

University of Florida College of Medicine

Research Space Committee Charter



Executive Summary

Research is a key mission of the University of Florida College of Medicine (UF COM) and research space is one of the key resources needed for success. Research space management in a competitive research environment with an increasing focus on thematic, team-based research is a complex task. To improve and objectify the space allocation process, the UF COM leadership established a Research Space Committee (RSC) with the mandate to acknowledge, understand, and analyze the current process of space allocation and optimization and to transform it into a cost efficient, impartial, and strategic process.

A space management policy that promotes programmatic, interdisciplinary research and that fosters a collaborative environment is an institutional commitment, recognized by faculty and college leadership. The new process will be guided by the premise that, by strictly adhering to institutional goals, space can be allocated fairly and utilized optimally based on program quality, mission-relatedness, demonstrate need, and availability of sponsored research support. The COM RSC will adhere to the following guiding principles for research space allocation:

1. Space is a valuable resource that belongs to the University. The Senior Vice President for the UF Health Science Center (HSC) is the steward of HSC space and assigns space to the COM Dean. Space will be managed and allocated by COM leadership and the Senior Associate of Research (SADR) will act on its behalf with input from Department Chairs, Center and Institute Directors, and the COM RSC.

2. Space assignments are not permanent or contracted. To maintain fairness and ensure that the COM's larger goals guide space allocations, open inventory must return to the COM. The Office of Research (OR) will maintain a detailed inventory of open and underutilized space.

3. Research space will be evaluated and allocated based on data-driven metrics for Space Utilization Densities (average 3-year total indirect cost (IDC) \$/net assignable square foot). The space utilization density benchmark is currently set as \$100/SF. The OR Research Analytics and Intelligence Division (RAID) will maintain accurate space utilization metrics using real-time data.

4. Using proposed metrics, underutilized space, space that is 25% or below the benchmark, will be reviewed and may be reallocated. Department Chairs and faculty will be notified annually about underutilized space and will be provided with a three-month window to determine alternative relocation. Chairs should report their proposal for the use of that space to the RSC. Department-level metrics will be considered in these reviews.

5. The OR will provide a process for Department Chairs and Institute or Center Directors to request new space allocation on behalf of specific investigators (new onboarding faculty, new programs, expansion of existing programs, etc.) using a space request form. Other stakeholders, for instance groups with adjacent space, affected Centers, etc., will be able to give feedback. The RSC will evaluate space requests on a regular basis and make recommendations (majority vote) to the Dean and the SADR for approval to ensure that space decisions are made to maximize productivity, fairness, and team science. The SADR and Dean will review recommendations to finalize their decision. The OR will oversee the update of the space inventory.

6. The OR will institute a process for the review and approval of all renovation requests from Departments and Centers. All requests for space renovation will be reviewed by College and HSC leadership to align them with the larger strategic goals for research development and available resources. Large-scale requests that affect the strategic initiatives of the COM will be reviewed by the RSC. The OR will maintain a list of ongoing renovation projects throughout the COM.

7. The OR will work on developing a strategic plan for shared incubatory and co-laboratory space to accommodate faculty in transition periods (loss of funding, closure of programs, start-ups, etc.).

8. The COM will prioritize space assignments that place investigators with common research interests and those doing team science in close physical proximity to foster programmatic development and research synergy.

9. Single-occupancy research offices in research buildings must be occupied by faculty with a research mission, regardless of the home Department. The Committee will review and approve exceptions. Shared research office space allocated primarily for research will be considered dry lab space. The OR will update the space inventory accordingly.

Guiding Principles, Business Policies and Management Responsibility

Overview

Research is a key mission of the University of Florida (UF) Health Science Center (HSC) and College of Medicine (COM) and research space is one of the key resources needed for success. Research space management in a competitive research environment with an increasing focus on thematic, team-based research is a complex task. To improve and objectify the space allocation process, the UF COM leadership established a Research Space Committee (RSC) with the mandate to acknowledge, understand, and analyze the current process of space allocation and optimization and to transform it into a cost-efficient, impartial, and strategic process. A space management policy that promotes programmatic, interdisciplinary research and that promotes a collaborative environment is an institutional commitment, recognized by faculty and college leadership and central administration. The new process will be guided by the premise that, by strictly adhering to institutional goals, space can be allocated fairly and utilized optimally based on program quality, mission-relatedness, demonstrated need, and availability of sponsored research support.

