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.