

MINUTES

Minutes of the Uris Vision Committee
October 29, 2018

In attendance:

Co-Chairs: Jean Howard, Maya Tolstoy

Professors: Peter Bearman, Michael Cole, Ruben Gonzalez, Oliver Hobert, John Huber, Christopher Washburne,

Tian Zheng

Librarians: Barbara Rockenbach

Ex-Officio: Lisa Rosen-Metsch, Eugene Villalobos, Jana Wright

Students: Mike Ford, Aja Johnson

Staff: Jessica Lilien, Fredrik Palm, Rose Razaghian

1. The official minutes of the meetings of September 24 and October 8 were reviewed and approved for posting on the A and S website.
2. Barry Kane gave a short presentation on the current shortage of classrooms within Arts and Sciences. Enrollments are up 34% over the past decade while the stock of classrooms has remained static. At peak hours, there is a need for every size classroom, but especially those that seat more than 100 students. It was noted that Columbia undergraduate students take on average more classes than their counterparts at other institutions. Arts and Sciences has spent \$2,000,000 to rent classroom space in the last five years. He then listed some of the things that faculty request, including decent furniture, lighting, and podiums in their classrooms but also more flexible seating.
3. A long discussion ensued about what classrooms of the future should look like with some arguing physical classrooms will be less important as students take classes electronically; some arguing that the day of big lectures is over and that all classrooms should be flexibly configured to allow collaborative and group learning. There was a discussion of the feasibility of teaching in classrooms whose size could be easily changed by means of sliding partitions and of teaching in classrooms with glass walls to maximize light and transparency. Arguments for having all classrooms open to view were countered by the reality of various departmental needs (art history classrooms need darkness, for example) and personal tastes of instructors; arguments for making all rooms multi-purpose rooms that could be reconfigured in size and function were balanced by the reality of our classroom shortage and the need to assign many classes to rooms of predictable size and shape. But there was a general consensus that a considerable proportion of classroom space in the renovated Uris needs to be flexibly configured and without fixed seating.
4. Discussion turned to where in the first three floors classrooms should be located, some arguing for putting classrooms on the first and second floors to avoid elevator congestion and to place classrooms near the library, others arguing for dedicating the first floor to a

student commons with few classrooms but with library, study, and teaching and learning spaces clustered there. The second and third floors would then house most of the classrooms along with other services.

5. The committee then took up the question of food services in Uris with strong arguments made for preserving and improving the cafeteria that presently exists there, perhaps adding a few rooms that could be reserved for group dining, and maybe a grab-and-go food bar in another part of the first floor.
6. There was a discussion of the need for congenial meeting spaces for graduate students, the need for a family-centered space for students and faculty, performance space, and the need for music practice rooms. While the group affirmed the value of all these things, it is not clear that Uris will be able to accommodate all of them. Vacated space will have to be the solution for some of these problems.
7. The meeting closed with a discussion of the value of conference space in the building that would not charge rental fees and would enable the research done in the Arts and Sciences to be more available to the public as well as to academics outside Columbia. The faculty needs shared spaces to convene workshops and small gatherings since many units lack access to such spaces or do not have the money to rent them in places like the Forum or the Italian Academy.
8. At its next meeting the committee will review a draft report on the possible uses of the first three floors of Uris in light of today's discussion of classrooms, dining spaces, and conference spaces, and will start to discuss the tower floors.