

COLLEGE OF SOUTHERN NEVADA
UTILIZATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL SPACE
Internal Audit Report
FALL 2013

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) produces an inventory and utilization report every two years. Each NSHE institution is required to submit data for inclusion in the report. The most recent report was based on assignable space inventory and instructional utilization information collected as of October 15, 2013. The utilization data presented in the report is intended to quantify the extent to which institutions effectively schedule and use instructional space, based on standards established by the Board of Regents.

During its September 2009 meeting, the Board of Regents approved the suspension of the existing space reporting process that would have been produced in the fall 2009 to support the 2011 capital budget cycle, and directed the System Administration Office to establish a working group tasked with modifying the space inventory and utilization reports for use during the 2013 capital budget cycle.

The Space Study Working Group, established in September 2009, was tasked with bringing together innovative space reporting practices used by NSHE and institutions across the nation with the goal of recommending to the Board of Regents credible, auditable, and meaningful space reports that would be used to support the capital budgeting and planning cycles in the future. A Technology and Implementation Subcommittee was established in June 2010 for bringing the new reports into reality. The subcommittee finalized and presented the report templates and data elements for the final fall 2011 space reports that were presented to the Investment and Facilities Committee of the Board of Regents in September 2012.

SCOPE OF AUDIT

The Internal Audit Department has completed a review of assignable space inventory and instructional space utilization data submitted by the College of Southern Nevada (CSN) for inclusion in NSHE's System Wide Inventory and Utilization Report (IUR) for Fall 2013/FY2014. Our review was conducted in accordance with the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing* issued by the Institute of Internal Auditors, and included tests of the accounting records and other auditing procedures, as we considered necessary. The tests included, but were not necessarily limited to these areas.

1. Reconciling CSN's space and utilization data reported in the IUR to its supporting sources in the PeopleSoft student information system.
2. Reviewing the college's methodology for gathering and reporting assignable space and instructional space utilization data, including compliance with the most recent guidelines generated by the Board of Regent's assigned Space Study Working Group.
3. Reconciling the rooms and assignable square footage information identified in CSN's classroom and class lab summary reports to facility blueprints, to confirm the accuracy and completeness of the reports.
4. Physically sampling classrooms and class labs at various CSN locations to confirm the accuracy of assignable square footage, work station counts, and the space use code classifications identified in the classroom and class lab reports.
5. Confirming low room use exception summary data was accurately supported and grouped, and reasons for low room use were supported with narrative explanations.

6. Surveying NSHE institutions that reported classroom and class laboratory utilization data for the IUR to determine whether their submissions included information related to non-credit courses.

In our opinion, we can be reasonably assured that CSN's submission of its utilization of instructional space data is accurate. However, implementation of the following recommendation would improve the consistency and completeness of the information included in the NSHE IUR.

OTHER – UTILIZATION REPORTING

The Space Study Working Group identified that the utilization report was to be expanded to include instructional space associated with short-term, non-credit courses, including Business and Industry workshops, public service courses, and school district partnerships. These types of activities were previously excluded from the space utilization reporting requirements. Our review of CSN's fall 2013 IUR data indicated that instructional space for non-credit courses was excluded. We made inquiries of the NSHE institutions that participated in the fall 2013 IUR submission, and noted four of seven excluded this information, as the institutions were unclear on this requirement/expectation. We were informed the non-credit course data was being tracked outside of PeopleSoft in other systems.

We recommend the NSHE Finance Department issue additional guidance to the institutions regarding the requirements for reporting non-credit course data for the IUR. We recommend this data be included for the next biennial submission cycle scheduled to occur in 2015, in order to facilitate the consistency of data reported by the participating NSHE institutions, and to best reflect actual utilization of instructional space.

Institution Response

The new Space Study requirements were developed by a working group which

consisted of representatives from each institution. All representatives were aware of the new standards and were given a final copy of the “Summary of Board of Regents Deliverables and Recommendations by Working Group” which was created by the working group and approved by the Board of Regents in September of 2010. Item #11 of the document states that “The Utilization Report must be expanded to include instructional space associated with short-term, non-credit courses, including Business and Industry workshops, public service courses, and school district partnerships.”

What will be done to avoid the identified problems and issues in the future?

The NSHE-Finance Department will provide additional guidance to the institutions to reiterate the requirement for non-credit course space utilization data and require that non-credit course space utilization data be provided to the Finance Department separate from the credited course data so that it will be evident that non-credit course data has been provided.

How compliance and future good management and practice will be measured, monitored and assured?

The NSHE-Finance Department will verify that two utilization files are provided by each institution; one file for non-credit course and another for credited courses.

Who will be responsible and may be held accountable in the future if repeat or similar problems arise?

The NSHE-Finance Department will be held accountable in the future if a non-credit course utilization data file is not provided by each institution that delivers non-credit courses.

When the measures will be taken and on what schedule compliance and good practice will be secured?

The measures will be taken beginning with the preparation of next Space Study which will be provided to the Board of Regents in FY16.

How Compliance and performance will be documented for future audit, management and performance review.

Space Study data utilization files are saved for future reference by System Computing Services. The existence of utilization files for credited courses and non-credit courses which matches the final reports submitted to the Board of Regents will document that the required data was collected from the institutions. In instances where a data file is not provided for either credit course or non-credit courses by an institution(s), it will be clearly stated on the space study utilization report provided to the Board of Regents as part of the biennial space study.

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSE

At the September 4, 2014 meeting of the Board of Regents Audit Committee, the Audit Committee concurred with the NSHE Internal Audit Department's recommendations with regards to the System's Space Study report which is calculated by the NSHE System Administration Finance Department and distributed to the Board Biennially. The specific recommendations in the report were to "issue additional guidance to the institutions regarding the requirements for reporting non-credit course data for the IUR" and that the "data be included for the next biennial submission cycle scheduled to occur in 2015, in order to facilitate the consistency of data reported by the participating NSHE institutions, and to best reflect actual utilization of instructional space". As outlined in the System's Response which was reported to the Audit Committee, "The NSHE-Finance Department will provide additional guidance to the institutions to reiterate the requirement for non-credit course space utilization data and require that non-credit course space utilization data be provided to the Finance Department separate from the credited course data so that it will be evident that non-credit course data has been provided."

Additional guidance will be provided to the institutions prior to the beginning of the Space Study student utilization "snapshot" date for the 2015-2016 space study. The "Snapshot" date for space utilization will be on 10/15/2015 and notification of space study requirements and additional guidance to the institution for the non-credit course data requirement will be distributed prior to this date so that the non-credit course data will be incorporated into the "snapshot" information.

Additionally, The NSHE Finance Department suggested the collection of 2 separate utilization data files from the institutions: one file for credit course data, and another for non-credit course data. In this way, the Finance Department can verify the existence of utilization files for credited courses and non-credit courses which match the final reports submitted to the Board of Regents and will document that the required data was collected from the institutions. In instances where a data file is not provided for either credit course or non-credit courses by an institution(s), it will be clearly stated on the space study utilization report. The Space Study report will be presented to the Board of Regents in FY 2016.

The Internal Audit Department appreciates the assistance and cooperation received from the CSN staff during this review.


Las Vegas, Nevada
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