)
- Develop a classroom utilization and mix analysis to inform decision-making (see Appendix: Classroom Utilization Analysis + Room Mix Detail)
- Focus on general-purpose classrooms and selected class labs to improve overall quality and consistency, and to support updated instructional pedagogies
- Analyze the potential for flexible environments to accommodate development and exploration of different pedagogical methods
- Include research and planning for "third spaces" (informal learning spaces)
- Develop a comprehensive renovation/ implementation program that incorporates technology upgrades, furnishings and environmental updates

As with the previous master plan, the strategy was to gather as much input from as many faculty as possible. Approximately 185 faculty participated in one or more of the study's information gathering or working sessions. In addition, groups of students were engaged in interviews and planning sessions so that their input could be incorporated into the new plan.

Ayers Saint Gross' on-campus work at the University began in February 2013 and was completed by the end of the year. The process was designed to engage faculty and students and utilized a variety of methods to explore the potential for improved learning environments. Activities included five intensive on-campus workshops with faculty, staff and students; workshop agendas included listening sessions, presentations with discussion, and participatory visioning exercises. (see Appendix: Workshop Report)

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FACULTY PARTICIPATION, INTERVIEWS AND COMMENTS

While the workshops allowed the committee and Ayers Saint Gross to gather significant feedback, there remained the goal of hearing from as many faculty in each school and department as possible. The committee decided that conducting a survey would risk a low response rate and that it would not collect the nuances of faculty opinion sufficiently. Instead, the committee decided to meet with every academic department or school. This method substantially expanded and improved the input already received from the workshops.

To conduct the interviews, three committee members attended each departmental or school meeting, with one person appointed to facilitate, one to observe, and one to take notes. After each meeting, a summary of the notes was sent to the department for review and comments to ensure that faculty concerns and comments were accurately represented. Faculty members who could not attend the meeting were asked to add their thoughts to the departmental summary. In one case, a department elected to poll its faculty and provide a summary document in lieu of a face-to-face meeting. In addition, in November 2013, the Classroom Master Plan Committee and Ayers Saint Gross held an open meeting for University faculty and staff at which we presented our findings and invited further comments and conversation. The notes below are a summary of all of this input.

Throughout the conversations, common themes emerged. Some departments discussed the importance of classroom adjacency to departmental offices, as faculty frequently need to bring materials to class for that day's discussion. In other cases, specific classrooms were equipped with features needed for a class. Faculty understood that by putting the emphasis on the location of a class, the schedule would have to be more flexible.

A majority of faculty indicated a requirement for flexible classrooms. They desired furniture that was lightweight and easy to reconfigure with sufficient flat surfaces for writing and other class materials. Faculty expressed an interest in having standardized furniture configurations that would be fixed for the semester by agreement of the faculty teaching in the space. This is a cultural expectation already in some buildings, such as the Gottwald Science Center. Fixed configurations would alleviate the need to take class time to move furniture. One faculty member indicated that she scheduled her class in the earliest class time slot on the class schedule, reserving three classroom spaces with different configurations. By opting to teach at a time fewer rooms are in use, this instructor was able to keep furniture fixed, while moving the entire class to nearby classrooms as the instructional activities changed.

Faculty also indicated that some of their classes were scheduled in rooms that had more chairs than their class required. The unused furniture in some cases made it difficult to perform class activities, such as writing on boards on side walls or having students sit more closely together to facilitate discussion.

Several departments expressed an interest in having access to larger classrooms that support collaborative work and activities. They would like one or more rooms that could be reserved together that provide:
- Space for movement
- Sufficient space for viewing multi-media as a class, with space for students to breakout into groups with no furniture moving required
- Storage space, including space to store student projects
- Higher ceilings in some situations
- Ability to share and interact among instructor and student screens/displays

Classroom environmental conditions were the subject of much discussion:
- Projector resolution and image quality
- Ambient lighting control with window shades
- Lighting zones and controls
- Reduced mechanical noise
- Placement and number of screens
- Lectern and placement of technology controls, and portable controllers such as iPads for faculty use
- More Mac computers integrated into the lectern, as more faculty adopt Macs over PCs

- Classroom PCs with slow logon times (this has been noted and addressed)
- More power outlets
- Acoustics and sound control
- There is some interest in having the entire wall to write on, rather than board space
- Shape of the room is important — rooms that are more square are more desirable
- Some rooms have too much furniture

While a small number of faculty indicated an interest in having technology-free classrooms, the majority of faculty continue to incorporate the use of technology and multi-media equipment in their teaching. We discussed how to improve the many attributes that contribute to a successful technology-enhanced classroom. (see Appendix NN for the technology consultant's report)

University of Richmond faculty expressed an interest in class capture and the ability to record student presentations and performances. In addition, more faculty every year are using video conferencing capabilities and/or Skype to connect their class with others outside of the classroom.

