

Appendix B

Grinnell College Campus Plan Update Pedagogy and Space Planning Workshop Friday October 9, 2009

Contributing to the on-campus discussion of teaching spaces as part of our update of the campus plan, this workshop entailed four activities: a keynote lecture on national and local trends in student engagement, a dinner with discussion of the issues raised in the lecture, a presentation by Grinnell faculty members of key lessons gleaned from on-site visits of six institutions, and a discussion of four potential “experiments” with different kinds of teaching and learning spaces. Thirty-three members of the faculty (including library and learning lab faculty), staff, and student body participated in the workshop. We were joined by our keynote speaker and Anne Newman of Shepley Bulfinch Richardson & Abbott.

Dr. Jillian Kinzie, Associate Director of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Institute for Effective Educational Practice and the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research delivered the keynote address. She spoke about today’s undergraduate students, their expectations, and the quality of their educational experiences, and reflected on what this suggests for the design of learning environments. Moving from national trends, she then focused on student engagement at Grinnell College. This presentation then led to discussions over dinner about the use of technology in teaching, and good and not-so-good teaching spaces at Grinnell and elsewhere.

Faculty members Keith Brouhle, Richard Fyffe, David Harrison, and Kathy Kamp spoke about their visit to Hamilton, Wellesley and Middlebury Colleges, Harvard and Wesleyan Universities and MIT. Key observations included the need for sufficient space in teaching and other learning facilities, the importance of adjacencies, the significance of personnel and other kinds of collaboration needed to ensure that the goals for the function of facilities is achieved. Specific lessons of what sorts of functions appear in certain types of buildings (such as learning centers in libraries but also advanced digital technologies in libraries, and GIS and certain kinds of social science buildings) were also instructive. The presenters emphasized the importance of non-classroom learning spaces (labs, study areas, learning support spaces and centers) in addition to classrooms for our discussion of teaching and learning.

The last activity of the evening entailed presenting four options for experimentation as part of the campus plan update exercise:

1. Computer classroom: configured along the lines of MIT’s TEAL classrooms so as to allow for flexibility & student group work.
2. Data Analysis Center (human and material resources): encompassing consultation and technology to support advanced data analysis both quantitative and qualitative, and GIS and statistics in particular.
3. Unified digital media center for production, editing, listening and viewing that would bring together personnel and resources.
4. Learning consultation place in Burling (for writing, IT, reference, course-work).

Discussion of the four options did not result in a strong majority preference for any. Each received considerable interest from at least one group. Some concerns were raised for staffing issues linked to options 2 and 3, and to logistical issues involved in option 4. Further

investigation of computer classrooms and labs in the new Noyce Science Center is needed, although these spaces are not configured like the classroom proposed in option 1.