UFCOM Research Space Committee

The UFCOM RSC was established to provide overall guidance for space policies and procedures and ensure that space-related decision-making is aligned with the COM guiding principles, mission, and core values. The COM Dean with assistance from Senior Associate Dean of Research (SADR) appointed the UFCOM RSC, composed of elected faculty members of various ranks with interests that encompass basic and clinical research across the biomedical research spectrum and units (Departments, Center, Programs) to advise them on apportionment and re-allocation of space designated for research within the COM. Among other tasks, the RSC will: a.) evaluate metrics for space assignments; b.) regularly review space assignment requests and make recommendations for optimal space utilization during space repurposing or remodeling; and c.) advise COM leadership on strategic space development. Members will be appointed on a rotating basis for terms of 3 years. The committee will be co-chaired by the COM SADR and an elected Chair (two-years mandate) and will interact with the Deans/Chairs/Directors, or their designates, and not directly with individual faculty. The standing members of the committee will include administrative representatives from the Dean's office. The committee will provide requisite information to UFCOM leadership and guidance to Department Chairs and Center/Institute Directors. Each of the Chairs/Directors is responsible for ensuring that their Research Unit has its own Space Plan that is consistent with the overall UFCOM Space Governance Policy.



The College of Medicine Office of Research

The new Research Analytics and Intelligence Division (RAID) within the Office of Research (OR) will maintain accurate and reliable data on all COM's research space and provide the RSC with all relevant information related to research metrics, impact, and needs to allow objective and data-driven recommendations on space utilization. A full accounting of research space will be performed continuously and in collaboration with University of Florida appropriate business offices, and space will be accurately and granularly assessed and catalogued. The OR will facilitate the completion of space surveys by academic units' administrators. The OR will develop and maintain "SnapMetrics" with a detailed summary of data on funding and space utilization density. In addition, the OR will assist with processing, recording, and responding to all space and renovation requests and will interface effectively with research administrators, department chairs, and institutional leadership to coordinate opportunities involving existing research space. In conjunction with the requesting departments, the OR will oversee the scheduling and progress of approved renovations and relocations. Though unit leads are responsible to the UFCOM for effective management of their space, the OR and RSC will continuously monitor all research space for signs of underutilization and potential future availability, on the one hand, and for progressive overcrowding and future need for additional space, on the other. The OR also plays a key role in assisting COM leadership in the development of funding proposals for space projects and monitoring the expenditures. During annual meetings, the OR and Department Chairs and Center and Institute Directors will address ongoing space allocation and identify deficiencies, urgent needs for expansion, or unused and neglected space. Strategic planning information will be requested by the OR and the SADR every year in October and July to properly plan for the strategic needs of pending and planned grants and associated full-time equivalents (FTE). While this type of information may overestimate need, it is important for strategic planning objectives by COM leadership and may help direct future building plans and allocations. Space reallocations among Departments or individual investigators will be based on criteria outlined by this governing document, in consultation with and enacted by Departmental leadership, and will require final approval from the OR and COM leadership.

Guiding Principles for the UF COM Space Management

Space allocation and management is based on several fundamental principles essential for an efficient and equitable process. These core guiding principles are designed with sufficient structure and flexibility for colleges and units to assign and manage research space for all research purposes consistent with the goals and vision of the University of Florida.

1. Space is a resource. Research space is an asset that must be utilized efficiently. The COM OR will provide institutional leadership and academic unit leaders with comprehensive information on all research activity, funding, and space metrics.

2. Space belongs to the University. Space is provided by the University and is the ultimate responsibility of the University President. The Senior Vice President (SVP) for the UF Health Science Center (UFHSC) is the steward of all UFHSC space and is responsible for ensuring that space supports all academic missions. The SVP assigns research space to the Deans and Center/Institute Directors. This charter addresses the needs of the COM.

3. The COM OR and RSC provide strategic space management for the Dean. The COM Dean allocates space among reporting entities, including College Centers, Programs, and Departments. Chairs/Directors assign research space to faculty members according to their priorities. Faculty effectively utilize the research space to meet the research goals of the unit. The OR and SADR act on behalf of the Dean to ensure a cost-efficient, impartial, and strategic process for space management. The COM RSC operates at the level of the COM as an executive body and advisor to the SADR and Dean who make final decisions.

4. Space assignments are not permanent or contracted. Space is not indefinitely tenured to specific research departments or investigators. The COM is the primary “tenant” of all research space, which is ultimately owned or leased by the institution. The RSC evaluates all available space in fair consideration of outstanding space requests and submits space allocation proposals for the SADR and Dean’s deliberation. This creates a positive atmosphere, offering groups the opportunity to compete for available space equitably.

5. Space Utilization Metrics are standardized using real-time data. Proposed allocations of space are discussed openly and objectively with the full participation of all affected parties. The RSC reviews data and recommends space allocations based on program quality, mission-relatedness, demonstrated need, and availability of sponsored research support. Researchers are free to dispute the decisions made and provide supplemental information to strengthen their case for any space requests.

