May 10, 2023

To: Gerry Bomotti  
Vice Chancellor for Planning, Budget and Administration

From: Sang-Hee Lee  
Chair, Riverside Division

Re: Proposed Draft Guideline/Policy on Research Labs

Dear Gerry,

The Executive Council met on May 9, 2023, to discuss the said subject. We reiterated and emphasized points made in the response memos from the reviewing committees (see attached).

In particular, these points were strongly raised:

- All colleges should be involved in the development of policies and governing bodies.
- Important for faculty and other key stakeholders to be involved.
- Policy does not address the real issue of decaying infrastructure and lack of space at UCR.
- While guidelines for regular assessment of space usage are necessary and constructive, it cannot take a top-down approach without appropriate involvement of the departments.
- The department chairs should be included and engaged throughout the process, as they are “leaders and cheerleaders” with regard to lab space.
- Departments have often invested substantial amounts of money in their research space that meets their research and instruction needs. Departments would lose their investments and perhaps decide not to invest like this in the future.

Executive Council requests/recommends the following:

- More research-based faculty must be on the committee on a regular and not on an ad hoc basis.
- Senate appointed people need to be on the committee in addition to active consultation and feedback with faculty, in particular with Senate standing committees with relevant purview (for example, Physical Resources and Planning Committee) that are already in place.
- Assessment criteria need to be specific.
Given the critical importance of this topic that directly impacts faculty research, I invite you to join the Executive Council during our next meeting on Monday, May 22, 2023. Senate Executive Director Cherysa Cortez will contact you with the Zoom link and to identify a time window that will work with your schedule.

Thank you,

Sang-Hee Lee

Cc:

Elizabeth Watkins, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor
Linda Walling, Chair, Committee on Physical Resources Planning
Sharyl Murdock, Principal Analyst, Space Management
Moriah Joyner, Academic Senate Analyst
Executive Council
To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Jang-Ting Guo, Chair
Committee on Academic Personnel

Re: CAP’s Response to Proposed Draft Guideline/Policy on Research Labs

In its 4/12/2023 meeting, CAP discussed the proposed Draft Guideline/Policy on Research Labs. The committee commended the effort toward better utilization of the campus resource and a practice of assignment of research space based on an alignment between the researcher’s needs and the design capabilities of campus research space. Below are our comments and suggestions.

- Regarding point #2: “… the allocation of campus space from the Provost is made to the Org head. There is [no] approval to further delegate this to a lower level in the Org.” In practice and also in some other campus space policies, the Department Chair is often involved in the space assignment. A clarification is needed.

- Regarding point #3: “…lab space uses be reviewed every five years … to evaluate the utilization of the space, the number of PIs and graduate students using the space, the amount of external funding, etc.” How and why are these specific parameters identified to be in the review process? Are these review criteria consistent with the current campus space policy?

- Regarding point #4: “… revision to the existing process for campus research lab allocations,” and “… to evaluate design capacity, carry this information in our automated space management system, and work to focus reuse on the design capacity of that lab/building”. How would this proposed mechanism be carried out? More details are needed. For example, if one college/department could not offer a PI the suitable space in the allocation without expensive renovation, what is the process to obtain space from another college/department?

- Regarding point #4: “Assigning a PI to a research lab that is contrary to that lab’s design capability should require extraordinary approval (at the Provost level).” Mis-alignment can still occur if the entire campus has no suitable existing space.

- Regarding point #4: it should be pointed out that it is equally undesirable to underutilize the lab space in space assignment, e.g. using a wet lab space for a dry lab or less demanding usage.
April 28, 2023

TO: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair  
Riverside Division of the Academic Senate

FROM: John Kim, Chair  
CHASS Executive Committee

RE: [Campus Review] Proposal: Proposed Draft Guideline/Policy on Research Labs

The CHASS Executive Committee appreciates the effort made in proposing a policy aimed at improving the utilization of campus resources for research lab spaces. As CHASS FEC, we welcome the opportunity to review the proposed policy and share our concerns and suggestions.

