

# Graduate Student Space Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2007

2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

*In attendance: Tania Aldred, Adeela Arshad-Ayaz, Associate Dean Jamshid Beheshti, Sandra Chang-Kredl, Kim Daniel, Genevieve Gauthier, Winnie Hunter, Sara Janes, Cameron McKay, Krista Redden, Dana Salter, Dean Roger Slee, Jessica Toste, Margaret Williams*

## 1. Overview of Building Plans

Jamshid explained that two buildings have been allocated to the Faculty of Education: the law mansion and the coach house (see Space Committee Report)

## 2. Recommendations

The university is currently looking at different recommendations. Jamshid described one scenario as follows:

- the Law mansion could be used as a space for grad students with 100 grad student office spaces and open spaces available for common room;
- the sixth floor art rooms and Room 513 in the Education bldg would house 10-12 GSLIS faculty offices;
- visual arts would be relocated to the coach house

## 3. Other Scenarios

Other scenarios are being considered; space committee is interested in grad students' input in order to provide quality space for grad students and create a grad student community

## 4. Time frame

A critical date is GSLIS's master's program accreditation in fall 2008 therefore GSLIS's move out of McLennen must be completed by summer 2008; for this to occur, the art studios have to move out to the coachhouse by oct/nov 2007

The sooner recommendations can be given to the planning office the better to make a feasibility study (hopefully by the end of this month); coachhouse will come first, law bldg later.

There will be an interim period before getting the Law bldg (perhaps floor by floor) when we'll be "cramped".

## 5. Questions and Comments (part I):

- Exactly who is going to move when you say grad space? To be decided.
- How will classrooms be affected? Medicine and law faculties agree to provisions in Moot Court for classes (yes, there will be some inconvenience for GSLIS)
- GSLIS student concerned about losing the shared space currently valued in their bldg

- Possibly two areas behind curriculum lab in library will be allocated as graduate student space
- Question of lab space in ECP
- Jamshid expressed his understanding that common space and individual office space are needed: but how do we do this?

## 6. Faculty-Wide Graduate Student Community

Dean Slee responded to a question on faculty wide grad student community, expressing the opinion that the opportunity to build culture is exciting as well as the question of what kind of culture and workspace we want to build. He described the ways that knowledge is being created and disseminated in teacher education faculties, the range of research being done, and the things that connect us together.

Offered as example U of Queensland's opening opportunities to do different things. University of Whitepaper: changes in the way McGill is looking at fields of inquiry: transdisciplinary model and the kinds of space you need to do these types of cross-disciplinary work.

Office spaces leading into ugly halls is not going to work; can we sustain putting people in closed offices and is this the best ways to go? Asks for recommendations coming out as *principles* (community, single offices, etc.), not just where you want to be. Making models of types of space.

## 7. Questions and Comments (part II):

- Is GSLIS moving for the right reasons? Issue of accreditation. Dean Slee responded that the main reason is that the university wants to build a student space in McLennan (Master plan), however there are a number of mutually beneficially reasons Education wants GSLIS in closer proximity. Jamshid said GSLIS joined Education faculty in 1996 and talks have been taking place since then to amalgamate with this bldg; issues of isolation
- Disability accessibility and discrimination viz moving bldgs
- Comment that there are very unique needs per department; but there's a lot of overlap too; and space has to fit purpose.
- What about faculty identity? Space is not all, but is part of the mix. The REF's are building towards collectivity in the faculty.
- Dean Slee expressed that part of the aim here is getting people to work/study in the building and to be happy here.
- Comments and e-mail expressing the need for shared space between student and faculty as opposed to segregated grad student space in law building - getting students and profs to interact
- Consider mental needs of students here, for example, the darkness of the basement; windows in law building a hope in terms of windows and light.
- Comment that we need a lounge/common space closer to where we work and bigger, shared lunch space.

*Minutes taken by Sandra Chang-Kredl*

**Feedback received via e-mail:**

*The following comments have been integrated within the “recommendations and priorities” report, where appropriate.*

- I agree that ECP needs rooms for interviews with research participants (in person and by phone). These can be common rooms used for research interviews and students/RAs may sign up to book the room(s).
- As an archives student, I thought I should underscore the issue of the archives being located in a different building (McLennan) than the department and classes (Education). An integral part of the archives courses is being able to have actual archival materials to go through during class, under the professor's supervision. The courses that I have taken this year (645 and 641) would not be nearly as effective if those materials were no longer easily available to the professor. And I have to say I don't see the feasibility of pushing carts of archival boxes up McTavish each week. This sort of hands-on experience is invaluable in a professional program like the MLIS is offering.
- A large communal graduate student space would be ideal. The challenge in this would be to create quiet or silent work space with computer terminals, AND loud communal interactive space. The current group labs in the faculty don't really foster productivity, especially if you have come into try and get some writing or thinking done. On the other hand they are great for sharing ideas (and frustrations) with other graduate students. I think the issue is less of question of who goes where, but more a question of how to design space to meet both needs.
- I think in the "community space with kitchen" we should add, computers for e-mail, printing/photocopying machine, phones and our mailboxes. I think community space is only as good as it draws community use. As grad students we always need to photocopy, check mailboxes, e-mail etc so these kinds of things will be what draws people to this space.
- Revisit who has research space in the basement. Keep the basement for professor research space, but ensure it is all being used. Could reallocate professors to new spaces that are appropriate to their research activity and to the number of graduate students they have.
- There has been no mention of the quality of the classrooms in the documents. We need laptop plugs in the desks. It would make things more secure (no dangling extension cords that students and teachers can trip on), encourage students to bring their laptops to class, and make the school more up-to-date (other universities have had laptop plugs in classroom desks for a long time now, making McGill look out-of-date).
- I just want to express my support of the point regarding the proximity to faculty. I think it is really important for grad students to have easy access to their very busy supervisors. Offices of a faculty member and his/her grad students + post docs should be close to each other.
- If we really want something different to happen – open common spaces, collaborations that create unexpected possibilities, different kinds of work relationships across different kinds of expectations - then I agree with the idea to create transdisciplinary kinds of space that facilitate cross-disciplinary work. The Coach House and Law building are wonderful pieces of architecture – it would be a shame to continue to keep them such rigidly exclusive spaces. Why can't we use all the present spaces to *intermingle* the three main groups (art, library, other) that seem to be most affected? Wouldn't it be fun to have an art studio in the middle of a common space where people from different disciplines go about their apparently more prosaic but equally intriguing text/talk work? A lab next door to an open area where people can plug in their lap tops? Why can't the approach to using all of this great space be a little more ad hoc and *unresolved*? Do we have

to nail everything down? Can we assign spaces in surprising/creative groups of art/library/other? Can we keep our desks and chairs on wheels and keep walls movable?

- I agree with the hope expressed that different spaces might permit faculty and students to interact more easily and naturally and that our building(s) could be places where people want to come, work and stay for expected and surprising reasons.