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Approved by: James E. K. Hildreth, Ph.D., M.D.  
President and Chief Executive Officer

Subject: Office of Research - Research Space Use and Assignment Policy

**PURPOSE:** All Meharry Medical College buildings, space, and land, regardless of source or location, are the property of the College. Space, like personnel, funds and equipment, is an institutional resource that must be managed and maintained in accordance with the College's mission and priorities. The short- and long-range planning for optimum use of these valuable assets by the College is a continuing process. Accordingly, the assignment and use of space must change, sometimes rapidly, with the priorities of the institution.

Like any other scarce resource, campus space must be managed strategically to ensure its highest and best use. Wherever possible, the colleges and units should promote the clustering and sharing of research space among groups of faculty working in related areas, and/or requiring access to similar types of specialized equipment.

**POLICY STATEMENT:** Research space, as a resource, will be allocated in proportion to the productivity of each unit and/or faculty member and within the contextual needs of each discipline/set of responsibilities.

Location of assigned research space, including laboratories, offices, etc., will be optimized based on a variety of issues including, but not limited to:

- type of appointment
- productivity
- proximity to other assigned space
- proximity to other faculty with similar academic interests and specialized equipment

In order to most effectively and efficiently manage institutional space, an institutional Research Space Management and Planning Committee (RSMPC) will be established.

With the implementation of this policy, the stewardship of all research and research infrastructure space will be allocated to the deans of the schools and by them to department chairpersons/center directors. This allocation is not static, but will be reviewed annually by the RSMPC and more frequently as approved space requests dictate a change in the allocation between units. Stewardship has the accompanying responsibility of maintaining the integrity of the space in

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accordance with established standards on the use and upkeep of space at Meharry Medical College.

Although not within the scope of this policy, the deans also will maintain stewardship of academic space as assigned. Shifts from academic to research space or vice-versa must be approved by the President and/or Provost.

In as much as contracts and grants are awarded for a defined period of time, the assignment of research space to support an award also is to be time-limited in accordance with the provisions of the contract or grant. Generally speaking, consideration for continuing space assignment is contingent on maintenance of a level of funding consistent with a metric to be developed by the RSMPC. However, due diligence should be exercised to avoid space reallocation during temporary interruptions in funding. An interruption of one year or less may be tolerable, provided that the faculty member has developed and implemented a sound plan for the continuation of funding within the coming year.

**DEFINITIONS:** RSMPC, Research Space Management and Planning Committee

**PROCEDURE:**

**A. Research Space Requests**

Research space requests and justification should only come from department chairpersons/center directors on behalf of faculty members and must be approved by the cognizant dean before being reviewed by the RSMPC. Justifications must include either need for space for anticipated faculty recruitment or need based on independent extramural funding. Any other requests will not be reviewed. Requests for space for recruitment of new faculty must be submitted to the RSMPC before any space commitments are made by the department or center responsible for the recruitment.

**B. Research Space Management and Planning Committee (RSMPC)**

The President or Provost and the Vice-President for Research will appoint the RSMPC. Decisions made by the RSMPC will be forwarded to the Vice President for Research for implementation.

Voting membership of the RSMPC will consist of the following (or his/her designee):

- Six to eight faculty researchers (all faculty members should have independent extramural funding; no deans, department chairs or center

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directors)

- The Chairperson of the Faculty Senate
- Two members - Office for Research
- One member - Teaching Department faculty (no deans, department chairs or center directors)
- One member - Campus Operations
- One member - Finance
- One member - President's Office

The chair and vice-chair of the committee will be appointed by the President. A quorum consisting of a majority of the entire membership of the committee will be required for meetings of the RSMPC.

The RSMPC is responsible for:

1. The assignment of research space.
2. The resolution of research space problems
3. Developing and maintaining an accurate and up-to-date database on all research space use and assignments including any identified productivity measures that have been established (e.g., extramural support per square foot). Research space use planning, procedures, and metrics are based on recognized best practices and proven quantitative and qualitative indicators. Once developed and/or when modified, such measures will be attached to this policy. This database will be the official source for all research space reports.
4. Developing the criteria used to determine if the use of research space is appropriately aligned with the institution's mission and priorities. Once developed and/or modified, such criteria will be attached to this policy.
5. In order to encourage the most appropriate alignment of research space usage to the institution's mission and priorities, the RSMPC will facilitate communications between units as to their use of space and space needs.
6. In order to ensure the most appropriate alignment of research space usage to the institution's mission and priorities, and to ensure that no 'stockpiling' of research space is taking place, reassessing unit research space assignments will be done at least on an annual basis.

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7. Serving as the designated holder of 'swing' research space and making temporary assignments to such research space as deemed necessary.
8. Developing a standardized process for making requests for new space, including requests for new buildings, renovations of existing space, leases or simple moves. After the process is finalized, a description of this process will be attached to this policy.
9. Substantiating that adequate funding is available for the building of new research space, renovations, moves, and the operation and maintenance of such space.
10. Substantiating that adequate research space is available to support the hiring of new employees.
11. Developing and maintaining a research space strategic plan for Meharry.
12. Verifying that research space is being used for the purpose specified, prompt reporting of changes in assignment, use or configuration of research space and monitoring the efficient use of research space within the institution's major units.
13. Providing recommendations on an annual basis to the President regarding how research space should be assigned/reassigned across campus. Recommendations also might be needed on an *ad hoc* basis at times when the President or Vice President for Research determines there is an overriding institutional need or as situations dictate.
14. Providing recommendations to the President regarding when and how to lease research space.

**EXHIBITS:** None

**APPROVED BY:**

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James E. K. Hildreth, Ph.D., M.D.  
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