First, while we agree with the proposal’s emphasis on aligning the needs of researchers with the design capabilities of campus research space, we suggest that this should not be the sole criterion for assigning research lab space. It is also essential to consider the quality of research that can be conducted in the space, as well as the potential for collaboration and interdisciplinary research. Furthermore, point 4 of the proposal appears to prioritize cost-effectiveness over other factors such as faculty cohesiveness and the benefits of clustering related research groups together. This approach may disperse faculty from a single unit throughout the campus, reducing opportunities for collaboration and building a sense of community within the unit. It is essential to balance cost-effectiveness with the needs and desires of the faculty and the potential benefits of clustering related research groups together.

Second, the proposal suggests that assigning a PI to a research lab that is contrary to that lab’s design capability should require extraordinary approval at the Provost level. While oversight is necessary, the decision-making process should involve the input of relevant stakeholders, including the researcher, the School/College, and the Provost.

Third, the proposed policy appears to centralize decision-making power with the Provost, which may not necessarily consider the needs of the faculty members who will be using the lab spaces. The current practice of delegating decision-making power to lower units, such as individual schools and colleges, allows for more localized decision-making and better consideration of faculty members’ needs. Additionally, the proposed policy does not address how the Provost will consider the needs of the faculty when allocating research lab spaces. It is important to consider
faculty members' needs and research requirements to ensure they have the necessary resources and facilities to conduct their research effectively. Diminishing decision-making power and not considering the needs of lower units could potentially overlook lower unit needs, leading to dissatisfaction and potentially negatively impacting research productivity.

Lastly, the proposed policy lacks specific details regarding the collection of space information and how decision-making will be implemented. Without this information, it is difficult to evaluate the potential effectiveness of the proposed policy. A more detailed proposal should specify what space information will be collected and how it will be used to inform decision-making. It should also outline the specific steps involved in the review process, including who will conduct the reviews, and what factors will be considered in the review process. This level of detail will provide more transparency and clarity, making it easier for faculty and staff to understand how the policy will be implemented and how decisions about research lab allocations will be made.

Overall, we appreciate the effort made in proposing a policy to improve the utilization of campus resources for research lab spaces. We believe that with some adjustments, this policy has the potential to better serve the needs of faculty members and improve research productivity. We encourage the Space Committee to consider the concerns and suggestions raised by the CHASS FEC, and to work towards developing a more detailed and transparent policy that balances cost-effectiveness with the needs and desires of faculty members, as well as the potential benefits of clustering related research groups together. We look forward to continued collaboration in creating a policy that benefits the entire research community at UCR.
April 28, 2023

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
   Riverside Division

From: Weixin Yao, Chair
       Committee on Research


The committee on research reviewed the proposal and have concerns regarding the oversight and assignment of space but if the policy is used as a check rather than the authority over space it could be beneficial.
GRADUATE COUNCIL

April 27, 2023

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Christiane Weirauch, Chair
Graduate Council

Re: [Campus Review] Proposal: Proposed Draft Guideline/Policy on Research Labs

Graduate Council discussed the “new campus policy/guideline for research labs” proposal at their April 20, 2023 meeting and has several concerns. Council members understand that currently research lab space is under the authority of the Provost and delegated to the “Org head” (which we assume means Deans of Schools and Colleges), but that further delegation to a lower level in the organization is not approved. However, Graduate Council members voiced concern that space allocations really need to be made either by or with significant input from department chairs, given that only these units and their leadership really understand needs. The proposed policy and processes do not outline such consultation, which we believe is absolutely critical. Graduate Council members were also concerned with the proposed 5th year review of lab space, because allocating space only based on graduate student numbers and amount of external funding could lead to extremely biased assessments. It is unclear what the “etc.” at the end of this sentence indicates, but Graduate Council would like to understand possible other criteria used during assessment (e.g., what about undergraduate students or post docs?). Graduate Council would like to see a much more clearly spelled out plan and process for space assessment. A concern was also raised that should a lab be forced to move, this could lead to the lack of access for lab members, including graduate students, to critical shared equipment. Finally, handing over decisions to an “automated space management system” could also lead to the dispersion of labs across multiple and distant buildings, potentially negatively impacting collaborations and cohesion within a program. On the other hand, some Graduate Council members pointed out that decision making related to lab space allocation in the long-term should be guided by better and comprehensive information.
PLANNING AND BUDGET

May 2, 2023

To: Gerry Bomotti, Vice Chancellor
Planning, Budget and Administration

Via: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Peter Atkinson, Chair
Committee on Planning and Budget

RE: Proposed Change to Campus Policy/Guidelines for Research Labs

The Committee on Planning & Budget (CPB) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed new University Space Committees’ guideline/policy relative to campus research labs from January 2023 with the cover memo dated March 15, 2023 from Vice Chancellor Bomotti inviting our comments.

