COUNCIL FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Co-Chairs:
Dr. Karan L. Watson, Provost and Executive Vice President
Dr. Jerry R. Strawser, Vice President for Finance and Administration

July 15, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: President Michael K. Young

SUBJECT: CBE Recommendation: Proposed Space Utilization – Academic Building

According to University Rule 41.01.01.M1, one of the charges of The Council of the Built Environment (CBE) is to review requests for space for the University and make recommendations to the President. In the near future, due to the completion of renovations, or expiration of temporary agreements, space on the 4th floor of the Academic Building will be available space for allocation. In February of this year, a memo was forwarded to the Deans, Vice Presidents, and Agency Directors to ask those interested to submit a short proposal on their desire for available space. CBE’s Facilities Utilization Review sub-committee (FURsc) was charged to review each request and determine the priority of the needs presented and then prioritize the space requests. The FURsc met to consider the requests by the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Education and Human Development and the combined request of the Center for Geospatial Science, Applications and Technology and the Environment Grand.

The College of Education and Human Development would house several new hires whose work focuses on the area of improving educational achievement in K-12 schools through innovative educational technology and teacher education especially in the STEM and literacy education fields. Space would be needed for 15-20 offices depending on the configuration for faculty, staff and GA’s; 3 larger spaces for collaboration and meetings. There would probably be some limited renovation by creating larger spaces than those currently configured for the testing and collaboration spaces, but painting and freshening the space would be minimal before move in. This cost would be covered with start-up funds.

The College of Liberal Arts would use this office and research space to house an Entrepreneurship presidential hire; consolidate people and activities already supporting the Strengthening Democracy Grand Challenge (e.g., faculty in sociology and communication and the Aggie Agora, a new initiative aimed at bringing students, staff, and faculty together to enhance civil discourse, encourage civic engagement, and understand democratic principles in action); provide meeting/collaboration space for existing and emerging GC participants (e.g., PPRI, departments of Economics and Political Science as well as Sociology and Communication, and nearby interdisciplinary programs); and enhance research support for these areas by providing space for graduate assistants, postdoctoral fellows, and other research staff.

The combined request of the Center for Geospatial Science, Applications and Technology and the Environment Grand Challenge would utilize the space to accommodate: 1) Office space for the director, administrative staff, project managers and students; 2) Conference room to permit planning, management and project meetings; Faculty and students will participate in project, proposal planning and progress reviews, corporate engagement, and center meetings (such as executive committee meetings, team meetings and assessments, and proposal development, among others); 3) Geovisualization rooms/space
for interactive analysis presentations and remote interactions; Faculty and students will utilize geovisualization walls and cyberGIS to facilitate visual interactive analysis of geospatial data and interactively interpret analysis and modeling results with faculty, students and outside entities not present in the GEOSAT Center; and 4) Functional research & contract workspace to permit synergistic interaction among faculty; this space will facilitate collaborative research, workshops, and contract work and will support 10-20 people on a daily basis. The collective space will enable secure administrative, management and research functionality for approximately 40 individuals. This space will be primarily utilized for research, and other GEOSAT space on campus (e.g. O&M 807) will be used for education related projects and other GEOSAT programs.

Major renovations will be required in order to make the space operational for GEOSAT. This includes ceilings, floors, air conditioning, lighting, electricity, internet connectivity, removal of walls and general reorganization of space. And it is also requested that the university provide a 10Gbyte internet connection to the building to promote the TAMU HPC and research infrastructure that is being established via GEOSAT.

The Environmental Grand Challenge requests 6 offices and a common meeting space in the Academic Building that would be used for the Grand Challenge Director, two Project Leaders, an Engagement and Communication Coordinator, a Research Manager, 4 graduate students, and a common meeting space with little or no renovations required to the space assigned.

The Facilities Utilization Review sub-council agreed that each of the proposals had merit; however, concerns were expressed regarding the need of the GEOSAT/Environment Grand Challenge to do major renovations in the Academic Building space which may be at odds with the need to do a comprehensive renovation of the building. After further discussion, it was reported that the College of Education and Human Development’s proposal was centered on a prospective hire who has since declined.

The CBE voted to recommend the President’s approval to reallocate the available space on the fourth floor of the Academic Building to the College of Liberal Arts.

Karan L. Watson 
Provost and Executive Vice President 
Co-Chair, Council for the Built Environment

Jerry R. Strawser
Vice President for Finance and Administration 
Co-Chair, Council for the Built Environment

Concur or not concur with CBE’s recommendation:

Michael K. Young 
President