Campus Development Plan

Introduction

The University of Pennsylvania has clearly articulated its commitment to being "one of the premier research and teaching universities in the nation and the world." It was with this goal in mind that the University initiated a comprehensive planning process of which the strategic plan, Agenda for Excellence, was the first step. As the next chapter within this comprehensive planning process, we propose the development of a campus development plan. The primary purpose of such a plan is to assure that the University’s physical environment fulfills the needs of its academic mission.

The University of Pennsylvania campus, located for the most part in West Philadelphia, covers about 260 acres of land dedicated primarily to academic, administrative, medical, student facilities including recreational, and retail use. Facilities range from the historic buildings of the 1800s to the new structures designed for Sansom Common and the Wharton School. The land and facilities that comprise the campus are estimated at a worth of $5 billion. Despite its rich heritage and value, for the most part the development of the physical campus has not proceeded from an advanced planning initiative as proposed herein.

We begin with the premise that an effective and attractive physical environment is vitally important to the faculty, students, administrators, and staff of the University. The physical environment of the University is also important to the community that surrounds Penn, to the city of Philadelphia, and to the thousands who visit the campus each week. While Penn’s current environment is in an overall sense both effective and attractive, there are elements of the environment that continue to need our attention. In addition, much of the available space on campus has already been allocated for academic or other uses; use of the remaining space must be carefully planned. Finally, as is the case with all of its other vital resources, Penn will need to skillfully manage the totality of its physical environment in the years to come.

Objectives

With the academic mission as its overriding concern and within the framework established by Agenda for Excellence and the schools’ academic plans, the campus development plan will provide general guidelines for the development of Penn’s physical environment for both the short- and long-term future. We do not expect that these guidelines will address specific issues such as resource allocation or the assignment of space to particular schools or programs. These will continue to be handled through the University’s existing structures and processes. We do expect, however, that once the plan is developed, these specific decisions will be made within an overall campus perspective. In addition, we recognize that the campus has and will continue to evolve, that it will continue to be dynamic and not static. Thus, we expect that the campus plan and its guidelines will serve as a framework for conceptual development and future planning and, once completed, will be revisited routinely for updating and revision.

In order to clarify the intent of this development plan, it will be useful to enumerate specific examples of what the plan is or is not intended to accomplish.

The campus development plan will:

- provide a flexible but integrated framework for future decisions on specific site use that can be regularly revised and updated.
- provide general guidelines for building size and massing in different areas of the campus.
- recommend general classes of use for various campus regions (e.g. academic, recreational, residential, parking, etc.).
- provide specific suggestions regarding green space, landscaping standards, and campus visual gateways.
- develop alternatives for improving vehicular, pedestrian and commercial traffic flow on the campus.

The campus development plan will not:

- commit specific building sites or existing buildings for use by specific schools or programs.
- involve the development of a new strategic academic plan.
- involve specific decisions on capital projects or the commitment of resources.

Areas of Focus

Within this overall context, we propose two primary objectives in order of their priority:

1. Examine the academic and scholarly environment of the campus and the extent to which this environment meets the teaching and research needs and the support requirements of faculty, students, and staff.

In order to address this objective, the Agenda for Excellence and the schools’ own strategic plans will be examined to explore the impact of these pre-existing plans on the University’s physical environment. Some of the issues that will need to be addressed include: a) how current pedagogical trends might affect the use of academic space in and across schools; b) whether the plans, taken separately or together, suggest common approaches to the configuration of faculty and administrative offices, research facilities, and classroom space; and c) whether anticipated technological advances will, in the near term, alter our teaching methods and our approach to the use of academic space.

2. Examine student, faculty, and administrative life; neighborhood and community life; and campus amenities.

Over the past several years the University has undertaken a number of initiatives to create a more fully integrated living and learning environment for students and faculty such as the creation of College Houses and the Huts. The continued evolution of this environment for all campus constituencies must include consideration of academic, living, working, dining, recreation, shopping, services and cultural activities. We must examine, for example, a) what are the available opportunities to enliven the campus and surrounding environs? b) how can these various options be integrated so that scarce physical and environmental resources are best utilized? and c) where should the University provide the opportunity for planned and routine activities for its constituencies versus chance encounters?