6. Shared resources are included in the assessment of space utilization. The COM is strategically invested in creating shared resources open to all faculty using shared space and core facilities. The COM OR will develop a lasting strategic investment in these facilities and work with UF Research to make existing core facilities accessible and affordable for COM faculty.

7. All additions, renovations, and modifications of space need COM and HSC leadership approval. The RSC, in conjunction with the SADR and OR, must approve all major proposed changes in research space utilization or allocation. This may include sanctioning the loss or gain of space, as well as supporting required renovations in an existing space. Whether new or renovated, space is configured as flexibly as possible to meet specific program requirements and to be readily usable by future groups.

Reporting and Metrics for Space Management

Overview

The space management process relies on both qualitative and quantitative analyses to provide comprehensive information on all research groups. Qualitative analysis includes collecting data on space, people, and funds, categorizing space use into research types, and assessing the space required to meet research objectives and the institution's strategic plan for long term growth. Quantitative analysis links indirect costs modified by total direct costs and full-time equivalents to net assignable square footage (NASF), providing the basis for density metric calculations. Space utilization standards and institutional density targets allow a comparative review of space utilization. The analytical information provided by the COM OR for the research space management process provides valuable financial and strategic planning information to researchers, administrators, and institutional leadership, assisting them in resolving space issues and planning for future growth.



Current Overview of the COM Space



Analysis of data maintained by UF's Office of Planning, Design & Construction (<https://facilities.ufl.edu/>) reveals that the 18 main UF buildings contain approximately 797,068 SF of office and research laboratory space that is assignable by the UF COM (not belonging to Shands, ICBR, Animal Care Services, PPD, etc.) (Figure 1). Approximately 481,400 SF comprises office type rooms – designed for single or multiple occupants and/or office equipment. Another 315,668 SF falls into the category of research lab space. There are three primary systems that the UF COM uses to analyze space. The UF Space Tracking and Reporting System (STARS; <https://stars.facilities.ufl.edu/>) tracks all physical facilities at the site, building, and room level. The Space Inventory and Allocation System (SPIN; <https://survey.facilities.ufl.edu/>) collects information on university buildings and rooms utilization in terms of occupancy, projects, and room allocations. Finally, the detailed catalogue of space “assignable” to PIs or units is maintained by the UF Metrics system (<https://metrics.facilities.ufl.edu/>), which combines data from both the STARS and SPIN systems as well as funding data from UFIRST and HR data to give a comprehensive view of UF COM research space utilization.

IDC Density Groups in Comparison to UF Benchmark (\$100 IDC/SF) **

| Building Name (ID) | All Space | NASF | Core Labs | Unallocated Space | Below 50% | Low (50-100%) | Optimal (100-200%) | High (>200%) |
|---|------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Academic Research Building (0201) | 123,993 | 90,962 (73%) | 6,046 (7%) | 9,016 (10%) | 24,662 (27%) | 17,452 (19%) | 22,523 (25%) | 11,263 (12%) |
| Cancer/Genetics Research Complex (1376) | 172,661 | 57,950 (34%) | 1,147 (2%) | 3,186 (5%) | 15,633 (27%) | 23,985 (41%) | 9,714 (17%) | 4,285 (7%) |
| Stetson Medical Sciences (0445) | 209,569 | 45,613 (22%) | 2,833 (6%) | 11,200 (25%) | 17,356 (38%) | 7,115 (16%) | 5,202 (11%) | 1,907 (4%) |
| McKnight Brain Institute (0059) | 113,971 | 43,466 (38%) | 2,237 (5%) | 442 (1%) | 17,362 (40%) | 6,937 (16%) | 11,792 (27%) | 4,696 (11%) |
| Basic Science (0206) | 36,769 | 9,569 (26%) | | 6,513 (68%) | | 711 (7%) | 1,575 (16%) | 770 (8%) |
| Biomedical Sciences Building (0213) | 79,065 | 18,530 (23%) | | 2,639 (14%) | 367 (2%) | 1,129 (6%) | 2,345 (13%) | 12,050 (65%) |
| Dental Science (0205) | 264,589 | 13,613 (5%) | 1,839 (14%) | 537 (4%) | 4,754 (35%) | 82 (1%) | 5,726 (42%) | 675 (5%) |
| Lake Nona Research and Academic Center (3425) | 56,283 | 12,243 (22%) | | 171 (1%) | | 2,058 (17%) | 5,673 (46%) | 4,341 (35%) |
| Clinical & Translational Research (1375) | 55,789 | 1,070 (2%) | | 1,070 (100%) | | | | |
| Communicore Building (0203) | 194,098 | 7,278 (4%) | | 994 (14%) | 1,569 (22%) | 2,807 (39%) | 1,224 (17%) | 684 (9%) |
| Emerging Pathogens Institute (1377) | 45,762 | 3,531 (8%) | | | 1,439 (41%) | 1,082 (31%) | | 1,010 (29%) |
| Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine Institute (1178) | 77,014 | 2,936 (4%) | | | 2,828 (96%) | | 108 (4%) | |
| V. A. Hospital (2000) | 15,237 | 4,101 (27%) | | 801 (20%) | 2,605 (64%) | | 695 (17%) | |
| Shands Teaching Hospital (0446) | 258,521 | 2,793 (1%) | | | 388 (14%) | 572 (20%) | | 1,833 (66%) |
| Rocky Point Pathology Clinic (3301) | 22,973 | 952 (4%) | | | | | 952 (100%) | |
| Human Development Center (0454) | 34,016 | 884 (3%) | | 226 (26%) | 442 (50%) | | | 216 (24%) |
| V. A. MRI Building (2003) | 218 | 109 (50%) | | 109 (100%) | | | | |
| General Services Building (0204) | 22,136 | 68 (0%) | | 68 (100%) | | | | |
| Overall - Total | 1,782,664 | 315,668 (18%) | 14,102 (5%) | 36,972 (12%) | 89,405 (28%) | 63,930 (20%) | 67,529 (21%) | 43,730 (14%) |

