

University of Houston

Agenda Documentation

JACK J. VALENTI SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION EXPANSION

The Valenti School of Communication is one of the larger majors on campus, ranking behind biology and running a close second with psychology. The student population of approximately 1,600 includes majors in Media Production (243), Print and Broadcast Journalism (312), Public Relations and Advertising (469), Corporate Communication (110), Interpersonal Communication (29) and Media Studies (25). The remaining students are categorized as majoring in communication, but they have not yet selected a concentration. Approximately 100 students are seeking a Master Plan of arts in programs emphasizing theory and research. Some of these graduate students are seeking an alternative to an MBA or a BBA; others plan to teach at the community college level or pursue a doctorate in communication.

The school has experienced extensive growth over the last several academic years and finds itself in the position of turning students away from classes due to shortage of both classrooms and production studio space.

Notably, nearly all of the classes for the fall semester are filled two weeks after registration begins. Student demand each semester averages at least 10 more course sections than space permits; and student work labs are open and typically operating at capacity 7 days a week.

One classroom was lost as part of the creation of the suite housing the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts (48 seats). Another was downsized to create office space for emeritus Director of the School of Theater & Dance Sidney Berger (loss of 25 seats). Necessary ceiling height in the sole production studio was taken away in 2002 to build additional faculty offices on the second floor.

The production studio has numerous deficiencies. It is both too small and too short to serve typical production needs and contains antiquated equipment. Despite these drawbacks, it is overbooked and unable to meet customer demand.

Internal and external studio clients include UH Educational Technology and University Outreach, UH Human Resources, Moores School of Music, UH Visual Studies, CLASS e-communication newsletter, Wonderworks summer workshop for HISK students, the Veterans History Project, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center and the Baylor College of Medicine.

The proposed new entry will create and identity for the building, mitigate circulation issues help leverage student and alumni pride in the Valenti legacy.

April 15, 2009