

III. FUNCTIONAL SPECIFICATIONS

The primary functional specification for Aldrich Hall is that the building should be designed to implement the case method of instruction. The lecture method is used in some courses to accomplish special objectives, but for the most part the case method predominates throughout the instructional program of the School. Moreover, preliminary studies indicate that rooms designed for the case method will be at least adequate for the lecture method, while the converse would not be true. The Committee recommends, therefore, that attention be directed primarily to the unique requirements of the case method of instruction and to the design of features which will contribute to it.

Analysis of the case method suggests that above all else the room interiors should be designed to facilitate group discussion. The case method is not a matter of instructor lecturing to students nor yet a matter of students reciting to instructor. The very essence of the process is a group discussion with the instructor as a leading participant. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that the rooms be arranged to encourage triangular discussion among Student A, Student B, and the instructor. This general requirement will be developed in more detail below.

A second general requirement of the classroom interiors (and corridor interiors) is that they should achieve an atmosphere of quiet informality. All possible care should be taken to avoid the regimented, institutional atmosphere which is so often characteristic of buildings which must accommodate masses of people. Care must likewise be taken to avoid distractions which interfere with the learning process, such as crowding, discomfort, noise, glare, uneven temperature, and inadequate ventilation.

In the following paragraphs, the Committee has attempted to set down the maximum specifications for room features and equipment in order to give the architects as clear an idea as possible of what is wanted in the new building. It is fully recognized that modifications in these specifications may become necessary after their feasibility has been explored and cost estimates have been secured. Moreover, as the design work progresses, the architects may develop some completely new concepts which may make some of the specifications unnecessary or suggest new specifications.

A. Specifications for 80, 110, and 160-Man Rooms

The same general specifications will hold for all rooms in these three size groups. It is assumed, however, that the attainment of these specifications might require quite different designs for each size of room.