All values represent square feet with % in parenthesis.

Abbreviations: SF-Square feet; NASF-Net Assignable Research Space in square feet; IDC-indirect cost.

* % of total research space in the building. ** The IDC density is the total amount of indirect cost support from all approved research agreements divided by net assignable square feet (IDC/NASF; \$/SF).

The UF benchmark is \$100IDC/SF. The % of benchmark is indicated by colors: Dark blue-below 50%; light blue-Low 50 to 100%; Green- optimal 100 to 200%; Red-High > 200%.

Qualitative Space Analysis

The qualitative space analysis includes collecting data on space, people, and funds, categorizing space use into research types, and assessing the space required to meet research objectives and the institution's strategic plan for long term growth. Within the COM OR, a new Research Analytics and Intelligence Division (RAID) will maintain accurate and reliable data on all the COM's research space and provide the RSC with all relevant information related to research metrics, impact, and needs to allow objective and data-driven recommendations on space utilization. A full qualitative analysis and cataloging of research space will be performed continuously and in collaboration with University of Florida appropriate business offices, and space will be accurately and granularly assessed and catalogued. The cataloging of space has been divided into five broad categories: research, core, office, administrative, and patient care space. Research space is classified as wet laboratory, dry laboratory, or laboratory support space.

Wet Laboratory Space

In addition to the wet laboratory space assigned to individual faculty labs, the laboratory support space includes glass washrooms, autoclave or sterilization rooms, darkrooms, and tissue culture and free-standing equipment rooms. The laboratory support space is assigned to an academic unit or shared between academic units. The qualitative analysis of wet laboratory space will take into consideration that space for wet-bench science requires architectural considerations in the original building plan and is often difficult and/or too expensive to retrofit. Therefore, wet bench space should be prioritized for researchers requiring core infrastructure access (wet bench space, chemical hoods, vents, tissue culture space, appropriate BSL designations). Medical research is an interactive and interdisciplinary process. Considerations should be taken for integrated units with a common purpose or research objective.

This metric will serve as an ancillary scoring criterion on wet bench space determinations in addition to IDC and FTE. Research space will be scored based on functional unit, square feet of continuous space, and the condition and location of the room (we will consider implementing a scoring system (1-5; worst to best) (for documentation of the utility of various UFCOM spaces). This will include consideration for time from construction and/or renovation. We will consider the following key criteria for wet laboratory space and include it in the new qualitative survey:

- a. The bench top surface area and seating capacity
- b. The integrated equipment space
- c. The electrical, HVAC, data port, and plumbing capabilities of the space
- d. The condition of the space (whether it is usable or unassignable)
- e. The accessibility to common rooms, core facilities, cold rooms, freezer rooms, animal facilities, and autoclave rooms
- f. The specialization of the space (e.g. the track, AMRIS facility)
- g. The addition of write-up/clean space areas for laboratory staff
- h. The requirement for GMP facility access or interactions with clinical intervention staff
- i. The shared lab space allocation in proportion to funded grants effort of MPIs or CO-PIs

