

Guidelines for Allocating Laboratory Space in the Neuroscience Building

The Neuroscience Building was established as a hub for interdisciplinary activities in neuroscience research and student training. It is the goal of the College to use this space in the most efficient manner that leads to breakthrough discoveries facilitated by the unique nature of this interdisciplinary building. Following completion of the building, the College has begun a cluster hiring initiative to complement existing college strengths in neuroscience. This initiative is expected to double our faculty strength on “Understanding the Brain” research problems.

We envision that researchers housed in the Neuroscience Building will form an integrated community and will assure that the neuroscience research cluster in Coral Gables is at the forefront of neuroscience research. We aspire to become a premier neuroscience group of investigators among Colleges of Arts and Sciences. Our Coral Gables research will complement activities at the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, as we strive to address some of the most challenging research questions in neuroscience leading to understanding the brain.

To accomplish this goal, the College has high expectations from all researchers housed in the Neuroscience Building. Thus, research space in the building will be allocated to maximize effectiveness using discipline-specific guidelines. We need to optimize space allocation in a way that encourages and leads to improved research productivity. The Advisory Board University Leadership Council has prepared a Research Brief entitled *Allocating Laboratory Space to Maximize Research Productivity*, which was used to formulate some of the recommendations outlined below. Additionally, we collected information from other universities that use space allocation formulas to assign space in interdisciplinary buildings.

The Advisory Board University Leadership Council arrived at their recommendations by using benchmark data from two NSF surveys: (1) Science and Engineering Research Facilities, and (2) Academic Research and Development Expenditures. It establishes parameters for new Assistant Professors and more senior investigators. It recommends establishing a "memorandum of understanding that lays out the conditions under which a researcher is assigned the space. The researcher agrees up front to a certain level of performance. The benchmarks and the consequences of failing to meet those benchmarks over a specific time period are explicitly laid out." It suggests using the following criteria for size and productivity in making decisions regarding space.

Criterion	Metrics (per sq ft)
Headcount	Number of postdocs, graduate students, undergraduate researchers
Equipment	Size of equipment, proximity to core equipment
Productivity	Research funding, proposals submitted, publications, impact of publications, patents, faculty awards

The College will allocate space in the Neuroscience Building only to research groups who will benefit from the proximity to the equipment, research facilities and colleagues available in the building. Space allocation benchmarks vary across universities and disciplines. We propose to use *\$100 per square foot in annual research expenditures* as a benchmark amount, a value derived using 2005 NSF data based on the reports on Research Facilities and Research Expenditures. We will review this benchmark as new data become available in future years.

Research groups with space allocated in the Neuroscience Building are expected to show high levels of research productivity and quality. Specifically, we expect that each group will maintain productivity and publish high impact articles in peer-reviewed journals within the discipline. The Dean's office will consult with the corresponding chair in evaluating the publication output of each group to weigh the numbers and impact of publications. Based on national data, *a reasonable guideline is a minimum of three papers per year.*

In consultation with the departmental chairs, we will evaluate space allocation on a periodic basis (e.g., over a period of three years) using a rolling average of indicators such as funding levels, effort in obtaining funding, likelihood of obtaining future funding, and publication quality/quantity. Researchers who fail to meet expected levels of productivity will be given a grace period to improve productivity or otherwise lose space in the Neuroscience Building.

Junior faculty researchers will not be held to these standards until the completion of their probationary periods. Once they earn tenure, they will be expected to have reached the guidelines specified above.