

**MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE
CAMPUS LANDSCAPE AND FACILITIES MASTER PLAN
September 2002**

Introduction

In March 2000, President Creighton convened an *ad hoc* Campus Master Planning Committee of faculty, staff and students to decide what changes need to be made over the next fifteen years to buildings, landscape, infrastructure, parking, accessibility, and circulation around the campus. The Committee was also asked to consider the College's environmental responsibilities as well as to devise links between its planning process and its curricular and co-curricular program.

Over the next nineteen months, the Committee received and reviewed a number of studies and other resource documents, including two reports by Philip Parsons, a landscape master plan study by Carol R. Johnson Associates, and a Sightlines facilities study (Appendix A). The Committee also consulted with the College community at each stage of its proceedings through open meetings, public presentations and individual interviews.

The Committee's discussions quickly identified a number of aspects of the campus that should remain the same, including:

- Preserving the overall configuration of the campus landscape with its open greens and prominent tree canopy.
- Maintaining the historic look of the campus buildings, particularly on College Street, and ensuring that any new construction is compatible with existing architecture.
- Enhancing the aesthetic quality of the campus through the design of buildings, landscaping and outdoor spaces.
- Protecting the sacred spaces on campus, including the greens, Mary Lyon's grave, Stony Brook and the lakes.
- Continuing to envision the campus as a botanic garden.
- Supporting the regular maintenance of the campus's facilities and equipment.

In addition, the Committee identified several aspects of the campus where change would be beneficial, including:

- Moving to a more pedestrian centered campus.
- Focusing more systematically on the campus landscape.

- Making environmental stewardship an institutional priority.
- Strengthening the sense of vitality of the campus.

In the course of its deliberations, the Committee agreed on a set of interrelated principles on which to base its observations, goals and recommendations. It proposed that the campus master plan should:

- Inject an urban dynamism and vitality into the campus through landscape and architecture, framing central areas of activity in ways that make them visible and compelling.
- Protect the tranquility and contemplation offered by the campus's many pastoral areas, and, where necessary, make those sites more inviting.
- Preserve the overall proportions of the campus with its open green spaces and mature tree canopy while improving campus circulation, clarifying the campus's physical layout for outsiders and newcomers, and creating greater opportunities for social interaction among students, faculty, staff and visitors.
- Enhance the College's natural and built resources to provide an optimal setting for liberal arts education in ways sensitive to the ecology of the campus and surrounding region.
- Open the College to the world, forging its identity in the 21st century as a contemporary and forward-looking as well as historic and venerable academic institution.

Each of these overarching principles is reflected in the specific goals and recommendations of this report, which we have divided into four major subject areas: landscape, parking and circulation, environmental stewardship, and facilities design and maintenance.

Landscape

Sidebar:

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Mount Holyoke College began on the narrow strip of land fronting College Street and extending to Lower Lake that is currently occupied by Mary Lyon Hall, Mary Lyon's grave, the Richard Glenn Gettell Amphitheatre and Pageant Field. Early expansion was to the north and to the east on Prospect Hill. The College did not acquire much of the land housing the current core campus south of Mary Lyon Hall until the 1880's and 1890's. With the destruction on the original Seminary building by fire in 1896, the College began an extensive building program with the assistance of John Olmsted, son of Frederick Law Olmsted, America's most famous landscape designer. This necessarily rapid rebuilding of much of the campus abandoned the single massive structure of the Seminary for a series of smaller buildings. In particular, this was the

beginning at Mount Holyoke of the “cottage” approach to residential buildings that had become popular at Smith and other women’s colleges and remains a prominent feature of the campus.

Contrary to widespread perception at Mount Holyoke, John Olmsted did not create a comprehensive plan for the College’s landscape. Rather, he offered advice as the rebuilding in the late 1890’s proceeded in a hurried and piecemeal way. As a result, much of the formality characteristic of men’s college campuses (such as rectilinear courtyards and closely spaced buildings) that Olmsted would have preferred was never achieved at Mount Holyoke and some of the most distinctive elements of the campus—the generous open spaces between buildings and the large, rolling lawns of the campus greens—were created.

The first comprehensive landscape plan was developed by Ralph Adams Cram and Arthur Shurtleff in the late 1920’s during Mary Woolley’s presidency. This plan brought some of the more formal elements that are seen on campus: stronger courtyards, although still not enclosed quadrangles, and buildings that faced into the campus greens rather than outward to the streets.