The CPB acknowledges that all campus space is under the authority of the Provost who may delegate this authority to organizational heads. We also understand that five-year reviews of space allocations and uses are a reasonable time frame of review. The CPB understands that the age and state of disrepair due to the cumulative lack of maintenance of over many decades of some/many of our research buildings has led to the proposed revision with the appropriate use of BSL2 laboratory space used as an appropriate example (item 4 in the memo). Previously, this issue has primarily been dealt with through renovation of existing research space within the building housing the department in which the new faculty member has been hired. The proposed policy seeks to make the process of the allocation of appropriate research space more cost-effective by placing new faculty in research space appropriate to their research needs, be it in the same building as their departmental colleagues or in a building separate from them.

We acknowledge that there may well be short-term cost benefits to this new policy, should it be adopted. Should this be in a building space already shared with faculty colleagues from the new faculty member’s department, then these benefits may well be long-lasting and would not be expected to impact the strategic planning of the department. The CPB anticipates problems arising when new faculty are allocated appropriate research space distant in location and research focus from their departmental colleagues. The new faculty may feel isolated from their departmental colleagues; while the issue of the use of space
within their own laboratory might be immediately addressed by the new policy, the question of shared research space and facilities with neighboring colleagues may well reveal research incompatibilities. In such a case, making their own research space self-sufficient for shared instrumentation would undermine, to some extent, the proposed cost-effectiveness of the new policy. Furthermore, research incompatibilities with neighboring faculty from other departments may arise subsequent to appointment, necessitating relocations.

Another problem is that this new policy undermines departmental strategic planning since faculty and chairs can no longer assume the idle (or soon to be idle) research space reserved for future hires in their department will remain available to that department. Re-assignment of this space to another department will impact their strategic planning, compromise their ability to hire their desired candidates and may well impact retentions within their own department. One member of the CPB wondered if a system of space credits for departments/colleges that give up their space to accommodate faculty from other areas could be put in place to address this concern.

In summary, while the CPB understands the reasoning behind the new policy, we believe that any short-term cost-savings will be exactly that: short-term. The longer-term costs will be high and measured not just in dollars but in the loss of the ability and confidence of departments to plan their own futures with respect to research directions, faculty hiring, and faculty retentions, recognizing that it is the departments that are the fundamental research and instruction units of the university.

The underlying cause is the state of disrepair of many of our buildings and their unsuitability for 21st research which this proposed policy does not address.
To: Gerry Bomotti, Vice Chancellor for Planning, Budget & Administration
Via: Sang-Hee Lee  
Chair, Riverside Division

From: Linda Walling, Chair  
Committee on Physical Resources Planning


The Physical Resources Planning Committee (PRP) reviewed the AY2022-23 Proposed Research Lab Policy Draft document of January 2023 as proposed by Vice Chancellor Bomotti from January 2023 with the cover memo dated March 15, 2023. The Committee provides the following comments.

Acquiring a comprehensive understanding of the laboratory support capabilities of existing buildings is an excellent priority for the campus. This will help department Chairs understand the lab support capacity of the buildings they occupy. However, PRP is very concerned that this new layer of administration will have several severe ramifications on: (1) timely and essential building renovations, (2) continued access to research facilities with high levels of safety controls, and (3) placement of faculty in locations far from their home departments, which breaks down collegiality, and interferes with departmental and college hiring plans. We highlight several concerns.

In the past, the institutional memory regarding the quality of a research space and its associated infrastructure has been very short lived and often conclusions from campus space and capacity evaluations change over time. For example, prior to 2005, Design and Construction considered Batchelor Hall a ‘dead-end’ building, with little renovation potential, and, therefore, not worth any investments in improving of labs or infrastructure. This clearly changed as infrastructure renovations are now going. Perhaps the new policy will help to prevent such inaccurate estimates of building capacities. This could be a positive outcome of the proposal.

