A town hall was held on June 1, 2010 to address questions about the South Texas Research Facility (STRF). Areas discussed included the current status of the construction, operational and management functions, and the timeline for occupancy.

The presentation was based on specific questions and concerns from faculty, chairs, deans, and the planning groups who have been closely involved with the design of the building since the early stages of the project.

**STRF Management – Questions**

**Question 1:** What will be the administrative and support structure at the STRF? Will there be a change in the reporting lines for faculty who move into the STRF?

**Answer:**
This has been the most articulated area of concern.

Faculty in the STRF will retain all current academic and administrative reporting structures.

An on-site leader or director will be selected for each thematic group.

An Executive Council will be formed for the STRF. The council will meet with VPR on regular (2 week) basis for discussions of building operational issues.

**Question 2:** Will each thematic group get an administrative support person?

**Answer:**
Each group will have an administrative assistant supported by shared contributions across the departments/schools whose faculty participate in the group. The administrative support person will report to on-site leader.

Chairs in the departments where the investigators have their primary appointments will remain responsible for all academic issues such as teaching responsibilities, promotions and tenure, salary changes, departmental committee assignments, and career guidance.

**Question 3:** Most faculty are not clear about the actual physical layout. How will special equipment be incorporated into the facility?

**Answer:**
Plans have been presented to group leaders to facilitate discussions with faculty and the New Construction group to incorporate the required special items.

Funds for these special items will come from the construction budget.

**Question 4:**
What will be the impact of the location of the STRF? Will the distance from the Long Campus have a negative impact on existing collaborations?

**Answer:**
Shuttle service between the Long and the Greehey Campuses will run every 15 minutes. New parking spaces (some covered) will exist on Greehey Campus to accommodate building occupants and visitors.

**Question 5:**
How will the location of the STRF impact package deliveries, animal facilities, adequate restaurants, etc...?

The STRF will operate as current buildings in terms of these items. There are future plans for food service in STRF and there is food service in the CTRC, Health Professions building and the MARC.

**Research Space Productivity Indicator (RSPI)**

According to the HOP 7.8.1 the research space productivity index (RSPI) measures both a rolling three year average and a current year measure of direct plus indirect (D+I) income divided by assignable square feet of research space. RSPI is calculated on an investigator, department and school-wide basis.

The Executive Committee on Space Management (ECSM) set the initial target metrics for the HSC’s RSPI calculation. At the outset the Medical, Dental, and Graduate School’s target RSPI was $350 per square foot. The School of Nursing target was $250 and $75 for the School of Health Professions. For “operating research units” (ORU’s) the target RSPI is the same as that for the Medical, Dental, and Graduate Schools.

A recent change to the target RSPI level has been adopted by the ECSM raising the target to $500 per square foot. This new target aligns the HSC with its closest competitors in UT System. For the 2008-2009 fiscal year the following expenditures per research square foot were reported by The Higher Education Coordinating Board:

- SWMC– Dallas: $444
- UTMB– Galveston: $266
- HSC– Houston: $438
- HSC– San Antonio: $356
- MD Anderson: $667
- HSC– Tyler: $267

Setting the target RSPI at $500 per square foot would position the HSC above most of the UT System health components. The RSPI is calculated based on both direct and indirect costs awarded to an investigator and is credited back to the department/school/center where the faculty have an affiliation. Some of the schools have significantly exceeded the old RSPI of $350/sq.ft. and increasing the RSPI will allow the
institution to be more accountable for efficient use of its space.

The RSPI calculation in the South Texas Research Facility (STRF) will be calculated differently because of the open wet bench design and the associated support areas. Instead of dollars per square foot the calculation will be dollars per linear foot of bench. The conversion: 

\[.168 \text{ LF} = \$1/\text{sq ft}\]

Each lab module has 6 benches. Each bench 21 feet long on each side for a total of 42 linear feet. Each module has 126 linear feet of bench. The equipment area in each lab module is 440 square feet. There are 40 lb modules on the 2nd floor of the STRF.

![Typical STRF Lab Module](image)

**Program Selection**
Research programs selected for the STRF include
- Adult Cancer
- Neurosciences
- Healthy Aging
- Metabolic Biology
- Regenerative Medicine
- IIMS

These groups met with architects over a year to discuss specific design needs.

**Faculty Relocation Process**
The faculty relocation process has begun and has maintained the principle that 40% of the building will remain open for future recruitment and 60% will be available for current faculty.

The process of identifying faculty who will relocate has been a bottom up process beginning with group leaders from each program area. These include
- Neuroscience (David Weiss)
- Metabolic Obesity (Ralph DeFronzo)
- Healthy Aging (Arlan Richardson)
- Regenerative Medicine (Steve Wolf)
- Adult Cancer (LuZhe Sun)
- IIMS (Bob Clark)

The group leaders from each program area provided a list of names to the Vice President for Research (VPR). The VPR in turn provided the list to the deans and department chairs of the faculty on the list. The VPR has asked the deans and chairs to look at the list and to work with group leaders to come to an agreement on the list of faculty. This is currently in process.

The VPR is meeting with faculty on the list to verify that they do want to move to the STRF and to discuss preliminary movement-related issues. Research done in the STRF will be credited to departments and centers as it is done now. Academic and grant issues will still reside in the current structures. Dr. John Cole will oversee the transition of the faculty and other issues dealing with the start up of research activity in the new building.

**Construction Update**
The Lab Animal Resources extension is underground and ready for occupancy.

The building design is graded for optimal support with one end of the building at ground level and the other raised with pillars. The STRF design will allow for extension on both ends for future growth.

An increase in new parking spots is planned with some new spaces available now.

Future plans for the north campus also include a conference center that would connect the STRF and GCCRI with a food court and conference rooms.

**Next Steps**
The next steps for the STRF planning include completing the faculty selection process, selecting furniture, a color scheme selection, developing an appropriate building management plan, and raising remaining capital for completion of the building. To date $144 million out of the $150 million approved for construction has been raised.

Because of faculty relocation the Long campus will recover 30,000 to 40,000 square feet of space. The HSC is looking at funding to renovate and update recaptured space.

**STRF Management**
The cost of operation of the STRF (house keeping, security, utilities, etc...) is $2.2 million per year. The HSC will use Facilities & Administration (F&A) funds to pay this cost and will not charge rent for the space. F&A continues to increase and the STRF gives the HSC an advantage to enhance F&A immediately and will positively impact recruitment going forward.

The Office of the VPR will manage the building which means hiring a person to oversee the day to day building operations and to assist occupants with facility issues. A council representing the building occupants will be formed to assist VPR with oversight of the building.