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STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Beginning with Workshop One, students participated in the listening sessions and briefings about new instructional and technology trends. Groups of students also participated in the Visioning Sessions, offering their thoughts about classrooms of the future. The students provided insight and commentary that often paralleled the faculty's comments.

Regarding other aspects of the learning environment, the students reinforced concerns regarding deficiencies related to room attributes noted elsewhere in this document. In addition to the conversations related to classrooms, the students expressed support for strategically adding informal learning places throughout the campus and for making improvements to several of the existing settings. In general, the students who participated were quite positive about the overall environment.

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NEAR TERM ACTIONS TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO FACULTY & STUDENT INPUT

The Classroom Master Plan Committee intentionally deferred major classroom upgrades during the summer of 2013. Instead resources were focused on addressing some specific issues that surfaced during the faculty interviews.

During our conversations several faculty expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of time it took for classroom computers to boot up at the start of class. They felt they were losing too much valuable class time. During the summer of 2013, Information Services focused significant effort to test, streamline, and re-test each computer in each general purpose classroom.   http://is.richmond. edu/academic/classrooms/classroom-logon-times. html. Logon times, defined as the time it takes for the computer user to get a desktop screen after entering their network credentials, were standardized from a low of 45 seconds to a high of 2 minutes 45 seconds for the most complex software images.   This was communicated to faculty and complaints were almost eliminated as a result of this work. More information on this process can be found at: http://is.richmond.edu/ academic/classrooms/classroom-logon-times.html

New classroom technology control systems were installed in all Gottwald Science Center classrooms, Booker 127, Booker 217, MRC 4, Ryland 109, Jepson 109, THC 125, and the Wellness classroom. These upgrades will allow for quicker response to problems by enabling remote assistance and proactive reporting of system warnings and diagnostic information

New ultra short throw projector and Smart Boards were installed in Jepson G 22, Jepson G 23, and North Court 201 at the request of faculty who teach in those spaces.
The University's Arts Initiative has been running in parallel to the Classroom Master Plan process.

During the Classroom Master Plan interviews several opportunities were identified that would provide much needed improvements for the Arts programs and the committee proceeded with those. Completed improvement included: a new high resolution, high definition digital projection system for Theater Complex 102, Booker 216, and Frederick Rehearsal Hall. Frederick Rehearsal Hall also received a new sound system, new media playback systems for video and music, a Macintosh computer and ceiling fans. New wiring and electronics were required to support the new digital interfaces in these spaces.   The Dance Studio in the Robins Center was upgraded with a new electronic screen, CD player, a sound system and the replacement of older sections of the flooring.

Faculty in other disciplines also expressed a desire for high resolution, high definition classroom projection systems.   A new upgraded standard is being installed in all rooms due for a projector refresh.   In addition, the following classrooms have been outfitted with these and new cabling and electronics to support digital signal and wide screen images: Jepson 231, Ryland Hall 203, Ryland Hall 204, Ryland Hall 205, Puryear Hall 201, Puryear Hall 202, Puryear Hall 203, Weinstein Hall 303, Weinstein Hall 304 (including Skype), Weinstein Hall 305 (including Skype), Weinstein Hall 306, Weinstein Hall 307 (including Skype), and the Boatwright Library Computer Classroom (BCC).

The Law School and Business School also received upgrades with a new video recording system in the Queally Hall Interview Suite and dual

LCS panel displays with Skype capabilities in the new seminar classroom on the 3rd floor of the Law School.

During the Classroom Master Plan meetings with faculty several individuals remarked that their classrooms seemed too crowded with furniture. As part of the Utilization Analysis (Appendix D) conducted by Ayers Saint Gross we completed a detailed right-sizing analysis identifying the number of classrooms that the University required for each of a range of capacities. This analysis allowed us to identify rooms that were over-provisioned with furniture. During August, 2014 the Registrar's Office will work with University Facilities to remove excess furniture. This should provide a better experience for faculty and student assigned to those affected classrooms. Where possible, the newer, more flexible furniture that is removed from classrooms will be repurposed and used to replace older, less flexible furniture.

During our classroom discussions faculty remarked that they often found that rooms with flexible furniture were not set up the way they required; and, having to reconfigure a room could take up valuable class time. Several potential strategies for dealing with this issue were discussed. It was determined that we would experiment with some form of "fixed" configurations, in that a room set-up would be specified for a particular classroom, and by agreement that configuration would be fixed for the semester. Faculty who specify a particular classroom set-up would be matched with configurations that they prefer. The Registrar's Office is planning to pilot this protocol in the Spring, 2015 semester.