While subsumed under these two main objectives, there are three other aspects of the physical environment that we believe must be addressed, at first separately, and then in an integrated fashion. We propose to:

3. Examine the unique opportunities and challenges of Penn’s large number of historic buildings.

We need to address, for example, a) what is the importance of historical buildings to the campus and community? b) how can historic buildings be creatively used or re-used? c) what are the University’s legal and ethical obligations surrounding historic buildings? d) should the University acquire historic buildings and, if so, what are the guidelines for their renovation or demolition?

4. Examine access, circulation, transportation, and service for their impact on the campus environment.

These are issues that impact every member of the University community. Within this context we will need to examine travel to and within campus, parking, campus gateways, streetscape/furniture guidelines and mass transportation. We need to address, for example, a) how does the University interface with the city? b) how can intra- and inter-campus circulation be improved? c) how can vehicular and pedestrian safety be maximized? and d) how can service and delivery be accomplished most effectively?

5. Examine maintenance and operations for their impact on the physical environment.

Because continued quality of the environment depends on continued upkeep of the buildings and land, maintenance and operations must be an integral part of campus planning. We need to address, for example, a) what are the trade-offs between continued and deferred maintenance? b) what are the costs of continued maintenance vis a vis the resources? c) what are the life-cycle costs of continued maintenance?
Process

The University has hired Olin Partnership, Ltd., a leading landscape architectural and urban design firm based in Philadelphia, to assist the faculty and administration in preparing the campus development plan. Their extensive campus work includes campus plans for Yale, M.I.T., Harvard Business School, Duke University, and the University of Southern California among others. In addition to numerous projects at Penn, they have also completed projects at such universities as Ohio State University, Case Western Reserve University and the University of Washington. Their work in the public realm includes the J. Paul Getty Center in Los Angeles, Bryant Park and Wagner Park in New York City, and Cany Wharf and Exchange Square in London. Currently they are the lead consultant for the Master Plan of Independence National Historic Park.

Olin Partnership has achieved their national and international reputation under the leadership of founding partner Laurie D. Olin, a former chair of Harvard University’s Department of Landscape Architecture. Olin resides in West Philadelphia and is currently Professor in Practice in Penn’s Graduate School of Fine Arts. He was a member of the Faculty Design Team that undertook, produced and implemented the University’s Landscape Master Plan of 1976. His partners in the firm have equally strong ties to Penn as alumni and adjunct faculty in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning.

In order to conduct a careful, thorough review of Penn’s campus and its future development and to receive advice we will:
1. Seek the advice of the Council of Deans and the Academic Planning and Budget Committee as we initiate the process and routinely as the plans begin to unfold. We will also update the University Council Committee on Facilities and the Faculty Senate leadership on a routine basis. Prior to final approval of a plan, the advice of the University Council and the Senate Executive Committee will be sought. The proposals also will be published in Almanac For Comment by the community-at-large.
2. Appoint several working committees to coordinate activity and analyze data. The Steering Committee will refine the objectives and charge of each committee. It will receive preliminary proposals from the other committees to be established and coordinate the overall effort. Each of the other five committees will be asked to focus on one of the plan’s five objectives. These groups will meet regularly throughout the process to synthesize and consider the information gathered in open fora, provide further input into the plan, and generate review proposed solutions as they are developed. [Ed. Note: Committees are to be announced shortly.]

The membership of the committee will depend heavily on its focus, but it is our intention to involve faculty, students, staff and administrators in the process. We will include individuals who represent the University Council Committee on Facilities and faculty who are recommended by the Faculty Senate. In addition, these committees will rely on the expertise of various faculty members in such areas as planning, architecture, and engineering and administrators with responsibility for functional areas pertinent to each group. Each of the committees will be supported further by planning consultants under the direction of Practice Professor Laurie Olin. It is anticipated that Professor Olin’s team will gather input from the committees and develop for their consideration alternative ways of addressing the committees’ issues. The committees will consider these alternatives as they move toward the development of recommendations.