PRP agrees that well-intentioned renovations that do not meet the needs of occupants or surpass building capacity are wasteful and frustrating for faculty. This is particularly important when the research needs of assistant professors are considered. Assistant professors must hit the ground running with spaces that meet their current and future research needs. Assistant professors have a
short timeline to establish their independent research program and any delays in having access to functional lab spaces have major impacts on acquiring preliminary data for grants, data for publications, and training graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. This is also a concern for faculty who need to expand their research space due to acquisition of essential new equipment or increases in personnel associated with a new grant. Delays in adapting research spaces can be detrimental for the required progress on a grant. PRP hopes that this new administrative layer does not delay assignment and approval of spaces for new hires.

Third, the UCR campus has never been nimble when it comes to renovations or space decision making. There is a need for more clear guidelines and a chain of command, otherwise delays in decision making will inevitably occur. Delays is essential renovations will occur impacting research productivity and faculty satisfaction. With the increased costs of students and postdoctoral fellows, any delays in functional research space are detrimental.

In the past and currently, research space has been largely assigned at the department level, with both college and Provost approval. The exception is for the two multidisciplinary buildings MRBI and Genomics, which each have their own mechanism of space assignments. The propose policy changes appear to minimize the role of the department in efficiently managing space for the changing needs of its faculty. PRP thinks that the policy needs to be revised to acknowledge that space assignments are deeply important to department sustainability, planning and growth. Departments have hiring plans to replace faculty who have separated to assure that teaching needs and research strengths are maintained. This is critical for retaining the international research notoriety of a department, college and campus. Unlinking space allocation from a department or from multidisciplinary buildings that have different space allocation policies will be disruptive and harmful to the campus. There does not appear to be a consultative process.

Additionally, the process of reassessing lab space allotments once every five years has a strong potential to disrupt researchers who are conducting different types of research. This is particularly a concern for Principal Investigators who work on projects that require stringent safety requirements (for example, BSL3 labs). These PIs must have an assurance that these labs are available when needed. As the research endeavors and staffing for research projects are dynamic and change from year to year, our recommendation is to have an annual departmental assessment of needs to minimize disruption to research endeavors.

PRP is very concerned about the proposed policy as it may result in placement of new faculty in random locations across the campus solely because a building might have the right infrastructure to support a particular professor’s research program. It is very important for faculty to be located adjacent to, within the same building, or in close proximity to faculty from the same department or who are linked by common research interests or approaches (eg., Genomics or MRB I). Assistant professors and tenured faculty who are new to UCR immensely benefit by the informal mentoring that is associated with co-localization. This informal mentoring is critical for the success of assistant professors in departments with non-optimal leadership or a history of non-collegial behavior. We hope that the new policy does not result in a mosaic of faculty scattered across the
campus solely based on building infrastructure. It will not be good for morale or research productivity. We recommend the inclusion of a clause in the review process to ensure researchers’ track records and broader research agendas are considered when making space allocation decisions.

Finally, we are concerned about the proposed policy with respective to current status of research facilities across different colleges. The proposed policy may heighten the research space inequities across the science colleges. While there are few buildings that were designed for cross-college research initiatives (MRB), most buildings were built or renovated for college or school use. Examples of buildings with contemporary research space designed for use within a specific college/school include the current SOM building, Engineering I and II (BCOE), Chemistry (CNAS), and Genomics (CNAS). This college-based building and space allocation philosophy is continuing on our campus with the construction of the new SOM building and with Engineering III being the top priority in the building queue. However, there are no complementary plans for enhanced research spaces for CNAS; this will amplify the research space inequities across the science colleges.