Dry Laboratory Space

Currently, the majority of COM dry laboratory space is incorrectly assigned as administrative office space, placing clinical, translational, and data science researchers, who appear to have no assigned research space, on unequal footing with their colleagues in basic science. The COM OR is undertaking the major reassignment of research office space into appropriate category of dry lab space and providing necessary attributes to the space, such as advanced computer equipment, etc. Dry lab science has different space requirements than wet lab science. As data scientists and AI researchers become more prevalent in the COM, it is important to ensure that these researchers have the space they need. Key criteria for dry lab space are outlined below:

- a. The number of data ports available. Appropriate cataloging of all advance computational equipment.
- b. Accommodations for interaction areas, conference rooms, locations for private calls or video conferences, etc.
- c. Designated eating locations, storage of personal items, accommodations for mothers, accessibilities meeting ADA criteria, etc.
- d. Common use facilities for staff with remote work assignments they can be listed as a resource on grant documents that outline COM resources and computational capacity.

Qualitative Analysis: Calculating Space Utilization Densities

The University of Florida maintains a real-time system (<https://metrics.facilities.ufl.edu>) for assessing space assignment and metrics utilizing the information gathered in the qualitative space survey processes (STARS; <https://stars.facilities.ufl.edu> and SPIN; <https://survey.facilities.ufl.edu/>) and grant funding. The density metric indicators are calculated to assist in measuring the research intensity attributed to any given research space. The financial metrics currently in use, Recovered Indirect Cost Density, represents the linkage of dollars with space and is calculated using the total amount of indirect cost support from all approved research agreements. Other institutions also use Total Revenues, the total amount of all awards falling under the grants, contracts, and other agreements from outside sources, including gifts used to support research activity (e.g., research grants, training grants, contracts, fellowships). Another proposed metric represents the linkage of people with space. This metric is not currently tracked at UF. As mentioned, research expenditures, overhead recoveries, and research staff are allocated to the space in which the research activity occurs, regardless of personnel or funding ties to departments. Based on these metrics, the benchmark for UF is \$100 three-year average total IDC/net assignable square foot to individual investigator. Underutilized space is defined as having three-year average 25% or more below COM benchmark (currently below \$75 IDC/NASF). In the future, COM benchmark will be adjusted as needed to the median IDC/NASF for all research space within COM.

Net Assignable Square Feet (NASF)

The wet or dry lab space, support space, dry lab space, and vivarium space that is dedicated solely to one PI counts toward a PI's net assignable research space (NASF). Conference rooms, break rooms, core laboratory facilities, and administrative space do not count toward a PI's assignable research space.

Recovered Indirect Cost Density

The Indirect Cost (IDC) density is the three-year rolling average of total amount of indirect cost support from all approved research agreements divided by net assignable square feet (IDC/NASF, \$/SF). IDC rates vary widely by research sponsor, with federally funded and corporate-sponsored research grants characteristically providing the highest rate of overhead reimbursement, in comparison with training and foundation support. The density calculation reflects the level of funding that is available to partially offset the maintenance and support costs, as well as institutional administrative and other required infrastructure expenses associated with a given research space. The COM IDC target density for 2022-2023 is set at 100 \$/SF.

The committee proposes additional factors to be looked into:

- a. Indirect expenditures during the prior three fiscal years will count in the assessment of NASF. Grants obtained or lost near the end of the assessment period may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- b. Programmatic considerations to ensure the maximum likelihood of success for junior faculty will be used to evaluate early-stage investigators in the first five years of their employment.
- c. Exceptions for foundation grants and large philanthropic efforts will be considered.
- d. The needs of the investigator to successfully execute high-impact research will be considered for assignment of space. This includes the needs for wet lab space, dry lab space, behavioral testing space, specialized equipment, and office space.
- e. Special consideration will be given to space needs for laboratories that teach and train undergraduate students in accordance with institutional support.

Space needs based on research FTEs

The secondary metrics that will be developed by RSC for allocation of space to an investigator will be research team size, assessed as paid full-time equivalents (FTEs). This approach places the main emphasis on people, not dollars, in the assignment of research space. Since this metrics is not maintained by UF Office of Research, the COM OR is performing a comprehensive assessment of all academic units to develop a dynamic record of all research FTEs.