During the workshops and faculty interviews we discussed class capture technologies to record all or portions of the activities that take place during a class session. Reasons and requirements for this functionality were varied. Some faculty would like to record student presentations for later review and critique, others would like to record class sessions for students who were absent or those who wanted an opportunity to review the material. Information Services is in the process of researching class capture solutions providers and intends to run one or two pilot programs during the 2014-2015 academic year.

Finally, in response to faculty input we are renovating space in Boatwright Memorial Library in Summer 2014 to create two new classroom spaces that meet some of the criteria that faculty articulated in the visioning and interview sessions. The Adams Auditorium space is being renovated to provide a premier space for faculty who incorporate film or image viewing in their classes. Adams will have comfortable tiered seating to accommodate students and will have group breakout space, below the tiers, for those same students because Film Studies and other programs specified a need for a room that could accommodate both a high-end viewing experience and group discussion. At other times this space can be used for film viewing for an audience of up to 50 people. Adjacent to the Adams Auditorium will be a specialized classroom modeled after a "LearnLab." (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmWfNdzrlqQ) This space is designed to support collaboration. There is no designated front of the room; with triangulated displays providing everyone a clear view of the content. The faculty member has ultimate flexibility regarding what is displayed on the various screens. Groups can display any participant's work during collaboration sessions or the faculty member can display the content of their choice during an instruction or discussion session.

Special controls at each table allow individuals to connect their personal computing device and share content on the screens. Writing surfaces and an interactive whiteboard are also provided for class work. More information on LearnLab design is available here: http://www.steelcase.com/en/resources/industries/education/pages/learnlab.aspx We expect this room to meet the needs of faculty who expressed a desire for space that supports collaborative learning activities. Storage lockers will be available for the convenience of faculty who will be teaching in this room.

Going forward we are instituting a new process to annually collect, review, and prioritize the classroom needs of our faculty and schools.

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ANNUAL PROCESS

The University of Richmond's classroom master plan is not a static plan. Faculty needs and preferences change, new spaces are built, new initiatives are proposed, and as environments are more closely examined, special needs are discovered. The process for selecting and assessing classroom upgrades is designed to ensure that the classroom program reflects the needs of the faculty and the University's academic programs. This process may be refined from year to year as we learn from our results and from feedback from the faculty and deans.

The classroom plan process is supported by two committees: the Classroom Committee and the Classroom Master Plan Committee. These committees, created in 2004, are an outgrowth of the University's first Classroom Master Plan. The Classroom Committee is the vehicle for taking faculty-articulated priorities and turning them into actionable blueprints and budgets and coordinating the other administrative details related to classroom maintenance. The Classroom Master Plan Committee helps ensure that priorities and resources are aligned and coordinated with the University's Campus Master Plan.

The Classroom Master Plan Project Web site http://classrooms.richmond.edu/ provides information and updates about the project and the classroom plan to the University community.

Throughout the year faculty are encouraged to use the input form on the Classroom Master Plan Project Web site to provide their thoughts and input about classroom needs and renovations or to request a meeting with representatives from the Classroom Committee. Faculty should also communicate their needs and preferences through

their respective department chair or dean. The Classroom Committee will meet with every department chair at least once every 4 years on a rotating basis. Those meetings will be scheduled well in advance so that the department chair has ample time to survey his/her faculty and process their input. Department chairs may choose to request a meeting with the Classroom Committee on a more frequent basis if their needs are dictate.

Each year a formal classroom upgrade planning process will begin in the fall for work to be done the following summer and in subsequent years. The Classroom Committee will meet with the deans (and/or their designee) of all five schools to solicit information on plans for new majors or programs that may require new or newly configured space. The Committee will use the deans' input and priorities and other input received throughout the year to develop a list of needs and potential targets. This may include classrooms, labs and other learning spaces. Guided by the list of current needs and priorities the Classroom Committee will visit potential target classrooms and develop a list of options as well as high level cost estimates. The Classroom Committee will review the options and develop a recommendation on how best to invest the resources available for the upcoming summer renovation process and will maintain a list of prioritized opportunities for later years and/or inclusion in other capital projects such as the Campus Master Plan renovations.

In early November the Classroom Committee will present their recommendation to the Classroom Master Plan Committee reviewing the current needs, priorities, and the options considered. The Classroom Master Plan Committee will evaluate requests within the context of the overall Campus

Master Plan and finalize a recommendation and target budget and review those with the deans, the Associate Vice President for Financial Planning and Budget, and the President's Cabinet.