We provide one example of potential inequities; we are certain that there are others that could be provided. CNAS inhabits numerous older buildings that lack contemporary research spaces (ie., Spieth and Batchelor Hall). With no plans for building new research facilities for CNAS, CNAS life science research depends on access to the very limited, high quality research spaces that are currently associated with CNAS (such as in Genomics and renovated portions of Boyce). These spaces are required to maintain CNAS faculty numbers. PRP is very concerned that ‘higher-level’ space allocations without extensive consultation with department chairs will disrupt the success of on-going department faculty searches and near-term hiring plans to replace faculty who have recently separated. Such disruptions will negatively impact the ability of CNAS to maintain research prominence and meeting the teaching needs of the college. PRP has learned that the campus plans to move a BCOE faculty member into Genomics; we understand that this decision was made without consultation of CNAS department chairs or the Genomics Building Committee that currently governs the interdepartmental research spaces in Genomics. Placement of faculty from other colleges into current ‘college-controlled’ spaces will only increase tensions across the campus. These top-down initiatives are rarely viewed in a positive light.
April 26, 2023

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Division Chair of the UCR Division of the Academic Senate & Cherysá Cortez, Executive Director of the UCR Academic Senate

From: Raquel M. Rall, Ph.D., Faculty Chair of the School of Education Executive Committee


The members of the SOE Executive Committee reviewed the [Campus Review] Proposal: Proposed Draft Guideline/Policy on Research Labs. Comments were solicited at our monthly meeting and via email. Our feedback is below.

Implementing a 5-year review of campus lab spaces makes a good deal of sense. However, a committee external to the school/college should evaluate the utilization of the space. Knowing that a negative review might lead to adverse outcomes for the particular college/school, it may be wise to have a separate committee conduct the reviews. Since space falls under the purview of the provost, maybe the provost can have a special committee conduct these reviews to move towards uniformity, consistency, and transparency. The college/school should still have to submit a report or any findings to the review committee.

We are curious about various logistical questions, including, but not limited to: Who will establish the review protocol? Will the review protocol be accessible to all so that those in charge of the lab space will know what they can expect from their review down the line? Following a lab space review, who receives the findings? What does the timeline look like once the review is completed if, for example, the lab space is not being maximally utilized?

We do not have any issues with the proposed revision to the existing process for campus research lab allocations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Sincerely,

Raquel M. Rall, Ph.D.
Faculty Executive Committee Chair 2022-2025
School of Education
University of California, Riverside
TO: Sang-Hee Lee, Ph.D., Chair, Academic Senate, UCR Division
FROM: Marcus Kaul, Ph.D., Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, UCR School of Medicine

Dear Sang-Hee,

The SOM Faculty Executive Committee has reviewed the Proposal for the Proposed Draft Guideline/Policy on Research Labs. The following considerations were brought up by members of the committee:

1) While improved central control of laboratory research space as outlined in the proposal can have a number of benefits, the policy does not appear to take into the account the full complexities that lead to a strong scientific environment to foster innovation and world-class science. The policy needs to be evolved further to address space and support for non-permanent communally used equipment and procedures, and core facilities, to ensure research environments are synergetic in nature and avoid siloing based purely on research techniques.

2) The committee would also encourage this development of the policy to include broad faculty representation from all college-level entities. More specifically, the FEC wants to emphasize that this policy must be developed following the UC self-governance process and as such any committee or task force that generates this policy must include representation of all affected UCR colleges and the SOM.

3) Space designated to SOM and other colleges should be under the purview of the respective Deans in collaboration with division and department chairs, to prevent reassignments between colleges based on short-term perspectives, since fluctuation in numbers of students and funding can be expected in this funding climate.

Yours sincerely,

Marcus Kaul, Ph.D.
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee School of Medicine
TO: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair  
Riverside Division

FR: Richard M. Carpiano, Chair  
Faculty Executive Committee, School of Public Policy

RE: [Campus Review] Proposal: Proposed Draft Guideline/Policy on Research Labs

Date: April 26, 2023

The Faculty Executive Committee of the School of Public Policy reviewed the documentation for “[Campus Review] Proposal: Proposed Draft Guideline/Policy on Research Labs.”

The creation of such a campus policy can help ensure sufficient, appropriate lab space exists for faculty research and student training; is efficiently accounted for in terms of quantity and capability; and is equitably allocated across campus units. However, members raised the following concerns with the current document:

1. The suggested rules for lab allocation need much more development, especially regarding the specific needs of various types of research conducted across the different colleges and schools.