Individuals who are determined to be staff/student FTEs in an investigator's research program are: a.) Paid research staff (TEAMS and OPS); b.) Post-doctoral research scholars; and c.) Graduate research students. FTEs will be determined by UF payroll records; direct surveys may be employed to assure accurate assignment of paid FTEs. Proposed space allocations based on paid FTE:

- 1 full-time faculty member = 1 faculty office and 150 NASF of wet laboratory space
- 1 staff/student FTE for wet lab research = 150 NASF of wet laboratory space
- 1 staff/student FTE for dry lab research = 75 NASF of dry laboratory space

Other Factors: Impact and Flexibility

The impact of investigator work should be weighed into space allocations. Metrics for this should be established and can include, but not be limited to H-index, citations, clinical trial, and GMP facility access needs. These metrics will be considered relative to the stage of investigator. Design principles in biomedical research have changed throughout recent decades, with a notable movement from stand-alone lab units to open-bay units to favor shared PI space and multi-functional space. The RSC, in general, favors collaborative science to maximize space utilization. As such, the committee will promote the flexible use of space across the investigator spectrum. This is particularly appropriate when considering the space needs of both junior faculty prior to extramural funding support and post-tenured faculty that may downsize to shared use space when FTEs and IDCs decrease. To better reflect the heterogeneity and nuances of research programs at COM, the committee plans to develop a composite score to calculate research unit NASF and consequent IDCs recovery expectations in consultation with the Chairs. IDCs expectations and considerations for space committee recommendations will also include faculty rank (Pre or Post tenure). When considering the expected level of funding for a space/unit, an IDC rolling average of 3 years will be used for established investigators (post-tenure), but not for early career investigators within the first five years of their appointment.

Proposed components contributing to a composite score are: the quality of the space (i.e. new, old, etc. – already being categorized); the qualitative aspects of the space (i.e. research type fit, proximity to foster collaborations, location from needed resources/equipment); and the financial aspects (FTEs/IDCs). All pillars will be ranked independently to create a composite score. This score will then be multiplied by a \$ amount/ASF derived from the base operational costs to maintain such space.

Procedures for Space Management

Overview

Using data-driven metrics and space utilization analyses, the COM will configure our current research space and eliminate consistently underproductive units, co-locate productive growing groups, and overall “right size” lab space to address PIs' needs. Moreover, research groups will be incentivized to use lab space more efficiently by providing adjacency with interactive research groups, improving infrastructure, and sharing facilities. Such changes will drive collaborative opportunities and reduce redundancies.

Designing for Team Science

The assignment of space should optimize synergy between collaborators and programs, fostering successful collaborations between investigators. Space assignments can dramatically affect the growth and success of multi-investigator programs, such as Centers and Institutes, thus requiring flexibility in the assignment of space to allow for the growth of successful programs and enhance collaborations. The identification, reorganization, and reassignment of underutilized space should be conducted and assessed at appropriate intervals. Optimizing investigator space assignments will likely lead to an increase in high-impact publications, multi-PI grants, program project grants, large center grants, and translational clinical studies. Decisions regarding the allocation of continuous and modular spaces should be made at the Department/program level in consultation with the Office for Research and the SADR.

Open Inventory Reserve

To maintain fairness and ensure that COM's larger goals guide space allocations, open inventory must return to the COM. When a faculty member leaves, retires, or downsizes their laboratory, vacated space will revert to the COM space inventory for reassignment. The OR will institute a process for reporting vacated space and maintain a detailed inventory of open and underutilized space. Academic unit leaders may request an open space reassignment based on programmatic needs, new faculty recruitment, or the development of new programs for review by the RSC and OR. The COM will prioritize space assignments that place investigators with common research interests and those engaged in team science in close physical proximity to foster programmatic development and research synergy. This approach encourages the development of multi-PI grants, faculty mentorship, and the retention and growth of Departments, Institutes, and Centers. The type of space required by the investigator (wet laboratory, dry laboratory, office, etc.) will be essential to space allotment. Proximity to collaborators, program co-investigators, and necessary facilities will also be considered in space allocations. Research square footage and type should be assessed for proper utilization at appropriate intervals to maximize space needs. For example, over time, an investigator may require more dry lab space and less wet lab space. The OR will work closely with Department, Center, and Institute administrators to provide regular and detailed updates to the space inventory. Space reallocations among the units will occur biannually. The OR will also develop a strategic plan for shared incubatory and re-laboratory space to accommodate faculty in transition periods (e.g., loss of funding, program closures, start-ups).

Interdepartmental Moves

To be consistent in the evaluation and assignment of space and ensure that COM's larger goals guide space allocations, interdepartmental moves must be requested and approved.