3. Begin the consultative process with a series of open fora designed to solicit broad-based input from all community constituencies. It is anticipated that each forum will center on one of the above objectives so that focused community input can be achieved.
4. Meet with the leadership of the various campus constituencies to gather their views about the overall campus planning initiative and the more specific questions to be addressed under each of the objectives.
5. Synthesize findings and develop recommendations. Professor Olin and his consulting team will coordinate the integration of information from each of the fora and from each committee. This process will be overseen by the Steering Committee.
6. Generate final suggestions for endorsement. After review and input from each of the participating groups, the findings and recommendations will be presented to the President for her consideration. The Board of Trustees will then receive and discuss the recommended plans.
7. Mechanism for periodically reviewing and updating the campus development plan. We will seek the advice of the Council of Deans and the Academic Planning and Budget Committee in developing this review process.

Judith Rodin, President
Robert Barchi, Provost
John Fry, Executive Vice President

ALMANAC April 6, 1999

Staff Changes

Judith Rogers
Tram Nguyen
Meryl Marcus

Office of the Secretary:
Two Appointments and a Promotion

The Secretary of the University, Rosemary McManus, has announced the appointments of a Director of Trustee Affairs and a University Council Coordinator, and the promotion of the former manager of events to Associate Director of the Office.

Trustee Affairs: Dr. Judith Krieger Rogers will join the Office as Director of Trustee Affairs full-time on May 24. She will work with the Secretary in planning and executing strategies to promote the effective governance of the University through its Board of Trustees.

Dr. Rogers has been director of student affairs in the Wharton Graduate Division for 12 years. “She has received great reviews for her work with the students on their co-curricular activities, her management of the Zweig Executive Dinner Series, and her leadership role in community building at Wharton,” said Ms. McManus. She previously worked in public relations for Hershey Entertainment and Resort Company and for Creative Images Advertising. Dr. Rogers holds a B.A. in sociology from Bucknell University, an M.Ed. Higher Education from William and Mary, and an Ed. D. in Higher Education from Penn.

Council: Tram Nguyen, who recently joined the Office of the Secretary as University Council Coordinator, manages preparations for University Council meetings and provides administrative support to Council Committees. She functions as the main contact for all Council business within the Office of the Secretary where, Ms. McManus said, “The introduction of a full-time Council Coordinator will enable better communication among various constituencies and Council and facilitate Council’s role as a forum for the discussion of matters affecting the common interests of faculty, staff and students.”

Ms. Nguyen, a 1996 alumna of Penn, holds a B.A. in the history and sociology of science. She came to her Penn post from Deloitte & Touche LLP.

Associate Director: Meryl Marcus, newly named to the post of Associate Director in the Office of the Secretary, joined the office as manager of events July 1998 after coordinating two of Penn’s Commencements. She currently manages all of the ceremonial functions of the Office and the diploma process. “Meryl has made major strides in revamping the Commencement process, building our partnerships with the twelve schools, and protecting our reputational risk by bringing increased attention to the diploma process,” said Ms. McManus.

Ms. Marcus holds a B.A. in history and music from SUNY, and a Master of Public Administration degree from NYU. Prior to joining the Office of the Secretary she was the clinical department administrator at the Institute for Environmental Medicine at Penn’s School of Medicine and served as administrator of the Pediatric Neurology Faculty Practice at Temple’s medical school.

To Pew Charitable Trusts: Michael Burton

Michael Burton, who has been a special assistant to the president since 1996, will join the Pew Charitable Trusts on April 12 as an associate of the Venture Fund—the largest of the seven Pew trusts and the one that initiates its own outreach to find opportunities outside the six closely-defined funds (Arts & Culture, Health and Human Services, etc.). Mr. Burton served as President Rodin’s representative to numerous University committees and projects, including the Affirmative Action Council, the Annenberg Center and ICA reviews, and the Information Technology Working Group.