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Issue/Concern: VPRT abuse of shared governance

Describe the issue/concern::

The physics department participated in the district planning group for the new Mohr Hall building that formulated the final architectural plan for submission to the state architect. It incorporated significant space planning to support important operational needs of the physics department.

Two years later as we began our planning to move into the new building, we discovered that changes to the architectural plan had been made with significant repurposing of space originally intended to support the physics department. We were completely unaware of the process that led to these changes and were left to adjust the operations of our department accordingly with no real explanation from administration.

In spite of many attempts to communicate with administrators about our needs in attempting to adjust to this situation, we have continued to be thwarted by arbitrary decisions made without our participation regarding our use of spaces in Mohr Hall. We recently learned that all these decisions about changing the space utilization in Mohr Hall have been the work of an administrative process called VPRT.

In all of our communications with administrators about the problems with these decisions no mention was ever made of VPRT. We had never heard of it, and we understand that faculty governance officials haven't either. Evidently, the VPRT process is a relatively arbitrary invention of campus administration that reserves unto itself the sole power to decide behind

closed doors issues of space utilization around campus with minimal or nonexistent participation by faculty. As far as we can tell it occupies no official place in the campus governance structure and bypasses entirely the purview of the campus safety and development committee.

We submit this issue out of our grave concerns regarding the actions of the VPRT group that continue to have significant disruptive affects on the smooth operations of the physics department, while operating completely outside the legitimate governance structure of the campus.

Our experience with the VPRT group suggests that they operate in a relative vacuum without any real consultation with the people their decisions will affect. They also seem unwilling to engage in any real discussion of the motivations for their decisions even after the fact.

Adding that to the fact that they do not seem to have any official position within the campus governance structure suggests that their operations are outside any semblance of the practice of good shared governance and lead to arbitrary, uniformed, and unwise decisions.

What do you recommend or suggest solving this issue/concern? :

We recommend a thorough investigation of the history and operations of the VPRT group with the view to redesigning the decision making process concerning space utilization on campus to make sure it doesn't bypass the official campus governance structure and always includes representatives of the people affected by such decisions in keeping with the spirit and practice of shared governance.

We also recommend a sorely needed redress of the most recent VPRT decision regarding the reassignment of our office spaces in Mohr Hall, that would force us to submit to a very disruptive rearrangement of our current office use on Oct 15th.

How will this recommendation support the success of SCC

Decisions made by VPRT in the absence of good shared governance practice fail to strike the proper balance between administrative priorities and the needs of the

students and benefit the campus community?:

daily academic environment. In our case they have repurposed spaces for unclear reasons seemingly without regard for the negative impact on the learning environment.

Replacing the VPRT process in accordance with our recommendation will hopefully lead to space utilization decisions that enhance rather than degrade the learning environments that faculty are constantly trying to improve.