

POLICY ON RESEARCH SPACE

Effective Date: April 1, 2017
Responsible University Official: President
Coordinating Department: Strategic Space Committee

I. Policy Statement

The universities of Arizona, including NAU, are engines for new research ideas, new economic development opportunities, new highly skilled workforce talent, and programs and projects that benefit Arizona's citizens more broadly. In line with these goals, and with the expectations of the Board of Regents, NAU includes in its university strategic planning a goal to increase its research productivity.

At NAU, we have limited resources to help us carry out these various missions associated with research. Deans and Chairs need to work closely with senior administration to ensure that research lab space is used most effectively. Research space is a resource owned and allocated by NAU. Given our strategic goals and limited resources, NAU must establish university policies for the most productive, yet least disruptive, uses of research space on the NAU campus.

For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures, "Research Space" for faculty includes lab space, secondary office space, or other space aside from the faculty member's primary office space. It does not include primary office space assigned by Deans of Colleges to faculty and used for office hours, academic meetings, instructional planning, as well as research activities. In addition, space assigned to temporary research uses that is alternately used as regular faculty or staff office space, and is under the control of the Dean, will not be considered research space for purposes of this policy.

In order to generate an appropriate research space policy at NAU, a set of Guiding Principles will establish the foundation for (a) reviewing current space allocations in line with specific space use expectations and guiding principles, (b) providing additional useable research space, (c) developing processes for (re)allocating research space in line with NAU strategic goals and ABOR metrics, (d) supporting student research opportunities as appropriate with competing needs, and (e) supporting new growth in research capacity. Accordingly, NAU has developed the following research space policy to include:

1. A set of research space guiding principles for prioritizing allocation of research space and for supporting future decision-making;

2. A set of procedures for near-term review and (re)allocations of research space which will result in some immediate improvements in usage and in the level of research productivity;
3. A list of longer-term recommendations that have the potential for major improvements in research productivity (research enterprise strategic planning and establishing research lab space needs for the future)

II. Guiding Principles

1. Research space belongs to the institution and is a valuable resource. The President is ultimately responsible for the allocation of research space in consultation with the Strategic Space Committee.
2. The Strategic Space Committee will appoint a Research Space Subcommittee that will review research space needs and research space (re)allocation as needed.
3. The Research Space Subcommittee will develop metrics (in consultation with the OVPR, Deans, Department Chairs and Program Directors) to assist in the evaluation of research space utilization and determine how the current allocation of research space meets the university and respective College programmatic needs and priorities. Quantitative measures, while not the final determinant, may be developed as part of the decision making process for allocation of research space.
4. The majority of tenure track faculty have an expectation to engage in research and scholarly activities as part of their university contracts, and reasonable space will be provided to help faculty carry out their research agendas.
5. Research space is allocated based on programmatic needs and priorities as determined by the university strategic planning goal for research and by respective Deans in consultation with Department Chairs, Program Directors, and faculty.
6. Faculty engaged in ongoing funded research and research-related activities will be priority occupants of research lab space. Research groups that have the ability to act as a catalyst for interdisciplinary research will also be a priority. Research activities that most directly address strategic initiatives of the university and graduate programs will be prioritized.
7. Research space assignments are not permanent. Space is assigned to faculty whose activities meet the above-stated goals, not to the individuals independent of the activities or goals of the Universities. As such, space may be reassigned to different faculty as activities change in order to meet the broader goals of the University's research mission.
8. Space that is vacant or deemed underutilized will be reassigned or repurposed. A College and respective Department/program will have a defined plan to improve the utilization of this newly released space.
9. Colleges/programs/centers may choose to subsidize research activities that do not generate sufficient indirect cost recovery to fully support the infrastructure and operating costs associated with space usage based on their research priorities and operating budgets, as well as the value of the research to the university as a whole.

10. Optimal use of research space includes shared use of resources and facilities.
11. Research space allocations will be based on existing facilities to ensure the current facilities are fully utilized before pursuing major construction and renovations.
12. Research conducted in university facilities must primarily support university interests and relationships. All research conducted in such facilities must adhere to university conflict of interest policies.
13. There may be occasions in which the NAU President decides to allocate space outside of the normal review process, and the President may make unilateral decisions regarding allocation of research space.

III. Commitments to Faculty for Research Space

The majority of tenure-track faculty are expected to conduct a robust program of academic research as part of their professional activities. Colleges, departments, and programs will strive to provide these faculty members with sufficient research space to support these activities. However, Deans, Chairs and Program Directors must balance the needs of individual faculty with the needs of the other faculty and the overall programmatic needs and priorities of their units.

