Don Morris Center Proposed Renovation

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

June 2003

GENERAL PURPOSE STATEMENT

Just as many professional news organizations move toward more converged environments, media educators must provide opportunities for students to learn in such an environment. When newspapers transitioned from paste-up to computer-based layout, JMC@ACU upgraded its equipment and curriculum to prepare students to work in that environment. In light of the most recent shift in journalism and mass communication practice, our curriculum has been updated. Now we must make changes to the learning environment.

The proposed multimedia/converged media newsroom will comprise the print, broadcast and online products, with a direct stairway to the main broadcast studio. The newsroom will function, like several in the professional media world, with a central assignments desk. Ideally, the products will each be a part of the whole – each providing its unique advantages to the coverage of a story. In addition to fostering understanding and respect among the different media within the department, providing opportunities for students to see and participate in each other's processes will create a more synergistic environment.

When the DMC was built in 1978, the equipment costs for the first and third floors were about $325,000. In 1986 the radio operation was upgraded with a $300,000 grant from the Public Telecommunications and Facilities Program. In 1990, the first of the Macintosh labs were installed at a cost of about $350,000. Since then the department has **replaced and upgraded** the equipment, hardware and software several times, and added two more computer labs.

The proposed renovation differs from replacements and upgrades because it will change the way the media products are produced. It will **change the process** and give students the opportunity to learn in a converged media atmosphere.

Whether or not the university approves the **mandatory laptop program for JMC majors** will directly affect the hardware costs for the newsroom. If students have personal computers, funds raised and subsequent LINK grants may be used to purchase and update community equipment, such as a newsroom broadcast/video set or servers capable of handling the needs of the multimedia newsroom. **This proposal is written with the expectation that the JMC laptop program will be approved.**

PROPOSED CHANGES

Wireless Capabilities

The Don Morris Center should have high-speed Internet and network connectivity that accommodates 300 JMC users. Proposed use of the wireless networks by other departments in DM will require an increase in number of users the system can accommodate.

Classrooms

One large classroom(32'X46') should be constructed with seating for 80 people in a tiered seating arrangement. This classroom should be dividable with a soundproof partition to allow for two smaller classes of 40 each to meet simultaneously without disturbance. Care should be taken to network the room so it is equally useful as one or two classrooms. The multimedia room(s) should include two of each of the following:

- built in computer with appropriate Internet and JMC software
- sound system
- hard-wired Ethernet connection
- television with VCR/DVD and cable television connection
- telephone
- large whiteboard
- projection screen, placed so it doesn't obscure the whiteboard
- projector.

Lighting should include incandescent and fluorescent fixtures wired with dual controls to enable dimmed-light note taking.

This classroom should take a portion of the space currently occupied on the third floor of DM by the Optimist and Prickly Pear newsrooms.

Faculty Offices

All JMC faculty offices (12'x14' or 12'x16') should be located on the third floor of the DMC. This should include ten offices for Bacon, Bradshaw, Hogan, Kessler, Mann, Lewis, Pybus, White and two adjunct offices. The space required can be created by:

• moving internal doors of the existing third floor center suite of offices to open into the corridor.

• converting a portion of the current Optimist office and adjoining staff office into a department chair suite with an adequate reception area. The suite should include:

a. chair's office with meeting area and built in storage shelves and cabinet

b. reception area with at least four chairs, and coffee table and/or end table

c. administrative assistant's office with room for multiple filing cabinets

d. workroom, including copy machine, file cabinets, departmental mail receptacles, work table and two student employee tables or desks with one computer

• converting current copy room and camera storage area to a reception area and advising office, respectively.

• converting current general storage room to camera storage and camera check-out office.

• converting current film developing area to an office and redefining darkroom space to fill the need currently met by the developing area

Student and Staff Offices

Student media offices should be on the second floor, including offices for:

• Optimist editor

• Prickly Pear editor(s)

• Online editor

• Convergence coordination editor.(This is the central assignments desk.)

Staff offices on the second floor should be:

• Student media advertising manager (12'x10')

• Staff student media adviser (contingent on creation of this position) (12'x10').

Each of these offices should be large enough for a desk, two guest chairs, a filing cabinet and a small credenza. They should each be equipped with telephones and cable television connections.

Converged Media Newsroom

The large, open newsroom (approximately 28'x50' total) will serve as the central location for all student media at ACU, including the newspaper, yearbook, television station, online media product and radio news. It should include:

• A stairway constructed directly to the television studio on the first floor to ease and encourage conversation among the media outlets. Care should be taken to secure this stairway technologically through card readers or other means.

