

Douglass Town Hall notes from a faculty member that attended the meeting

A first meeting was held on Monday and open only to faculty from that building. Some faculty received an initial notice that it was going to happen, with the location "TBD," but no follow-up email. Some faculty had to email their chairperson the day before to find out if it was still taking place and where. Mostly there were chairs, the COAS Dean, members of the design, real estate, and operations teams, members of the advisory group working on the design, and a handful of professors from History. The second event was open to the students and faculty from all over COAS, and took place yesterday during the Middle States meeting.

Essentially the same presentation was made at both events and was clear and straightforward. The design team wants to be inclusive and is actively soliciting feedback. Some faculty noted, however, that while they are looking for feedback on the initial design, none of the affected faculty from that building were consulted prior to drawing up the plans, nor, for that matter were students. In fact, the advisory committee that approved this first plan seemed to have mostly administrators like Dr. Wutoh, Dr. Dark, and Dr. Dubroy, not faculty (though the list was long and on the screen only a short time, so we may have missed folks).

There may have been good reasons for doing that--it's easier to have people react to a plan and tweak it than have everyone try to plan. And the group has good ideas and seems to be reactive to comments-- it was noted that some changes in the presentation on Thursday were based on the comments from Monday. However, it seems there still should be some wider consultation. Very few of the affected faculty were there either day. One colleague from Political Science, which was poorly represented both days, noted that they have the second largest major in COAS with 700 students....but there seems to be no provision for departmental office spaces. In fact, it was noted two such spaces on the second floor in the new design, if we are remembering correctly, but there are three departments present. In addition, as faculty repeatedly pointed out, there is not enough office space in the new design, period. It certainly does not allow for growth.

It was suggest that the design team/advisory group implement Survey Monkey or some other type of widespread survey of faculty and students asking some basic questions about preferred type of classroom and office space, departmental needs, etc. While it would have been better to do this BEFORE the design got underway (they managed to consult Enrollment Management on Douglass classroom sizes for several previous years, for example), it is not too late in the process to do that now.