

# Work Space and Office Furniture Standards

June 2013

## ***HISTORY AND CURRENT UNDERSTANDING***

Interior building space is a precious and finite resource at most universities, including Notre Dame. In 2008 an assessment of administrative work space use indicated that there is little, if any, unused work space on campus. It continues to be critical, therefore, that the University community use their existing space efficiently and effectively so that the University can fulfill its primary mission of research and teaching without incurring unnecessary administrative cost.

The 2008 space assessment study indicated that 55% of administrative staff work is in a single occupant private enclosed office. At the time, this was well above national norms. In addition, the study revealed that campus administrative space averages 280 square feet per person, including support areas and circulation space. The factor at that time was approximately a third higher than contemporary office planning guidelines. The study concluded that much of the projected growth in the administrative functions of the University could be accommodated by more efficiently designed work spaces.

In 2009 a set of Work Space Standards for the University was put into place to assist departments and space planners in programming efficient and effective use of space. Since that time however, administrative office planning strategies have continued to not only affect the overall square feet allotted per person in current work environments, but also affect; 1) the way in which works gets done 2) communication and collaboration 3) knowledge transfer 4) morale and atmosphere 5) health and wellbeing at work; and many other non-furniture related details.

Steelcase, a leading furniture manufacturer and the primary furniture contract vendor of the University has noted: “A Fundamental shift has occurred in our world and the ways we work, and it’s one that has had a profound impact on the places and spaces where we work.”

In addition, the growth of the mobile worker has challenged traditional work space allocation and assignments. A standards and planning approach that supports collaboration, flexibility, mobility, adjustability and technology is key to creating successful, effective, and efficient work environments.

## ***WHAT CURRENT TRENDS ARE TELLING US***

Due to nationwide trends and the need to maximize real estate efficiency and effectiveness, many studies have been conducted on the topic and have found that:

- Data released from CoreNet Global (the world’s leading association for corporate real estate) studies shows that for the first time for many companies, the average allocation of office space per person in North America may fall to 100 square feet or below within the next five years.
- According to CoreNet, the square footage of offices has declined by up to 25 percent in just the past five years

- As reported by CoreNet, the average for all companies surveyed, has found that square feet per worker in 2017 will likely average around 151 square feet as opposed to 175 square feet today and 236 square feet in 2010.
- A majority of CoreNet survey respondents, 55%, reported that square feet per worker has already decreased between 5 and 25 percent over the last five years.
- Representatives at Jones, Lang LaSalle predict that the standard of square feet allocated per employee will drop from a spacious 200 to 50-100 square feet per person. In the 1970s, American corporations typically thought they needed 500-700 square feet per employee to build an effective office. Today's average is a little more than 200 square feet per person and according to Jones Lang LaSalle; the space allocation could hit a mere 50 square feet by 2015.
- In January 2012, eWeek reported noted that according to an updated forecast from IT Analytics firm IDC, the world's mobile worker population will reach 1.3 billion; representing 37.2 percent of the total world workforce.
  - In the America's region (United States, Canada & Latin America) the number of mobile workers will grow from 182.5 million in 2010 to 212.1 million in 2015.
  - North America has the largest number of mobile workers in the America's region with 75% of the workforce being mobile in 2010.
- According to a 2010 survey by the International Facilities Management Association, some 68% of U.S. offices have an "open plan" or "open seating" design.
  - A recent Wall Street Journal article noted that companies such as American Express, Glaxo-SmithKline, PLC and PricewaterhouseCooper are shifting large groups of workers into shared spaces.
- In 2001 pharmaceutical company, Lilly struggling with lost productivity, higher capital expenses, and inaccessible managers, remedied these problems by radically redesigning 470,000 SF of space for 3,300 employees; bringing their per person square foot allowance to just over 142 square feet per person. Lilly accomplished this by reducing the amount of assigned workspace and increasing the amount of shared and temporary, or unassigned space. Quiet focus rooms or areas were provided along with cafes and teams rooms for collaborative work, and enclaves for private conversations.
- In a traditional office setting, there is a lot of wasted real estate usage.
  - According to John Anderson, President & CEO of PeopleCube, "If you walk into a building, typically 40 to 50% of the real estate is not being used on a given day.
  - Dean Strombom, a principal with Gensler architects notes, "Look around most workspaces today and you'll see lots of empty desks. It's not that there isn't someone assigned to the desk; it's just that they are only physically there about 30 to 40% of the time.
  - Based on observable data as reported by Perkins Eastman Architects, "We often see a survey reported workstation utilization rate of 55 to 60%, but find an actual utilization rate of around 50% from our observations."
  - According to TPG architecture, "Statistics show that only 48% of time is spent doing focused work in a general offices environment. The other 52% is spent talking to other people and being away from your desk."

