RESEARCH SPACE ALLOCATION POLICY

Policy

Enhancing the success of the University in all of its missions requires optimal utilization of institutional assets. One such asset is the space that the University provides to its research community. It is imperative that the University appropriately manage space in order to augment the institution’s overall success in the biosciences. Comparison to the institution’s peers is also important as a measure of success and accountability. The purpose of this policy is to promote fairness across the Schools for optimal research space utilization.

Guiding Principles

- The effective utilization of research space at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio is the ultimate responsibility of the Board of Regents of the University of Texas System with the President as the “landlord”. However, it is the responsibility of Deans, Chairs and Center/Institute Directors to insure that space is being used optimally.

- A research space productivity index (RSPI), which measures previous fiscal year total awards, divided by assignable square feet of wet bench research space, will be based on the institutional mean and calculated annually. The current wet bench target RSPI is $250/square foot of wet bench research space. This target RSPI applies to all Schools and includes only wet bench space assigned to individual faculty. Unassigned wet benches and core facilities are not included in the RSPI calculation.

- If an investigator/department/school/center/institute is more than 20% below the target RSPI (excluding newly funded or newly recruited investigators and new research programs), the space will be considered underutilized.

- Space allocated to newly hired Assistant Professors, focusing on research, will not be held accountable to the RSPI for the first three years of their appointment provided that grants are being submitted.

- Space allocated to Assistant Professors hired to be clinician/scientists, engaging in patient care, clinical teaching as well as research will be given five years from their appointment to reach
the RSPI provided grants are being submitted.

- New faculty hired at the Associate Professor and Professor levels are expected to be at 50% of the RSPI upon hire and have two years to reach the target RSPI.

- Requests for new space should be submitted in accordance with the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP), Section 9.1.1, “Space Management”.

- The Executive Council on Space Management will only adjudicate space disputes between Deans under exceptional circumstances.

- The RSPI will be used as part of the annual evaluations of Chairs and Center/Institute Directors by their respective Deans.

Reassignment of Underutilized Space

- Underutilized space will be reviewed by the appropriate Dean or by the STRF Council in the case of the STRF building (see below). Wet bench research space that is consistently underutilized beyond the timeframes outlined above may revert to the respective Dean for reassignment. He/she has the option of reassigning space to highly productive faculty or recruits. Chairs wishing to retain the underutilized space beyond the timeframes above must submit a written request to the Dean, detailing the needs for the space and a reasonable timeline to reach RSPI utilization. It is important to note that the RSPI calculation may not be the final determinant of space reallocation; however, it provides an important first step in the evaluation process. Additional determinants may include expenditure data, grant submissions, publications and patents.

- Space priority should be given to investigators who have sustained funding 30% above the target RSPI and/or newly funded investigators and new recruits. Reassignment of underutilized research space assigned to individual investigators will ordinarily occur according to the following schedule:

  1. Investigators occupying research space who are not actively engaged in research (no funding) will be given six months from the time funding is lost to submit new grant proposals. If this does not occur, then the space is available to be
reassigned to the office of the appropriate Dean/Chair at their discretion.

South Texas Research Facility (STRF) Research Space Assignments

- Research space assigned to investigators within the STRF is the responsibility of the respective Chair or Center/Institute Director and must meet the same RSPI requirements outlined above. Unassigned space, outside of the purview of the department, will reside with the Office of the Vice President for Research for reassignment through the STRF Council.

- Research office space allocations should follow the HOP, Section 9.1.1, “Space Management.” Specifically: private offices are reserved for faculty, administrators with a title of assistant director or above, or for managers when a manager is the ranking supervisor in the office, only one office is provided per position and part-time faculty and faculty who spend more than 50% of their time in clinics are expected to share office space.

- Office pods on the 2nd floor consist of six (6) offices and six (6) cubicles. Offices are to be assigned to principal investigators and each office is assigned one corresponding cubicle to accommodate post docs. Lab technicians and students should be located within the lab at the desk-height workspaces provided. Exceptions to the one cubicle policy can be made and will be reviewed and decided upon by the STRF Council on a case by case basis.

- Office and cubicle space located on the 3rd floor are assigned by the Vice President for Research. Requests for additional space should be submitted by the Department Chair, with supporting documentation, directly to the Vice President for Research for approval. The 3rd floor offices and cubicles are subject to the same policies outlined above and in the HOP, Section 9.1.1, “Space Management.”

- Chairs/Directors have the authority to reassign cubicles within their departmental space.
• Any space conflicts will be resolved at the STRF Council level.

**STRF Council**

• The STRF Council, chaired by the Vice President for Research, consists of Department Chairs and Center/Institute Directors with space assigned in the STRF. The STRF Council is responsible for reviewing and approving all new space requests with the facility. The STRF Council also has the ability to reassign underutilized space, as outlined in the Guiding Principles above, within the STRF. Members of the STRF Council will be updated based on departmental assignments within the STRF.

**Requests for Research Space**

• All requests for new research space must be submitted to the Vice President for Research. Each request will be reviewed and approved/disapproved by the STRF Council.