

Do You Need Space Planning or Space Programming?

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Space planning typically refers to a more macro level of planning, where space needs are broadly quantified by space category, such as during a master plan. For example, the amount of “all in” office and support space required by a campus may be calculated by applying an ASF-per-person multiplier. The resulting outcome quantifies the “pool” of required space and suggests whether a campus collectively has too much or too little.

Each space category in the Facilities Inventory and Classification Manual (FICM) has a corresponding planning parameter, typically linked to institutional enrollment and sector. The outcome of the macro quantification exercise identifies institutional space categories with deficits as well as those with surpluses that may lend themselves to repurposing. These planning parameters are typically referred to as space planning *guidelines* and are readily incorporated into “live” space planning models. Think of space planning as a “mitten” approach that outlines broad space requirements to support data-based decision-making and identify areas for further investigation.

If space planning is a mitten, then *space programming* is a glove, quantifying space on a room-by-room basis. Space programming multipliers, such as a potential allowance of 120 ASF per physical office or 25 ASF per conference room seat, may also be referred to as planning or design *standards*. These standards are used to define the space elements required in a new building or to “right size” space in a renovated building.

Commonly accepted planning parameters are rooted in history, reaching back to the 1950s as the post-war Baby Boomers surged first into public schools and then flowed onto college campuses. In response, many states – and even some private institutions – developed space planning tools to inform capital expenditures and promote space equity. These tools are not fixed, however, and must continuously evolve if they are to reflect real-world space use.

Rickes Associates recently honed its own robust planning toolbox to incorporate the latest space planning metrics in use across the country. Per our extensive research, roughly half of all states currently employ space planning guidelines, space programming standards, or a combination of both. In those states lacking comprehensive guidelines, many dozens of institutions have elected to formulate their own. Regardless of origin, these space planning tools are typically embedded in principles of good *space management*, which help ensure the effective use of capital resources.

How can we help?

We have selectively updated the space planning guidelines in our interactive space planning model *OPUS: Optimization, Planning, and Utilization of Space*. This dynamic model allows us to test assumptions around various space categories on a macro scale. For example, one institution may be exploring the option of moving to more hybrid workspaces while another is examining the space implications of transitioning to active learning classrooms. OPUS will quantify the spatial impacts of varying planning assumptions, including the impact of changes in enrollment composition, personnel, and programmatic offerings.

In addition to modeling best practices, we can also draw on our corresponding benchmark data associated with hundreds of institutions. Although benchmarking reflects what *is* rather than what *should be*, it is still an informative cross-check to understand where an institution may fall when compared to its peers and aspirants.

So, do you need space planning or space programming? A mitten or a glove? With 30-plus years of experience from the macro to the micro, a robust space modeling tool in OPUS, and rich benchmarking resources, Rickes Associates has you covered!