

NERA Institutions: Lab Space Allocation Policies

The OED solicited NERA institutions for their policies on allocation of laboratory space including open-concept lab space. Below is the response of NERA institutions.

Connecticut Agricultural; Experiment Station:

CAES does not have any formal policy concerning lab space. We generally provide all of our scientists with a separate office and an adjoining laboratory as space permits. Some are forced to have lab space in another building, but our campus is comparatively small. Some faculty also have multiple labs depending on the number of technicians and postdocs they are supporting. We additionally try to provide postdocs with separate offices but almost all technicians have desk space in their respective labs. The determination of who gets what largely depends on needs (funding) and is at the discretion of the Department Head.

Cornell University:

Cornell CALS does not have a college-level policy on lab space assignment. This authority is delegated to academic units with the understanding that space should be assigned based on need and size of program as well as external funding.

Penn State:

Penn State does not have specific policies regarding lab space. PSU has a lot of faculty in the Millennium Life Sciences Building in which space is allocated based on grant productivity. That is flexed space in an open lab format so space shrinks and expands depending upon need. For others, it's up to the academic units for the most part.

Rutgers:

The lab space policy within the school and experiment station at Rutgers is fairly fluid. Rutgers has a few "open lab" spaces where faculty can expand and contract programs easily. Department chairs are responsible for space they oversee, but the college administration steps in at the school/experiment station level when asked or as needed. Rutgers pays attention to program size, but especially full F&A-bearing programs.

University of Connecticut:

At UConn, Department Heads are in charge of lab space allocation in their respective departments, but in buildings managed by the Dean's office, lab space is allocated based on the need and size of the research program (grants, number of graduate students and postdocs). Newly hired faculty always get a preference.

University of Maryland:

UMD does not have a college-wide policy on space allocation. Similar to Cornell, this authority is delegated to the department Chairs and they usually allocate space based on the type and needs of each faculty's research.

University of Massachusetts:

Policy by practice is to allocate space in new laboratory buildings to active research faculty with a track record of bringing in external funding. Some space is also reserved for newly recruited faculty. A percentage of the indirect cost return supports the operational cost of the laboratory building.

University of New Hampshire:

In COLSA at UNH, the dean controls space, as our buildings that house department offices are very different relative to type and quality of research space. Thus, UNH does not identify a given building with a given department, as faculty are located in the type of lab that fits their research, wherever these may be. Jon Wraith convened a hand-picked faculty committee maybe 5 years back and charged them to suggest a metric-based approach to allocating research space. There was a productive back and forth, and here's what they ultimately settled on:

Metrics for which we have institutional data and that were ultimately included in the database. These include annual data for most recent five years (rolling 5-year totals), for each COLSA tenure track and research faculty member. All agreed that 5-yr averages provide most appropriate 'smoothing'. Some metrics that could be either #, FTE or \$ use the latter, as that's what is in the institutional databases. The metrics and allocations are updated every ~2 years:

- 1) Peer reviewed publications (faculty committee elected to weight 2X)
- 2) External and selected internal grant award direct costs (i.e., includes NHAES, NH Sea Grant)
- 3) F&A returns to COLSA
- 4) Research staff supported
- 5) Graduate students supported as RA (semester equivalents)
- 6) Post docs supported
- 7) Grad students mentored to completion (faculty committee elected to weight 2X)

This isn't used as an analytical equation with square feet as output, but provides cohorts of those who merit greater space and those who merit less space. Depending on the size of individual labs across our buildings, some faculty have two labs plus one or more support rooms, while others may have one-half lab. UNH provides new faculty hires with one full lab, and might add to that but not shrink it until they're past tenure (i.e., half dozen years for program building).

University of Rhode Island:

The University of Rhode Island and the College of the Environment and Life Sciences have space policies; the College's policies can be found in its [Bylaws, 11.4 Space Committee](#). In short, the College uses a committee to advise the Dean on the assignment of space. As the bylaws indicate, there is no single criterion or formula used for space allocation. Rather, the assessment is based on several criteria, such as success in procuring extramural grant support, amount and nature of research support, the quality and quantity of peer-reviewed publications, presentations at national and international scientific meetings, and the specific use of the space

in fulfilling the College's mission. Faculty investigators with funded research grants, as well as new faculty hires, shall have highest priority for laboratory space allocation and no amount of research space is guaranteed to any individual in perpetuity.

University of Vermont:

UVM delegates space decisions to department chairs.

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