• Desks and/or tables with space, chairs and power supplies for 25 laptop users.

• Raised platform with two television-worthy chairs for a mini-studio setting with camera, TelePrompTer and lighting controlled by programmed software networked with other media outlets for editing and broadcast.

• Adequate space for sofas and comfortable chairs with seating for 10-12 people, perhaps in pods of 5-6, and coffee tables and/or end tables.

• Suite of five large capacity computer workstations with hard-wired Ethernet connections and appropriate hardware and software for use by student media practitioners, mainly video editing and transmission of large files.

• Entrance to the newsroom should be secured.

• A printer area should be designated and equipped with room for a large format printer, a standard black and white laser printer and a color laser printer.

• Two phone lines

• Ping Pong or other similar game table

• One large or two mid-sized storage closets

• 15 feet of built-in bookshelves and 15 feet of built-in cabinets

• A secure server room housing a server with the ability to handle the selected media convergence software and traffic by student media practitioners. This server may be on any of the three floors of the DMC.

Meeting Area

In close proximity to the student media offices on the second floor of the DMC, a meeting room (17'x 20') should be constructed for use by media adviser(s), media editors, class project teams and faculty. It should be equipped with:

      a. whiteboards on two walls

      b. a screen on a third wall

      c. a projector

      d. a computer workstation with an Ethernet connection and appropriate software

      e. television with VCR/DVD and cable connection

      f. telephone

      g. built in storage cabinets

      h. conference table and chairs for 12

      i. lighting should have dimmer options that include incandescent and fluorescent fixtures

Common Area

The area around the one large window on the second floor should be used as a faculty/student commons area (24'x18'), with tables and chairs conducive to conversations and small meetings. Because of the wireless environment, this could also be a workspace for students and faculty. This area could feature a café, similar to the ones in the colleges of Business and Bible. Alternately, it could feature vending and a kitchenette.

General Observations

• Many considerations are contingent on the building having a wireless Internet and network connection. This component is key to the success of this revised learning environment.

• The open concept of the converged media newsroom is a realistic learning environment for students planning to enter the media field. It is meant to be very open, with as few walls as possible and lots of community space.

SPACE PRIORITIES

The items listed previously are interdependent. This new learning environment will be most effective when the all stated plans are fulfilled.

Highest priority

    A. Wireless network and Internet connectivity

As previously stated, wireless capability is the lynchpin to this learning environment.

    B. Converged Media Newsroom (the newsroom facilities listed above, student media and media staff offices, meeting room, staircase, printer area and storage facilities)

This is the heart of JMC's converged media curriculum. We have made the two rounds of changes to the classroom curriculum and the media curriculum to prepare for this new environment. Within the marketplace, media outlets continue to increase partnerships with each other. Media theorists expect the trend to continue, especially in light of the recent FCC rule change to allow newspapers and a television station within a local market to be owned by the same company. Our students must learn how to communicate with people working in various forms of media. The Converged Media Newsroom will create an environment for the students to practice their specialization and learn more about the operations of their peers in other media.

    C. Classroom with seating for 80 (dividable into two classrooms of 40)

The 2002 Visiting Committee report noted a need for a large, well-equipped traditional classroom. This room would fill the obvious void in our available classroom space, thereby freeing the room the Art Department has regularly shared with us. Also, this classroom (or classrooms) will enable some classes currently being taught in computer labs to move to a more traditional classroom setting, which will increase the number of students in each section of those courses, within the guidelines of our accrediting body, and aid our faculty shortage problem.

D. Faculty offices on the third floor (10)

In an effort to build community among the faculty, increase academic synergy and encourage accountability to student needs, faculty offices should be in close proximity to each other. The eight full-time faculty members should each have an office. The adjunct offices could be shared by adjuncts, senior faculty (Marler) or new faculty, as requested in the five-year plan.

E. Common area with vending

The DMC is one of the largest classroom buildings on campus with no faculty or student commons area. The students and faculty would benefit from a place to have an informal meeting, gather for lunch and enjoy the most natural light on the second floor.

High Priority

A. Common area with café

Again, the DMC is one of the largest classroom buildings on campus with no access to food service. All of the benefits of a common area with tables, chairs and natural light would be amplified by access to coffee, bagels and sandwiches.