Proposed After Hours Building Access Policy

Report to the UNI Faculty Senate

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The overwhelming consensus is that the proposed after hours building policy is restrictive, unnecessary, and has significant unintended consequences.

**Initial Key Access**

“My key is my permission”—Given the rules, paperwork, and controls in place about who gets keys in the first place, having a key to a particular building or room *is in and of itself permission to be there*.

Rules at all three regents’ institutions include strict stipulations about who gets keys and how key request get filed and approved. Other rules common across all three institutions are:

* Don’t share your key
* If lost, report immediately
* Don’t let unauthorized persons in to buildings after hours
* Do not prop doors after hours.

**Building Use at ISU and UI**

“Faculty, staff, and students shall be permitted access as required for their work or studies” –specifically stated in University of Iowa’s building policy. I could find no mention of after-hours access policies at ISU or UI, *for people who have keys*. I only found helpful information for:

* How to get into a building after hours if you were locked out
* Changing the building hours of a building
* If someone does not have a key, how do they use or get into a building after hours.

**After Hours Use at UNI: Faculty**

“I need unfettered access to my office to do my job”—After hours use of buildings is a necessity for faculty. Reasons include:

* Many hours of outside of normal work time is a requirement and necessity for many trying to achieve tenure.
* Can’t work at home (and shouldn’t be expected to have to); need access to software, equipment, resources and supplies.
* Lab research often requires checking experiments or equipment.
* Faculty don’t work 9-5 jobs; recent workload survey should bear this out.
* Data are often required to be kept on campus.
* “I can’t work alone???”—Much faculty work is solitary work: reading, writing, research, practicing (Music/Performance faculty report that their practice spaces are single, solitary rooms for private practice).

**After Hours Use at UNI: Students**

“I have to be able to work on campus, I don’t have anything I need at home”—Graduate students in particular note many of the same issues as faculty:

* They must put in after hours time for successful completion of MA theses and doctoral dissertations
* They do not have the materials at home that they need including access to specialized software and data from their research that must be kept on campus
* Music/Performance students (undergraduate and graduate) report the necessity of working late in their appropriate academic environments (practice rooms, studios, performance spaces).
* Restrictive library hours that require them to use their office and laboratory space
* They too often work alone, and they often are working without a faculty member or advisor present.

*Keep in mind: we are talking about students who have already gone through the key approval process—these people are approved to have keys for the buildings and spaces they are using*.

**Identification**

People are quite comfortable with the notion that they should make sure they have campus identification if using a building after hours and that they may be asked to show it. However, there is some concern about having to be ‘cleared’ for being n the building, despite have a key and ID, and the time it might take to do so.

**United Faculty**

UF has raised concerns that this could be a bargaining issue as access to facilities and equipment, progress toward tenure, etc, are bargaining issues; specifically, that the university may be inadvertently restricting ability to do their job.

**Academic Environment**

“We are adults engaging in scholarly activity”—Many remarked on what such a policy does for the ‘feel’ of a university, such that it is less a collection of faculty and student scholars, and more a physical plant run by non-academics. Other remarks included:

* If it is cumbersome to come to campus after hours, it makes me less likely to do so which has a huge impact on the job and the experience of university life.
* Why are rule abiding people’s rights being infringed upon in the name of stopping rule breakers? (Presumably people who are using or might use buildings inappropriately after hours?)
* Students and faculty do not engage in strictly 9-5 activity; academic life has great flexibility in hours.
* It does not make an environment ‘safer’ to restrict access to it.
* If a university values education and academic work, it allows unfettered access to the facilities and spaces to do that work.

**Unintended Consequences**

Those proposing this policy may simply not realize the sheer volume of after hours activity that regularly occurs on campus, and how much time would be taken to have to approve or even document use, check IDs, etc.

* 48 hours advance notification is “restrictive, ridiculous, and impossible to know.”
* Even if there was not a 48 hour restriction, any call-ahead rule is going to be incredibly time consuming and cumbersome—many faculty and students reported that they would be calling upwards of 4-6 times per week.
* If ID checking time takes any longer than literally showing the ID, then that’s an added problem (one faculty member reported a recent occurrence of being held up for 10 minutes after showing ID before being allowed to continue their work in their own building, for which they had a key).
* Most were unclear about who the ‘building coordinator’ is.

**Recommendations**

People who have approved access to buildings (defined by having been approved for a key and having it in their possession), *may* (but are not required), to call Public Safety to alert their presence after hours.

People who have approved access to buildings (defined by having been approved for a key and having it in their possession), should carry University Identification and show it upon request. There should be no requirement for clearance of said ID.

All those using buildings after hours should follow existing rules and common sense:

* Don’t share your key
* If lost, report immediately
* Don’t let unauthorized persons in to buildings after hours
* Do not prop doors after hours.

There are no restrictions for working alone.

Students (graduate and undergraduate who have approved for a key to a particular building or space) similarly are allowed to work alone and do not need a faculty member or advisor on premises.