

FACILITIES MASTER PLAN REVIEW

Clarion University of Pennsylvania

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This report fulfills the System's requirement for conducting a review and update of actions the University has taken to implement its Facilities Master Plan. Accordingly, the following information provides a review of the Plan's original concepts, discusses the current status of facilities programs for implementing the Plan, and covers recent developments that may require modifications to the Plan.

Original Plan Concepts

The University Council of Trustees approved the Facilities Master Plan in July 1998. The Plan covers a 20-year period and was developed to ensure the efficient use of University buildings and land, improve vehicle and pedestrian circulation, and improve campus appearance. Phases for near-term (1996-2001), mid-term (2002-2006), and long range (2007-2016) periods are defined in the document.

Near-term aspects of the Master Plan focus on an array of program relocations and attendant renovations necessary to prepare for accomplishing the capital project to expand and renovate the Carlson Library. These relocations served a second purpose in that they were also developed to more closely align space needs with programs and thereby accommodate the concept of using buildings and land more efficiently. Other topics addressed in the near-term involve landscaping, parking, and a detailed deficiency and adaptability analysis of selected program facilities. In this regard, the analysis of Peirce Science Center shows that it has a limited capability to support current and emerging instructional technologies.

Subsequent phases of the Plan propose changes to develop additional parking facilities, diversify the inventory of student housing options, and develop more appropriate facilities for conducting community outreach and day care programs.

Current Status

As the end of the near-term phase of the Plan approaches, the University has achieved significant progress in implementing the Plan's original concepts. The recommended relocations for Communications Sciences Disorders, Academic Support Services, and English programs were accomplished to facilitate vacating the Carlson Library prior to commencement of the renovation and expansion project. The project is now under way and is scheduled for completion in December 2001.

Pursuant to landscaping, housing, parking, and facility deficiency issues noted in the Facilities Master Plan, two major supporting plans and a feasibility study were written and approved during the near-term phase. First, a Landscape Master Plan was developed

to provide detailed guidelines for obtaining a more consistent campus appearance and to recommend specific project priorities that would implement this concept. Three of the five recommended projects have been accomplished: one at the main entrance to the campus, one associated with construction of the Recreation Center (also addressed in the Master Plan) and one associated with the ongoing Library expansion and renovation project. The remaining two projects are programmed for accomplishment during the mid-term phase of the Facilities Master Plan.

The second supporting plan, the Housing Master Plan, examines the feasibility, options, and costs associated with building new residence halls, upgrading existing buildings into more modern and code-compliant facilities, or possibly demolishing and replacing identified residence halls. The Housing Master Plan was completed in April 2001 and recommends sequential steps to diversify the University's student housing inventory. The ability to obtain bond funding and to pursue public-private housing construction initiatives is central to the Plan's execution.

A major feasibility study to review options for improving the University's facilities for science programs was also undertaken as a result of recommendations in the Facilities Master Plan. Conducted over a two-year period, the study resulted in the submission and legislative approval of a capital project to replace the Peirce Science Center.

Vehicle and pedestrian circulation concepts noted in the Facilities Master Plan have also been addressed during the near-term phase. Both leased and owned parking facilities for over 300 vehicles have been constructed on the perimeter of the campus, thereby reducing vehicle-pedestrian conflict points nearer the center of the University's grounds. Recreation Center and Library construction projects have also taken parking into consideration.

Recent Developments and Validity of Original Plan Assumptions

In general, the original assumptions of the Facilities Master Plan remain valid with three exceptions. These exceptions have been generated by:

- (1) growth in specific programs, primarily within the College of Education and Human Services,
- (2) space needs of Computer and Communications Services in view of an accelerated transition to more sophisticated technology in teaching and learning spaces,
- (3) System policies related to operation, maintenance, and/or construction of student residence facilities.

Program Growth

The Facilities Master Plan assumed growth of programs at a relatively proportionate rate among all of the University's colleges, based on historical data available at the time the

Plan was developed. However, although the projections for overall University enrollment growth remain valid, the enrollment within the College of Education and Human Services is now in excess of 42 percent of the University's total FTE. This represents a disproportionate growth in these specific programs, and consequently, has caused a review of space needs for the College. To accommodate this growth, re-alignment of space allocations among the colleges may be necessary. This re-alignment may also be problematic due to a need to customize spaces for use of particular technologies unique to programs within each college.

Space Needs of Computer and Communications Support Services

Although the Facilities Master Plan carried an implied assumption that emerging technologies would be implemented in teaching and learning processes, the pace of this transition has been more accelerated than the Plan forecasted. The advent of wireless technology, the decrease in prices for computers, peripherals, and software, and student reliance on these items have generated an expanded role for the University's Computer and Communications Services activities. Consequently, the space needs for these support services have increased at a rate not accounted for in the original Master Plan.

System Policies for Operating, Maintaining, and Constructing Student Residence Facilities

The Facilities Master Plan and its supporting Housing Master Plan were developed on the basic assumption that new residence hall construction would require accomplishment through public-private initiatives. However, there was also an assumption that major renovations and reconfigurations of existing housing assets could be funded through System-supported bonding arrangements.

The recent change in System policies toward funding of renovations and reconfigurations of residence halls presents the need for making fundamental changes in the Facilities Master Plan. These changes would appear to extend well beyond a simplistic review of the Plan's recommendations only as they relate to the University's housing and residence life programs. To be sure, restrictions on finance and the timing of demolition and/or conversion options in the housing arena appear to carry implications for the Master Plan's recommendations related to academic program facilities as well. This expands the scope of the review and changes required for maintaining the overall Facilities Master Plan as a relevant document.

In response to these changes, the University is presently undertaking a review of the Facilities Master Plan to examine comprehensively the impact of re-structuring housing and residence life programs in accordance with System guidance. This review will incorporate the revision of the assumptions related to space needs for residence life, academic, and administrative programs. Concurrently, the review will also assess the need for the assistance of an outside planning consultant similar to the assistance provided when the Master Plan was developed initially.

Conclusions

The Facilities Master Plan is intended as a guide for campus development in a way that accommodates changes in the University's programs. As the near-term phase of the Plan concludes, program changes have indeed occurred, and the Plan has served its purpose to date. However, assumptions related to housing, academic, and administrative space allocations require a comprehensive review and revision if the Plan is to continue to function as an effective guide.

Of particular importance is the need to re-examine the compatibility of the Facilities Master Plan with current System policies for developing student-housing facilities. These policies suggest the need for significant changes in the Plan's assumptions, not only in the context of housing issues but also to the extent that instructional and administrative spaces may also be affected.