Discussions of research space for new hires should commence at the time such hiring is requested so that commitments for space to the new faculty can be made in writing when employment offers are made by the College. The commitment to space should be as detailed as possible.

The research space of current faculty members will be periodically reviewed to determine if the faculty member has a shortage or excess of research space, or if the space is in need of reconfiguration or renovation. These reviews will be done as part of the annual review process, or done individually with Department Chairs/Program Directors.

Non-tenure-track faculty will be covered under this policy to the extent that they have a Statement of Expectation (SOE) document that explicitly designates some percentage of contractual effort to research.

It is the responsibility of the Dean and respective Department Chair/Program Director to provide adequate space (as identified on the proposal approval form) for the duration of any sponsored project conducted by the faculty. When the College/Center indicates on the proposal approval form that space is available and specifies the buildings and rooms, the sponsor is assured that space necessary to conduct the research will be made available. Proposal deadlines sometimes constrain this specification of space. Therefore, in some cases, the space identification may include the phrase "or equivalent space, as available." It is incumbent on principal investigators to identify and seek approval for all significant space requirements at the time of proposal submission. Space allocation without prior approval is not guaranteed.

Emeritus faculty may be provided with research space at the discretion of the Dean of the respective unit, if available, and if projects align with the programmatic needs and priorities of the respective College. Priority for research space will not be given to emeritus faculty.

IV. Reallocation of Research Space

In some cases, the reallocation of research space may result in the displacement of faculty, equipment or other infrastructure. The unit will work with the current faculty occupant to properly relocate faculty or dispose of items. The university is not obligated to compensate the faculty member for investments the faculty may have made in the space during the time of occupancy.

V. Research Space Productivity Measures and Review Process

A common need among many academic units and within the Offices of the Provost and Vice President for Research is to better understand how research space is used. Having quantitative and qualitative metrics in place helps Deans, Chairs, and Program Directors assign, allocate, and optimize use of this space for current and anticipated research needs. Productivity measures for dedicated/research space may vary, depending on factors that are deemed most important or valued by each College or related unit, and may or may not be linked directly to the level of financial activity. A quantitative measure of external research funding for a faculty member in relation to the average of research funding per faculty member is one, but not the only measure of research productivity.

Input from Deans, Chairs, Program Directors and Center Directors will help determine the most appropriate productivity measures to use. Quantitative production measures will only be a part of the overall assessment of research space productivity and space assignment.

Important Measures of Productivity to Consider

1. Current grant activity of faculty members associated with the research space;
2. Prior five-year record of research productivity and impact (grants, publications, number of citations, patents, presentations, awards);
3. Current and prior five-year record of research mentoring productivity (graduate students, undergraduate students) for each faculty member seeking/retaining functional research space;
4. Proportion of the faculty member's effort dedicated to research;
5. Level of F&A returns;
6. Alignment of actual research needs with space allotted (theoretical, computational, heavy equipment, need for bench space);
7. Alignment of the research activity with the strategic priorities of the College/university;
8. Options to share research lab space.

VI. Regular Review of Research Space

1. Research space will be assessed in 3-year cycles.
2. In the third year, a review will be made of research lab productivity and a recommendation will be made to continue current use for a new cycle or to transition out of the research space at the end of the 3rd or 4th year. The review will be carried out by the Department Chair and/or Dean (using FAAR data, Academic Analytics reports, and data from the Office of Sponsored Projects on external proposals submitted and grants awarded). A research lab space may be identified as "limited productivity" but not re-allocated if there is no current need.
3. Labs with no external funding will be reviewed yearly.
4. A faculty lab space listed as "limited productivity" may be re-allocated within a year timeline if space is needed for high productivity research projects or new hires.
5. Faculty labs may be moved to other reasonably equivalent functional research space within a year if:
 - A. There is a need to consolidate larger groups and interdisciplinary research groups.
 - B. New faculty with high research expectations need to be provided with appropriate lab space.
6. Data on research productivity will be collected by the Chair, Dean, and OVPR from FAAR, Academic Analytics, and the Office of Sponsored Projects to identify research productivity. Data will also be reviewed by the Strategic Space Committee when appropriate to consider new research space assignments or reallocations of space.

Signatures

Approved: Rita Hartung Cheng, President, Northern Arizona University

Signature  _____ Date 3/1/17

Approved: Daniel L. Kain, Provost, Northern Arizona University

Signature  _____ Date 3/1/17

Approved: William Peter Grabe, Vice President for Research, Northern Arizona University

Signature  _____ Date 3-1-17