Annual Space Review

A rolling review of space for each academic unit and faculty will be conducted annually using a three-year average \$IDC/NASF (and FTE metrics as needed and when available). The OR will maintain Research SnapMetrics for each department and faculty member, summarizing their funding, publication impact, supported FTEs, and space metrics. Academic units with an overall three-year rolling average IDC/NASF that is 25% or more below the COM benchmark (currently below \$75 IDC/NASF) will be reviewed for space optimization and readjustment. Underutilized space may be considered for return to the COM open inventory reserve upon review by the RSC and OR. The total amount of NASF that can be recouped will equal 50% of the deficit; for example, if an academic unit is 30% below benchmark, the COM may reclaim 15% of NASF. Currently, the UF Metrics system does not adjust for junior-level faculty. Within the next year, the COM OR will develop adjusted metrics to account for junior faculty contributions to overall space metrics. We will protect 660 NASF of laboratory space per junior faculty (1.0 FTE) for three years from the date of hire. The calculation for an academic unit will be modified as follows: $\text{total department IDC} - \text{IDCs contributed by junior faculty} / \text{total academic unit laboratory NASF} - 660 \text{ NASF} \times \text{the number of eligible junior faculty (1.0 FTE)}$.

During the annual review, the OR will collaborate with academic units' administrative leadership to conduct a review of their unit's space and address other space issues, such as data verification, planning for new grants and program expansion, and strategic recruitment plans as they relate to space needs. In addition to the overall evaluation of the department, each faculty member will be evaluated individually for optimal space allocation. For faculty with a three-year rolling average IDC/NASF that is 25% or more below the COM benchmark, the OR will work with Chairs or other unit leaders to create a plan for space adjustment. Whenever possible, space reallocation will be done within the same academic unit. Early-stage investigators will have a grace period during the first five years of their appointment, during which they will undergo annual evaluations to allow Chairs and mentors to identify whether additional mentoring and support are needed to secure funding. Program/Department space will be adjusted to accommodate new hires, and space for investigators recruited in a cluster hire will be prioritized to place them in proximity to each other whenever possible.

Space Allocation Process

A defined procedure for space allocation requests will organize and streamline the processing of the large number of requests received by the COM. The COM OR instituted a process for Department Chairs and Institute or Center Directors to request new space allocation on behalf of academic units or specific investigators (new onboarding faculty, new programs, expansion of existing programs, etc.) using a space request form. All requests are reviewed by the OR upon receipt of a written proposal. The OR staff may meet with the requesting individual(s) to fully define and document their needs when required. The RSC will evaluate space requests on a regular basis and make recommendations (majority vote) to COM leadership. A final decision for space adjustments and renovations in writing will be granted by the COM Dean and SADR. A similar process is required for the review and approval of all renovation requests from Departments, Centers, and Institutes within the COM.

Requests for space are categorized as renovations to existing space, requests for unspecified additional space, or requests for specific space reallocation. The need for further analysis or external discussion, involvement of Project Managers and Facilities, development of specific options to satisfy the request, identification of funding sources, etc., will be assessed and documented by the OR and RSC. For each request, the OR staff will perform a full preliminary review of all affected programs, including site visits; calculation of current, previous, and projected quantitative utilization metrics; and detailed discussions with leadership. The intensity and complexity of the space review process will be adjusted appropriately to that of the request. The COM Dean and Senior Associate Deans will be asked to make specific recommendations only when conflicts cannot otherwise be resolved or when large commitments of space or resources are involved.

1. **New Space Requests.** An academic unit will only be considered for additional space if they demonstrate a need for the space and meet or exceed the benchmarks indicated above. Space requests will be met based on space availability, timing, and how the request fits within the context of the COM strategic plan. Recruiting space will generally come from within the academic unit's existing space. Should additional space be required, it will be assigned from the Dean's Reserve at the discretion of the Dean.
2. **Limited Scope Requests.** Requests that are of limited cost and scope (typically less than 1000 NASF), well justified, independently funded, congruent with strategic space objectives, and uncontested may be administratively reviewed and approved by the OR and SADR. Advance written notification to the OR of these requests allows opportunities for questions or discussion prior to pending recommendations and approval.
3. **Disputed Requests.** Requests that appear inadequately justified will be referred by the RSC to the COM Dean and SADR for review, with appropriate recommendations for resolution or further analysis. These include, but are not limited to, requests that inadequately utilize metrics, strategic priorities, or previous quality review assessments; requests with a large scope or cost (typically more than 1000 NASF); requests with contested reallocations of space; requests requiring institutional funding; and requests with underlying disputes between investigators and service/center chiefs.
4. **Major requests.** Requests that involve the creation of major new programs or institutional cores, large amounts of space (typically more than 3000 NASF), substantial institutional funding, and significant expansion or changes in the use of research space will be analyzed by the RSC and subsequently presented to the COM Dean and Senior Associate Deans for detailed review, further action, and final decision.

