

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Chancellor
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Project Team: Space Utilization

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Dear Colleagues:

As a campus, we are engaging in a thoughtful and thorough evaluation of how we use resources toward the broader aim of advancing excellence in our scholarship, education and outreach activities. In this context, we write to invite you to serve on a working team to review space utilization across the campus. The use and management of space historically has been very decentralized at this institution. This approach has been effective for the most part in helping units to deal with local and often idiosyncratic needs and issues. Yet the decentralized nature of our approach has hampered our ability to take a more systematic, broad-based view of the use and cost of space at an institutional level. As a result, our use of space appears often to be inefficient. For example, very little space is shared across units, many spaces are underutilized across time periods during the day, and some faculty members have multiple work spaces. Moreover, we are spending in excess of \$4 million on rental space off campus, including locations at the Research Park, on Green Street, and in Chicago.

Your team is asked to begin a review process that examines the current use and cost of space at Illinois. Once key issues are formed and data are gathered, your review may point to a need to bring in outside consultation on our use of campus space. Your working team is one of many that will be asked to review specific units or activities as part of the campus evaluation effort.

The financial context of the University and the state of Illinois is a catalyst for this review. Given a challenging financial climate, it is vital for the campus to carefully consider our expenses and the ways in which our investments contribute to our mission. At the same time, it is critical to emphasize that this review is a complete and open process that does not begin with a predetermined aim of withdrawing or reducing resources or concluding activities. Instead, we

ask that the review openly examine the extent to which resources and policies pertaining to space utilization enhance the University and its missions.

As your team begins its work, we ask you to explore the following key questions:

- How much space do we have on campus and how is it allocated? How have space policies and assignments on campus changed over the past two decades? How often and in what ways do we determine if space is underutilized?
- Given the significant funds we are allocating for space rental off campus, are there ways we could reduce these expenditures without sacrificing quality of our core missions?
- Do campus and unit space policies support or hinder the effective use of space? How can we incentivize units to manage and share space more effectively?
- Are there creative ways we can better use and manage space? How can classroom space be managed more effectively? Can work stations or hoteling be used to increase office space efficiency and effectiveness? Are there ways to manage lab space more effectively? What are the barriers to these types of innovations? Are there upfront costs associated with such innovations?
- Are there models at other institutions for effective and creative use of space?

In conducting your review, we ask that your team devise a process that allows you to provide well-reasoned, comprehensive responses and recommendations on the key questions outlined above. It will be important for you to consult experts across campus who will have valuable insights on space utilization in departments, colleges, and other units. Members of the Provost's Office leadership team also will stand ready to assist you in this work. Please contact Stig Lanesskog (slanessk@illinois.edu) in the Provost's Office with questions or requests that emerge during your review.

We have invited Professor Van Harlingen, to serve as the chair of your working team, and he has graciously agreed to do so. Staffing for your team's work will be provided by Dr. Van Harlingen's office. We ask that you complete a written report summarizing your review by July 16, 2010.

We are deeply grateful for your time and expertise in this important review process, and look forward to your report and recommendations.



Robert A. Easter
Chancellor and Provost (Interim)

Sincerely,



Richard P. Wheeler
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (Interim)

c: M. Andrechak
S. Lanesskog