Once the target classrooms, budget, and renovation schedule are set the Classroom Committee will set up meetings with representative faculty and departments chosen from those most likely to use the identified spaces. In these meetings or workshops the Classroom Committee will seek feedback from the faculty about how they want to teach and how room design, technology, and furnishings can best support those goals. At that point a work plan will be developed along with more detailed and accurate budget estimates for each space. Any required adjustments and tradeoffs will be reviewed with the advising faculty. The Classroom Committee will review the resulting classroom upgrade proposal, scope, and budget with the Classroom Master Plan Committee which will provide approval to proceed. If issues arise in the early phases of construction planning and result in a significant change of scope the deans

and the President's Cabinet will be apprised of the variance and the rationale for that variance. Once finalized, the work plan will be published on the Classroom Master Plan Web site.

An important component of the Classroom Master Plan is assessment and the ability to continuously improve both the process and results. At the end of each fall and spring semester we will conduct a survey of the faculty and students who are using the most recently renovated spaces. The results of those surveys will be posted on the Classroom Master Plan Web site. Any significant issues will be targeted for follow-up and remediation if possible. Information on what worked and what did not work will be documented and incorporated into future planning and upgrades. In addition, each year the Classroom Committee will seek to identify and study emerging best practices in classroom design. This will be done by surveying various sources like the Learning Spaces Collaboratory, ELI, and work done at other institutions. At least one presentation and opportunity for conversation will be offered every

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

year in the fall, highlighting work done here at Richmond and ideas gathered from other sources. \During the visioning workshops and the department interviews faculty discussed their desire for learning spaces that offered more space per student and some specialized characteristics not available in standard classrooms such as high ceilings and storage space.   One outcome of the utilization analysis was the identification of classroom spaces that were underutilized and potential candidates for future renovations that could accommodate some of these different attributes. Adams Auditorium is one of those spaces and it is currently being transformed into a space that will accommodate several unique needs as defined by our faculty.   There are other spaces that because of their size and location offer similar opportunities; they include the combined Jepson Hall G24 A & B, Jepson Hall 106, and Jepson Hall 120.

Weinstein Hall presents another opportunity to upgrade classrooms and make them better outfitted for the way our faculty want to work. Weinstein Hall opened for the start of classes in the fall of 2003. At that time the classrooms were state-of-the-art, outfitted with the first generation of flexible furnishings intended to allow faculty and students to reconfigure the room, changing from discussion mode to group collaboration set-ups with relative ease.   Today that furniture is perceived as bulky, heavy, and difficult to move - not nearly as flexible as current classroom furniture designs.   By upgrading the furniture in the Weinstein Hall classrooms we would be able to create a number of highly desirable teaching spaces in a highly desirable campus location with a relatively modest investment.

As mentioned above the Classroom Master Plan Process proceeded in parallel with the University's Arts Initiative.   The Classroom Master Plan Committee working with the deans, the President's Cabinet, and the campus community will seek to align the recommendations emerging from the Arts Initiative with the University's overall classroom program priorities.

Ryland Hall and the North Court academic sections are targeted for renovations and upgrades as part of the University's Campus Master Plan.   In addition to the substantial renovations envisioned for the University's Arts Facilities, renovations to Richmond Hall, Puryear Hall, Ryland Hall and North Court (academic) are all cited as Phase II projects in the Campus Master Plan and will be addressed after completion of the Campus Master Plan Phase I projects. That work will be coordinated with the Classroom Master Plan.

Classrooms on the first floor of Jepson Hall were the subject of much discussion during the classroom utilization audit, visioning sessions, and faculty interviews.   Several of the rooms, including Jepson Hall 120, are perceived as undesirable classrooms because of their size, shape, and resulting room aspect.   Some rooms designed for classes taught in the early 1990s do not work as well today.   With some remodeling and shifting of interior walls this advantageously located building could be adapted, resulting in highly desirable classrooms.

As happens today, we fully expect that the needs of our faculty and student will continuously evolve. The process described above will be used to develop an annual program plan that will address the most pressing priorities and help ensure that we have learning spaces that support the goals of our faculty and students.

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FUNDING

The University has committed significant resources to maintaining high quality learning spaces. A capital budget allocation of $320,000 is provided each year specifically for the Classroom Master Plan to fund maintenance and renovation of these spaces.   In addition, approximately $290,000 is earmarked each year to upgrade classroom technology. These annual funding allocations supplement the University's annual investments in the Campus Master Plan and Facilities upgrades.

The periodic refresh of the classroom environment, defined as furniture, paint, carpet, etc., is based on a 15-year refresh cycle. Classroom multi-media technology replacement is currently done on an every 5-year basis.   A Classroom Master Plan budget supports the ongoing maintenance for general purpose classrooms and will continue to be used for this purpose.   Other work will be coordinated and funded through the University's capital budgeting process in alignment with the Campus Master Plan and University priorities. The Classroom Master Plan Committee will work with the deans, Cabinet, and other constituents to prioritize and develop the goals, scope and proposals for these projects.