2. While it is under the Provost’s purview to determine which lab space is allocated to which unit, it is unclear how that determination will be made. There is a lack of clarity and transparency surrounding equity of lab assignment, particularly given the current facility space shortage. For example, will lab assignments be rotated across colleges, or some other method be enacted so that certain colleges and departments are not favored over others?

3. In point #2 of the document, the use of the term “Org head” is unclear and needs to be clarified or replaced with more specific language. Does this term refer to the dean of a college/school?

Sincerely,

Richard M. Carpiano, Ph.D., M.P.H.  
Professor of Public Policy
March 15, 2023

Subject: Proposed DRAFT Guideline/Policy on Research Labs.

Hello

The University Space Committee (USC) has proposed a new guideline/policy relative to campus research labs (see attached). The idea for this policy comes from our noting assignments of labs to faculty (especially new faculty) where the design capabilities of the labs do not meet the needs of the faculty members. We have just implemented a new automated campus space management system and it has the capability to track design attributes/capabilities of research labs, and we propose (over time) to populate this system with details about each campus research lab. This should help Deans and Department chairs in their management and assignment of research labs, to match the needs/requirements of the faculty member (and hopefully avoid some very costly retrofit projects to significantly upgrade the capabilities of an existing lab – costly from a facilities standpoint but also from a time perspective for the faculty member).

Liz has shared this document with the Deans and received some initial input, and we wanted to make sure you had seen this draft. Please alert me what process you will use to evaluate and provide feedback on the policy, and if you have other suggestions as to who should received copies for input.

Thank you
Proposed Research lab policy

DRAFT January 2023

Consider new campus policy/guideline for research labs

In our ongoing effort to assure we use campus space in the most efficient and effective way possible, it is important to have some standards for research lab uses. In the past we have at times spent significant amounts of money attempting to create spaces that greatly exceed the building design capacity, especially in the mechanical area. The results were not always spaces that met all the needs/desires of the faculty member anyway, as the overall infrastructure limitations of the building itself cannot always be overcome with the renovation of one specific interior space. We propose a policy that would help us focus on assignment of research space based on an alignment of the needs of the researcher and the design capabilities of campus research space. This would better utilize campus resources, and hopefully provide space more quickly and effectively for the researcher.

1. Note that all campus space comes under the authority of the Provost, who allocates spaces for uses to individual Schools and Colleges. These allocations can be changed from time to time to meet the overall best interests of UCR.

2. Consistent with existing campus space policies, the allocation of campus space from the Provost is made to the Org head. There is not approval to further delegate this to a lower level in the Org. This is very important, given the value of space on campus, and the need to review broader UCR needs beyond individual programs or units.

3. We propose that lab space uses be reviewed every five years. This review should be conducted by the School/College, to evaluate the utilization of the space, the number
of PIs and graduate students using the space, the amount of external funding, etc.

4. We propose a revision to the existing process for campus research lab allocations. The current process has often resulted in the assignment of research labs to faculty that require major renovations, as their design capacity is inconsistent with the requirements of the new faculty member/PI. A more cost-effective process, and one that will allow PIs to occupy and begin work in their lab space more quickly, is to evaluate design capacity, carry this information in our automated space management system, and work to focus reuse on the design capacity of that lab/building. For example, there are Biosafety Level (BSL) rated labs on campus that should be reused for PIs with those specific BS needs and uses. It is very difficult and very costly to renovate a research lab into a BSL2 lab; by the same token, it would be a waste of to have a BSL 2 lab assigned for uses below those design capabilities. A shift to this proposed approach will require additional information to be collected (by Environmental Health and Safety and Facilities Services) for all research labs that defines their design capabilities and the types of research they can support. Assigning a PI to a research lab that is contrary to that lab’s design capability should require extraordinary approval (at the Provost level).

5. While MRB is not under the review of the Space Committee, UCR will also appropriately incorporate this proposed approach into the unique policy for space management in MRB. UCR would conduct the same design capability assessment for all the MRB spaces, include this information in the automated space management system. Space decisions relative to MRB remain under the authority of the Provost in consultation with the Vice Chancellor of Research
and the Academic Deans of the schools/colleges occupying MRB.