

Meeting Minutes

Date: 9 February 2005

Attendees: Adele Santos, Michael Ramage, Elliot Felix, Scott Franciso, Stephen Form, Liz Burow, Meelena Oleksiuk, Casey Renner, Coryn Kempster, Jimmy Shen

Discussed Items

1. Space/Facilities:

a. Student Common Room

- i. Dean Santos is aware of the architecture student body's need for a common room space but hasn't been able to get such space allocated in the short term. Addressing this need will be part of larger space/facilities initiatives, including moving visual arts, ugrads, and computation from N51/2
- ii. Prior to IAP there was talk of allocating a bay of the South MArch thesis studio in building 3 for the common room and accommodating the thesis program within underutilized space in Studio 5. While a possible short term solution, this was not pursued by ASC since a permanent partition (and the resultant program reshuffling) was not deemed feasible (or permissible) in the time allotted.
- iii. In order to help address some of the shorter-term space issues, ASC will propose a space plan that looks into some underutilized areas and programs and offers some suggestions. One example raised during the meeting was that *Pinup* and *Thresholds* currently have office/storage space in the middle of studio 5 that could be better configured by putting the two student publications in a shared office space that would offer more secure storage and a more appropriate work environment- the former StudioMIT space was suggested for this but may not be available.

b. PhD Computation / Ugrads move to main campus:

- i. As part of a larger and longer-term effort to secure space, Dean Santos reported that the school had secured the police building across the street but was not successful in its efforts to secure the squash courts adjacent to it.
- ii. It might also be possible for the school to expand into the Edgerton center classrooms/labs adjacent but this would be in lieu of the police building.

c. Model Photography/ Copy Stand Room:

- i. It was noted that there are currently no facilities for documenting student work (such as model photography) and this would be a significant help to students without taking much space/effort. It would

also provide a better way of accessing the tripod and lights that the department currently lends to students informally through departmental admin staff.

d. Public Display Space

- i. The school needs to find ways to make its presence more visible by displaying its work on a more permanent basis. Some public display areas (such as the ground floor of bldg 9 and building 10 basement lobby space) were noted, but many ways of making the department more visible with its additional space were noted, such as: stairwell display cases, claiming of 3rd floor wall spaces for display, elevator, etc...

e. Growth of MArch program

- i. Dean Santos noted the part of the justification for getting more space has to do with increasing the size of the MArch program by approximately 1 studio such that 2 studios would enter at level 1 and 2 at level 2. This in turn would lead to additional faculty, additional space, etc....

2. SMArchS leadership

- a. It was noted that a leadership position for the SMArchS program was strongly needed and that presently, Nancy Jones fulfills that position by default, adding to an already full complement of responsibilities.

3. Scheduling

a. Thesis after other reviews

- i. In previous years thesis has been scheduled before other final reviews to the detriment of all. Having raised concern about this, students have been informed that they would be moved to the end for the next term. While this promise hasn't been kept for at least the last 3 terms in a row, we understand that it will be next fall. As part of this move of thesis to the end of the semester, the department as a whole could benefit from making it more of an event and leaving the work up for longer time periods. These latter changes might be best made by moving the event off campus and having it as a "show" (within an "opening") at a nearby gallery space.
 1. It should be noted that last fall, when ASC learned that thesis had again been scheduled after other reviews, there was overwhelming student support for moving the reviews back but since the semester had already begun the logistical hurdle of pre-arranged airline travel etc proved insurmountable. The other objection was that many thesis students worried that by having latter reviews, they'd be stuck with equipment (ie: lasercutter, plotters) that had been broken by the other studios' charrettes. Obviously, this presence of such concerns signals a need to ensure that such equipment is properly maintained and the

appropriate equipment (and amount of it) is obtained by the department.

b. Tuesday/Thursday Studio

- i. Changing studios to t/th would greatly liberate scheduling within the department (classes, lectures, events, etc...). It would better correspond with how studio time is actually used since all three meetings are rarely needed in a single week, and it would allow faculty more time for their own work. This was generally well-received as a suggestion and may be under consideration for next term. It was noted that 3 times/week was likely necessary at Level 1 but this could be rescheduled to M/W/F to allow better interface with other classes or remain as T/TH/F with Friday as the additional day.

c. End of the Semester Coordination:

- i. Along with the relationship of thesis reviews with other studios' reviews, the end of the semester as a whole needs to be rethought so as to promote the best work possible. For instance, at present there is no effective system that coordinates final exams and papers with final reviews so it is not uncommon for a student to have a final exam the day before or after final reviews. Many peer institutions have coordinated their academic calendars to address these needs; for instance, ending the studios slightly earlier to allow for a short reading period to work on papers/exams.

4. Publication/Communication

a. Course 4 publication (Student work)

- i. Part of the visibility issues previously noted is that there is no current publication for student work and no system in place for making one. Meejin Yoon and 2 students put together the current "course4" book when the department was seeking reaccreditation but nothing has been done since. With this groundwork done, an annual book could be made with considerably less effort (also in light of the recent systemization of digital archiving for MIT OpenCourseware). This publication, in both paper and web formats, is sorely needed and should be allocated TA position(s) and a faculty advisor to ensure that this need is met annually.
 1. It should be noted, however, that not all faculty adhere to department archiving policies which would hinder the efforts toward such a publication.

b. Department Website

- i. The department website is in need of updating and revamping as part of a larger effort to better construct a more visible image of MIT. Dean Santos noted that there was a larger need for a "communications

office” or similar solutions, to facilitate department publications and image, in both online and printed media.

5. Pin-up

- a. Throughout its history, pinup has varied widely in its frequency, content, and role within the department. In recent years, interest and effort seems to be faltering and its faculty advisor, Arindum Dutta, approached ASC to inquire about our taking it over and providing overall continuity of direction, schedule, and content. Accordingly, ASC will try to reinvigorate Pinup and shift its emphasis to a more frequent and somewhat more “informational” publication – the voice of ASC and the department students at large. ASC will solicit interest for its editorial staff and recommend candidates to the department for their confirmation.

6. Clarity of Administrative Policies:

- a. In the course of discussion many of the above issues, the overall need for clear and accessible policies arose on a number of occasions – examples such as gating, the TAsip system, and studio archiving were all noted throughout. Gating was noted as having been removed by Dean Santos. The TAsip system was noted as an essential system for helping students meet financial needs, but one that was ineffectually administered without a well-coordinated calendar, process, or understanding.
- b. Though not mentioned at the meeting, one recurring item that students note in terms of unclear policy is the method of obtaining credit for previous academic work. The current system for MArch students to enter at Level 2 is not transparent enough, is not widely understood, and appears capriciously implemented and administered. It should be revamped and publicized to address the current situation in which many students are forced to repeat classes from their undergraduate education, despite nearly identical syllabi and competent performance.

7. Social / Community Activities:

- a. ASC noted that it would be imminently announcing three important events for the department:
 - i. Opening of the Steam Café
 - ii. “Unuseful Thing” competition
 - iii. Beaux-Arts Ball
- b. With the newly-renovated Steam Café as a central space for the school, it could be used for the community after lectures by setting up the food there rather than awkwardly in the hallway outside the 10-250. This would bring people into the department and better encourage discussion among attendees, etc...

adjourn.