Allocating Office Space

Academic units are allocated a fixed amount of office space per faculty member. A faculty member is defined as 1.0 FTE with an appointment in a clinical, tenure, or research track position. Titles include Lecturer, Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor. In general, one office between 120-160 NASF is assigned per full time faculty member. Emeritus faculty are not necessarily assigned office space unless they have substantial extramural funding. Preferably, single-occupancy research offices in research buildings are assigned to faculty with a research mission, regardless of the home Department.

The faculty with only a clinical or teaching mission or staff members are not recommended for single-occupancy offices in research buildings. The Committee will review and approve exceptions. Shared research office space allocated primarily for research will be considered dry lab space. The OR will work to update the space inventory accordingly.

Allocating Administration Space

Academic units are allocated a baseline amount of space for administration. The benchmark will be determined based on the NASF of administration space divided by the number of FTE faculty as defined above. The median NASF/FTE Faculty across all academic units will serve as the benchmark. The COM may reconsider administrative space reallocation when 3-year NASF/FTE faculty is 25% or more above benchmark. Total amount of NSF recouped would equal 50% of the surplus. For example, for units with administrative space 30% above benchmark, 15% of NASF could be recouped.

Cost Issues and Appeal Process Related to Space Assignment

Departments/Centers losing space based on under-performance will be responsible for all costs associated with vacating the space for future assignment (including issues related to Risk Management). Departments/Centers receiving space are responsible for all costs associated with renovations of and moves into the newly assigned space. Responsibility for costs associated with relocations required to meet programmatic goals of the COM will be determined by the Dean. Appeal processes to the COM RSC, OR, and COM Dean will be established for Department Heads and Unit Directors to appeal the decisions made regarding unit space allocation within 30 days of the decision letter.

Planning Principles for Renovations and Expansion

The rational planning of research space is challenging for complex organizations, such as the UFHSC and COM. While the ultimate decisions of what to build and/or what to renovate involve the highest levels of University leadership, the knowledge of what is needed is frequently derived from the researchers themselves. Yet, leaving the planning and design to researchers often results in the customization of research space to fit the needs of current occupants, which may not be appropriate to meet future needs. An example of this is domain-focused Institute buildings, which may have been contracted decades ago to meet topical needs of the UF scientists at that time but are now woefully outdated for today's scientific operations. While the outdateding of labs is inevitable, a planning process that incorporates input from many levels will hopefully avoid significant miscalculations in the future.

Optimizing Existing Space

The RSC faces the challenge of how best to prepare for and respond to another change in the landscape of biomedical research. The era of “omics” and “artificial intelligence (AI)” has altered the scale of our research approaches, resulting in projects that are more ambitious and encompassing than ever. We have identified several important considerations for future planning:

1. Informatics and computational biology - current infrastructure in most buildings is not appropriate to house these efforts. Furthermore, the pendulum that swung toward clinical research is now swinging back, but most successful research programs are translational and require significant exposure to clinical resources. How do we plan for what is next? What will be the needed balance of wet vs. dry lab? How will our core facilities be configured to stay current (e.g. processing patient samples for basic science efforts)? How much of our data will be derived from outsourcing? How should we configure our research teams?

2. Establishing the UFCOM RSC will provide a forum for space planning. The RSC will have the opportunity to evaluate requests and projected needs and present these requests to the SVP, Deans, and Directors in the context of current funding and future funding potential.

3. Exploring opportunities to renovate outdated research spaces to more current and flexible formats:

a. Identifying sets of labs and/or floors of space that can be coordinately renovated to a more open and modular format to house multiple PIs.

i. Providing open lab space with the greatest flexibility for multidisciplinary teams and unit-level “right-sizing” for PIs during the boom-and-bust cycles of research careers. Renovating sets of labs will be more cost-effective and enable planning for shared equipment and facilities, improving wet- and dry-lab design.

4. Repurposing existing UFHSC space to usable assignable research space (example is MBI):

a. The relocation of significant and proximal space devoted to activities distant to the primary missions of the College (i.e. under-utilized cores and shared rooms housing broken/outdated equipment) to better suited space and in some cases, distal locations will allow the modification of these spaces for research use. This may be done at minimal cost and maximal utility. Some of the modified spaces could be configured to dry-lab entities for shared-research facilities, thus freeing significant space within research-intensive areas for reallocation.

New Construction and Renovation Projects

The Committee recognizes the strategic importance of creating a new research building and strongly advocates establishing and maintaining Unit, College, and UFHSC priority lists for both new building construction and existing building renovations. The RSC will be responsible for communicating the plans to the SVP, EVP, and Deans and Directors for consideration. In collaboration with UF Planning, preliminary designs, estimates, and even drawings may be generated to move projects forward. Having a detailed plan available will also provide UFHSC Leadership and Development with the specifics needed for possible donor discussions.