UABC Agenda Item
March 26, 2015

Humanities Classroom Space Update

Having explored the ongoing issue of the lack of classroom space for Humanities courses and concerns about the unhealthy and unsafe conditions endured by Humanities faculty and staff who teach in Karrmann Library basement classrooms (where new lab mods funded computers are housed) and the students enrolled in their courses, I have concluded that we are unable to bring a concrete resolution to the table. Despite the intolerable conditions in these rooms and the problem of housing our updated computers (not to mention students, faculty and staff) in these spaces, it seems that the Karrmann classrooms will need to stay online because other classrooms have been taken offline and/or relocated. As a result, we have a shortage of classroom space and an unsustainable model of space allocation for Humanities department members.

Furthermore, based upon consultations with Humanities Department Administrator Sara Koeller, it seems that the AdAstra software update will not “decolonize” classroom spaces. Apparently, the new system assigns “preference zones” for each department. Presently, the three basement classrooms in Karrmann Library are the Humanities Department’s sole “preference zones.” Additionally, individual departments will still effectively “own” computer lab spaces. For example, the computer lab spaces in Karrmann basement have effectively been transitioned into classrooms. This presents a problem because this is where the lab mod funded computers are housed. In other words, these are no longer general
access labs. Additionally, as of a meeting that Dr. Terry Burns attended this morning, the possibility of relocating Karrmann basement labs to new spaces has been greatly diminished.

The Physical Plant is presently working to reduce leaks in the Karrmann Library ceilings. However, an effective repair would cost over $1,000,000. Furthermore, in addition to the present impossibility of relocating Humanities computer labs (which are, as noted, effectively classrooms and no longer labs), Humanities department faculty and staff are unable to schedule courses in other departments’ labs. For example, Engineering computer labs have not be transitioned into classroom spaces. As such, other departments cannot access these labs. Incongruously, other departments have always had access to Humanities computer labs. As a result, any Humanities faculty or staff member who opts to teach a course in a computer lab (which is, as we have discussed, a more cost efficient model of instruction) is forced to teach in the Karrmann basement.

As recently as yesterday, a fragment from the ceiling of a Karrmann basement classroom landed on a student’s desk. Also yesterday, a Humanities department faculty member was sprayed with sewage that spewed from an overflowing toilet in the Karrmann basement. As of this afternoon, the Karrmann basement bathrooms smell of raw sewage, which is not only disgusting, but also toxic. I am confident that each of you understands the urgency of improving Humanities classroom conditions and relocating our new computers to a safe space. I would appreciate any suggestion my fellow UABC members might offer. For instance, might we draft a resolution that entails the immediate relocation of at least one Humanities computer classroom/lab to another location? Thank you for your continued attention in this matter.