

Master Plan - Faculty Feedback

- There is a general consensus that green space needs to be maintained AND created. These spaces should consist of more than just a lawn. There were comments about “interesting” green spaces that had places to sit and covered areas. The Biology department in particular emphasized that green spaces can be used for more than just leisure. There are many educational opportunities that can be created with the right green spaces.
- There is also a general consensus that there needs to be more outdoor teaching areas, especially at the Ruffner end of campus. There are two spaces located next to the Fitness center but none on the other end of campus. Spaces that could also be utilized by students as study spaces would be beneficial.
- There is very poor connection between the campus and the Landings area. Students filter across Main St and drivers can become frustrated with getting caught at the crosswalk. Also the connection between French Hall, Venable St, and the Landings has been poorly remodeled. It was commented that “they jackhammered out the now-useful sidewalk that would connect with the Landings and replaced it with one that curved to point to nothing at all, so that there is now a worn spot where everyone walks along the old sidewalk to actually go to the Landings.” It should be recognized that this issue not only affects students’ commuting to campus but also an academic department since the HARK department is located in the old Lumber Yard building on 4th St.
- At the other end of campus, the connection between campus and the Moton Museum is awkward and in places dangerous. The south end of campus is poorly connected to the community and discourages student access to the retail spaces. There are no sidewalks in places on Griffin Blvd.
- Parking, especially at the north (Ruffner) end of campus, is a general gripe for faculty. The faculty on the north end of campus commented that their parking spaces had been gradually removed and were also the first to be restricted during special events. A master plan that further cuts into parking will not be well received. In line with parking there were requests for better alternatives to driving. For example, there are no covered bike racks on campus and not enough bike racks in general. Better bike access between campus and off-campus housing is needed. There also needs to be spaces for alternative energy (electric) vehicles. Faculty that do not live in Farmville who would like to invest in an alternative energy vehicle are restricted by an absence of charging stations on campus.
- More general areas need to be open to students 24 hours. There is a lack of study spaces for students around campus and the hours are restrictive. It was suggested that study spaces that are more connected physically to academic departments would be welcome since students tend to consider a department’s physical location as their academic home on campus. This would also place students in close proximity to faculty in case they had questions about study material.
- There is a general consensus that faculty would like some social space on campus that is not open to students. For example, a staff/faculty club or “a pub”, that does not have to be formally scheduled. This would encourage collaborative interdisciplinary conversations among faculty that do not have a chance to interact during their regular schedules.
- The faculty enjoy the LCVA art installed throughout campus and the sculpture program. It was suggested that an interactive walking tour could be developed. This could also be developed for green spaces.
- All faculty commented that the plan should take into account the growing number of students in certain subject areas and should be planned accordingly. The best example of this is the Chichester Science Building. It was already too small for the departments when they moved in. There is a need for more faculty office space across campus but this needs to be carefully planned (perhaps with admissions data and projections) to work for the programs that are in-demand. It was emphasized that it was important that departments do not become fragmented across multiple buildings, and if possible, multiple floors. Additional spaces should not be overflow space that turns into an “adjunct ghetto”.
- Willett Hall is an embarrassment for a Division I basketball program. As someone who has also worked in Willett for 7 years it is also a depressing cold-war era building to work in. Any new facility that is planned with basketball in mind should also be able to be used for multiple activities such as music concerts, speeches, research symposia, and cultural and community events, and should also be able to enrich campus and community life beyond sports.
- Please plan smoking stations carefully. For example, there are smoking stations on the High St side of Ruffner! There is also a smoking station outside Willett Hall, a building that houses the Health, Athletic Training, Recreation, and Kinesiology Department and hosts athletic events!
- The campus needs to be friendlier to visitors. Visitors have no idea where to park, there is no obvious welcome center, and the maps on campus are poor/incorrect and difficult to locate.