



University *of* Richmond

Appendix: Context for the Analysis



Context for the Analysis

2004-2011

The University of Richmond developed its first 10-year Classroom Master Plan in 2004-2005 with the following overall goals:

- Improvement of overall quality and consistency of general-purpose classrooms
- Development of common classroom types
- Creation of flexible environments to accommodate different pedagogical methods
- Development of a comprehensive renovation program that incorporates technology upgrades, furnishings and environmental updates
- Coordination of campus capital expenditures on general purpose classrooms

Almost 80 faculty members and a representative group of students participated in the process. The resulting plan identified a phased approach to classroom upgrades, renovating 8-10 rooms per year over a 10-year period. A Classroom Master Plan Committee (CMPC) was created to manage the plan's implementation.

In recent years the University expanded the scope of this work to include additional teaching spaces, special use spaces, and Law School classrooms. Initiatives like First-Year Seminars and a move from credit hours to units impacted classroom utilization. Outcomes and Conclusions from 2005 study:

- In 2004/2005 average utilization of general purpose classrooms at University of Richmond was 57% (According to our consultants, at that time the average classroom utilization for state institutions was about 65% and for private institutions, 40 to 50%).
- In 2005, the study concluded that the University did not need additional classrooms but did need more classrooms that provide

a supportive environment for teaching and learning and came up with suggested numbers for different types of classrooms.

- Faculty expressed a preference for discussion-style classrooms. In 2005 we had an excess of lecture style classrooms and a shortage of discussion style classrooms. In the intervening years we have corrected that imbalance by renovating classrooms and adding flexible furniture designed to be easily moved into the configuration desired by the faculty teaching in the space.
- In 2005, 54% of general purpose classrooms had presentation media. In 2014, 100% of our general purpose classrooms are equipped with multi-media equipment - as well as most other teaching spaces. Exceptions are areas like labs and studios that do not lend themselves to fixed installations, for those instances portable media carts are available.
- Faculty expressed a desire for baseline audio visual technology with a consistent interface in all classrooms. That has been a guiding principle for our design of multi-media systems in the intervening years.
- In our conversations with faculty and students there was a general preference for tables and chairs over tablet-arm chairs, especially by students. However, some faculty favored tablet-arm chairs because they were easy to move.
- Faculty emphasized their desire for adequate lighting controls, environmental controls, acoustics, and window shades.
- Arts & Sciences, Leadership Studies, and School of Continuing studies faculty had similar preferences. Law and Business had somewhat distinct requirements.

The architects used CAD drawings provided by University Facilities to fit the proposed classroom program into existing spaces which were verified by meetings with focus groups in April, 2005. To see similarly configured classrooms “in action,” a subset of the classroom master planning group took a trip to view prototype classrooms at Connecticut College. Some ideas from their implementation were incorporated into our planning. During summer 2005 we created four early prototype classrooms to test some of the ideas and preferences of our faculty and students. Each room had different features that were evaluated by surveying the faculty and students who used the room. In some cases classes switched classrooms mid-semester to provide a basis for comparison.

The 2004-2005 Classroom Master Plan was a successful initiative for the University of Richmond. Approximately 63 classrooms were upgraded from 2005 to 2012 using the principles developed during the plan.



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