

Facilities, Support Services & Technology Committee (FSST) Final Report, 2023-2024 Academic Year

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Report Summary

The FSST Committee members deeply appreciated the willingness of various WSU administrative representatives to participate in the communication of the issues, and future plans as pertains to construction, building maintenance, parking, and C&IT. These discussions were informative and useful. Given the ever-decreasing fiscal contribution of the state in support of the University, and the facilities, support services and technology problems that have arisen as a result of this situation, means that recruitment and retention of capable students will continue to be a challenge. Similarly, the lack of adequate spaces and limited resources negatively impacts the university's ability to attract and retain highly qualified faculty and staff.

Areas of Opportunity: The university should highlight and communicate more broadly the talent, hard work, and dedication of the many staff members that allow teaching, learning, and research to happen at the university. The FSST committee should be encouraged to take an active role in prioritizing issues impacting the teaching mission of the university, in thinking creatively for solutions, and in presenting these opportunities to the administrative staff leading the facilities, support services and technology units. In other words, communication should occur in both directions and creative solutions should be encouraged.

Below are specific problems identified by the committee through its work in the 2023-2024 AY. The committee recommends the university fix the problems identified below:

A. Building Maintenance: WSU Administration must take action to integrate routine building maintenance, repair & upkeep activities. The routine maintenance of the buildings, including temperature control and day-to-day service and repairs are challenging due to the difficulty in hiring and retaining engineering staff with appropriate qualifications. Faculty, staff, and students are negatively affected by lack of prioritization of maintenance and cleanliness in the buildings they are required to use for classes, research, and office space. Some of the issues include physical access to the buildings and rooms, temperature fluctuations, cleanliness (including trash pickup, dusting, and vacuuming), repeated flooding, technology access (or lack thereof), accessibility (bathrooms, entering and exiting buildings and rooms, elevators), pipe and HVAC maintenance (faculty, staff, and student displacement from buildings and classrooms with specific equipment needed) and more. FSST recommends that the university take actions to address these problems before the beginning of the 2024-2025 AY and augment maintenance services in the weeks surrounding students' return to campus for the new AY. Repeated occurrence of crises arising

from classroom access and/or maintenance of classrooms, bathroom & common usage spaces, particularly at the beginning of the academic year, should be prevented at all costs. The physical state of the campus is disturbing, especially when we are providing tours of spaces to prospective students and potential WSU employees.

B. Building Coordinator Model (Communication, Accountability, and Transparency): The administration and integration of the current Work Order and Building Coordinators model must be better designed to effectively address crisis arising from lack of building access and maintenance that occurred this past academic year. We highlight the following particular that need immediate attention:

1. *Lack of communication between the WSU community, assigned building coordinators, and submitting work orders.* The lines of communication and accountability in relation to the maintenance, repairs and service are not clear.”

2. *Repeated occurrence of crisis arising from lack of classroom access and/or building maintenance of classroom, bathroom & common usage spaces, particularly at beginning of the academic year.* The physical state of parts of campus is disturbing, especially when we are providing tours of spaces to prospective students and potential WSU employees. The Provost’s office has pushed for more and more on-campus events and classes to promote a vibrant campus while academic staff in the art department has to work in temperatures that fluctuate between 30 to 90 degrees and elevator access needed for classrooms is still under maintenance. This indicates a stark contrast between the image that we intend to portray to visitors and reality.

3. *The Building Coordinator identification and contact information are not always readily available or updated on the website.* The WSU community is not adequately trained on what to do in the event of a building issue and is largely unaware of who specifically oversees a particular building. The committee raised issues concerning safety and disability access. These included: multiple magnetic key entry points for a given building that is difficult to access for mobility impaired individuals, repair of cracked sidewalks, the number of cameras in the parking structures, and a clear way of communicating concerns associated with a particular building. Faculty and staff members can communicate a problem to a Building Coordinator, and they can place a work order, however they do not get sufficient feedback, and it is unclear who is responsible for performing the service in a timely manner. Work orders are submitted, then there is a substantial lack of follow-up from FPM about status and progress. For some university buildings, there is either a lack of fire drills or drills that take place infrequently.

C. Campus Accessibility: Campus accessibility for physically challenged individuals should be formally investigated via surveys, needs assessments, examination of ADA compliance via recent OSME, and ADA checklist inspection results. Concrete repairs and improvements as well as building access should be thoroughly investigated via a campus wide study.

Lack of clarity on the part of the Student Disabilities Services (SDS) Office themselves on their role in accessibility across campus is a problem. SDS was not included in the designs of State Hall, where the committee expressed concerns regarding accessibility. It is unclear where we would find the information about whether WSU is compliant with ADA standards. The committee suggested

that the budget be proactively prioritized for accessible physical spaces at the beginning of planning stages rather than after the fact. It was noted in the discussion that students who are registered with SDS could benefit from more resources such as assistive technology and more SDS specialists to work more closely with students.

D. Other Issues:

1. It appears that the teaching faculty is not systematically consulted in planning and restoring the spaces for classrooms, which sometimes leads to the classrooms not matching the requirements for teaching.
2. The maintained parking structures appears excessive; this generates a budgetary deficit.
3. Previous requests for the university to implement a recycling program and to replace remaining chalkboards with whiteboards in all rooms used for teaching have not been addressed.

2023-2024 Academic Year FSST Meeting & Activities Summary:

Date	Speaker/Main Agenda	Actions
September 20, 2023	Upcoming meeting schedule & FSST issues identified	FSST voted to approve formation of Accessibility Subcommittee (Simon, Dubinsky, Beaudoin, and Mitra, later renamed Access Working Group)
October 19, 2023	Rob Davenport VP, (FP&M) Presentation of FP&M activities& Discussion	Beale prepared FSST Cmte for upcoming Pleenary activity
November 16, 2023	Heather King & Juan Richarson presentation on Campus Security & Access Update Project	
December 14, 2023	Cherise Frost, head of Student Disability Services	Ms. Frost indicated she would supply FSST Cmte with ADA checklist, OMSE’s bathroom accessibility report (did not occur, no items were received).
January 18, 2024	Rob Thompson, VP C&IT, presentation on C&IT activities followed by Q&A	
February 18, 2024	Rob Davenport VP FP&M presentation followed by Q&A	
March 21, 2024	Jon Fredrick, Parking Services, discussion of activities	Fredrick followed up sending FP&M Hard Services - Road Show slide deck
April 18, 2024	FSST final meeting Approval of AY activities	Motions passed regarding FP&M campus maintenance