The purpose of the University of Notre Dame Work Space Standards is to assist space planners in the design of work spaces for future new buildings and in renovations to existing facilities. Standardization on fabrics, furnishings, work station sizes, panel heights and components is essential to achieve visual consistency and flexibility while keeping projects affordable. Facilities Design and Operations is, thus, charged to design office space for colleges and units with that group's individual program, purposes, and functions in mind while maintaining reasonable costs.

These Standards supersede and replace any previously published office space guidelines or standards.

The objective of the Standards is to create working environments that:

- provide effective and efficient work space
- provide long-term flexibility
- promote collaboration
- sustain existing building space by minimizing the impact of future modifications to administrative office environments
- are achieved and procured at an appropriate cost and level of quality

These standards were approved by the University Space and Project Review Committee in March 2013. The University Space and Project Review Committee consists of the following University officers and administrators:

Executive Vice President  
 Vice President and Associate Provost  
 Vice President for Finance  
 Vice President for Student Affairs  
 Vice President for University Relations  
 Vice President and Senior Associate Provost  
 Associate Vice President and University Architect  
 Director of Academic Space Management  
 Director, Treasury Services  
 Associate Vice President, Development Advancement Svcs & Finance  
 Analyst in the Office of the Executive Vice President  
 Manager, Capital Planning

This committee was first formed in 2001 in part to help manage the use of the interior building space on campus while overseeing improvements to the built environment in the form of new construction and reinvestment into existing facilities. Any exceptions to the Standards must be formally presented to this committee for consideration following the below process:

- 1.) Exception requests must be submitted in writing by the appropriate Dean or Officer. Exception requests for academic administrative space must be submitted to the Office of the Provost, typically to the Senior Associate Provost. Exception requests for non-academic administrative space must be submitted to the Office of the Executive Vice President. Additional copies of the request must be sent to the Associate Vice President and University Architect.
- 2.) The request shall be brought to the next meeting of the Space and Project Review Committee for consideration and action.
- 3.) The response to the request shall be communicated back to the Dean or Officer.

It is anticipated that the exception process will be seldom used as the University community strives to achieve the objectives of the Standards.

In order to streamline and ensure appropriate application of the Work Space Standards, all new furniture purchases for the University will be administered thru a primary furniture dealership relationship with Business Furnishings. When a campus user has a furniture need they should contact Business Furnishings directly:

Debbie Butler  
Account Manager  
Business Furnishings  
4102 Meghan Beehler Court  
South Bend IN 46628  
(574)243-3255 ext. 224  
[dbutler@business-furnishings.net](mailto:dbutler@business-furnishings.net)

In support of ensuring University funds are used wisely and appropriately, and ensuring the best product solution and discount structures are applied, the following process will be followed by Business Furnishings when a furniture request is received:

- Cross reference the request against University furniture inventory
  - Please see the next paragraph for more information on furniture inventory management
- If University furniture inventory cannot meet the needed request, Steelcase and Steelcase partnership vendors will be sourced.
- If a Steelcase vendor cannot meet the required need, Business Furnishings will assist the campus user in locating other University contracted vendor options

Renovation and large scale project space planning work will continue to be administered thru Facilities Design and Operations' Office of Planning, Design and Construction.

## INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

Business Furnishings will manage for the University a new University wide furniture inventory program located at an off-campus warehouse. Furniture inventory will be collected from existing unused furniture across campus. All furniture processed to University inventory is considered the property of the University and will be redeployed as appropriate when new requests are received.

Business Furnishings will maintain a data base of available furniture (with photographs, dimension, and finish information for their use in meeting campus furniture needs.

Both Business Furnishings and Facilities Design and Operations will use the following standards as the guidelines for planning for space planning and furniture design.

**Administrative Work Space Standards Affected by Position**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Range of Primary Work Space (sf)*</b>	<b>Furniture Material Standard</b>	<b>Private or Open Space</b>	<b>Fabric Allowance***</b>
Members of the Officers' Group and Deans' Council	180 - 250	Wood	Private	\$35-\$85/yard
Associate/Assistant Dean/Registrar	165 - 180	Woodgrain Laminate	Private	\$35-\$85/yard
Associate/Assistant Provost	165 - 180	Woodgrain Laminate	Private	\$35-\$85/yard
Associate/Assistant Vice President	165 - 180	Woodgrain Laminate	Private	\$35-\$85/yard
Department Chair	165 - 180	Woodgrain Laminate	Private	\$35-\$85/yard
Executive Assistant to an Officer, Executive Director, Head Coach, Senior Advisor to an Officer, Senior Associate Athletic Director, and Senior Director* *Depending on the work function of Senior Director this category may fall into the open work category below with the range of 36-120 s.f. open space	150 - 180	Woodgrain Laminate and/or Metal	Private	\$35-\$65/yard
Associate/Assistant Department Chair	150 - 165	Laminate and/or Metal	Private	\$35-\$45/yard
Accountant, Administrator, Advisor, Analyst, Archivist, Associate Director, Assistant Director, Athletic Trainer, Business Manager, Business Partner, Cataloger, Chief Pilot, Coach, Consultant, Coordinator, Counselor, Crew Leader, Librarian, Curator, Developer, Director*, Editor, Engineer, Manager, Processor, Project Manager, Specialist, Supervisor, Technician, Trainer, Writer, and other similar administrative positions *Depending on the work function of the Director, this category may fall into the 150-180 s.f. private work space category above.	36 - 120	Laminate and/or Metal	Open**	\$35-\$45/yard
Officer Assistant, Administrative Assistant, Senior Administrative Assistant, Senior Staff Assistant, Staff Assistant, Assistant, Clerk, Receptionist, and other similar administrative positions	36 - 80	Laminate and/or Metal	Open	\$35-\$45/yard
Student Worker	20	Laminate and/or Metal	Open	\$27-\$35/yard

\*Square footage allotments for individual, primary workspace will be based on several items:

- function of the position requirements
- architectural considerations
- overall occupancy to be achieved in the planned environment
- amount of collaboration ("We") space required for the departmental functions

\*\*In order for a position within this grouping to be considered for a floor to ceiling fully enclosed private office with a door, the request must be approved in writing by the Officer or Dean of the division or college; using the exception process noted above. NOTE: The role of a manager or supervisor does not immediately warrant a private office space; appropriate and sufficient private meeting space will be made available within work groups &/or buildings for supervisors to meet with and consult with their direct reports.

\*\*\*Graded-in fabrics should be used whenever possible and leather will not be permitted in personal offices workspaces

## Target Goals and Planning Standards

Target Goals	Goal Range
Aggregate Gross Square Foot Allocation per worker? (MSD)	185 sf or less
Aggregate average work station size - for use with groups of 10 or more	80 sf
Percentage of I space to We Space*	70% I space 30% We space

\*NOTE: I space and We space must be carefully planned based on the function of the department, total work station counts for “resident”, and “mobile” workers, and available floor/program space for collaborative/meeting spaces.

Planning Standards	Standard
Individual Task Seating Cost	\$550 maximum (medical concerns that require special task seating requirements will be considered)
Panel Height Options	30” 42” 54”
Finishes	
- Panel System Paint	Mineral Metallic Or Carbon Metallic
- Panel Fabric	Grades 1 or 2
- Laminate Work Surfaces	Grades 1 or 2

## Additional Planning Guidelines

- No University employee will have more than 1 office assigned to them on campus
- Segmented panels and glass panels should be used minimally and only in locations of prominence to create a desired effect
- In all cases contracted vendors for office furnishings will be utilized via coordination with Business Furnishings with Steelcase being the primary furniture vendor resource.
- Large orders should be placed at one time, as one order whenever possible.
  - negotiated contracts offer tier discounts based on order totals
- Standard product offerings should be used whenever possible. Special sizes, finishes, etc. add to both cost and lead times

*Note: The configuration of some existing buildings may require, in a few cases, exceptions to the above standards. In that unlikely event, the plan must be reviewed and approved by the Space & Project Review Committee*