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Mount Holyoke College is known for the great beauty of its campus. In their proposed landscape master plan for the College, Carol R. Johnson Associates state that “the strength of Mount Holyoke’s landscape is defined primarily by its strong architectural edges, mature tree canopy and rolling, irregular topography.” Much of our reputation stems from the fact that, since the 1870s, the campus has been a botanic garden, comprising an arboretum, a greenhouse complex, mixed herbaceous beds and borders and several specialty gardens (Appendix B).

In addition to our responsibility to preserve the College’s status as one of the most beautiful in the nation, we discussed our institutional commitment to environmental sustainability and environmental education. We talked about the role that art might play in enhancing the beauty of the physical campus and creating additional educational opportunities. Inspired by an observation made by Philip Parsons in his March 2000 master planning study that there were usually very few students congregating in outdoor spaces or walking along the paths on campus, we discussed ways to create opportunities and enticements for this kind of gathering to occur. We thought about what renovations and maintenance needed to be done to the landscape to facilitate the enjoyment of this tremendous asset.

In thinking about creating a more outdoor-centered campus, we considered the impact of the New England climate on the success of the spaces and programming we envisioned. Since the student and faculty community currently use the campus primarily from September to May, our principal recommendations are made with that usage in mind, but we also recognized that the campus is used year-round and considered summer use as well.

Primary Goals:

- Preserve and, where possible, increase the attractiveness of the campus.
- Enhance the experience of—and expand the use of—outdoor spaces by students, faculty, staff and visitors.
- Support the curricular mission of such departments and divisions as biology, environmental studies, and the arts.
- Support the co-curricular mission by providing gathering spaces and opportunities for engaged learning and developing recreational uses in the landscape.

Recommendations:

- Maintain and enhance the open spaces, views and vistas of the campus and emphasize the high shade tree canopy along the greens and the campus edges.
- Develop and implement a long-range plan for the continuing health and renewal of the tree canopy.
- Implement the design standards recommended in the Landscape Master Plan study developed by Carol R. Johnson Associates for paving, curbing, outdoor furnishings, lighting and signage to give the campus a more coherent look.
- Emphasize the appeal of the outdoors with furniture, lighting, recreational opportunities (walking paths, ski trails, skating rink, etc.) and the thoughtful use of outdoor art as part of the design of buildings, terraces, and other outdoor spaces.
- Work with faculty to identify sites for curricular use of the landscape (research, stewardship, design competitions, temporary installations, etc.)

Parking and Circulation

Mount Holyoke has long suffered from a lack of clearly identified entrances to campus. In addition to the Field Gate, the campus needs a major entrance at Chapin Road and College Street, as well as minor but more clearly defined entrances where Lower Lake Road intersects with Morgan and Park Streets. Also needed are campus maps near these entrances and more extensive signage to assist visitors in finding their way around campus (for example, directing visitors to parking areas and highlighting upcoming event locations).

Originally a walking campus, Mount Holyoke now is witnessing a competition between vehicles and pedestrians for the same space in many parts of campus. The dominance of vehicles is impeding the flow of both kinds of traffic and is threatening the safety of all parties. Cars parked on central campus further crowd the roadways and diminish the beauty of the College.

Primary goals:

- Re-establish the predominance of pedestrian over vehicular circulation.
- Improve circulation throughout campus for both vehicles and pedestrians.
- Establish an effective visitor arrival sequence, including better signage, information kiosks, campus maps and parking information.

Recommendations:

- Make Lower Lake, Chapin and Gateway Roads the primary routes through campus. Gateway Road will become one-way, coming in through the Field Gate and out onto Park Street. Other campus roads, while still available for service, emergency and handicapped access purposes, will become primarily pedestrian pathways in use and scale.
- Minimize parking around the central greens and along the water while expanding peripheral lots to provide adequate parking for students, faculty, staff and visitors.
- Make the campus in general more pedestrian-friendly by improving sidewalks, removing excess pavement and improving connections between the east and west parts of campus, the north part of campus, the buildings west of College Street and the east side of Lower Lake. Avoid building stairs wherever possible; barrier-free access will be assured in the east/west direction on campus primarily through the use of elevators in buildings.
- Work with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Town of South Hadley to improve the safety of pedestrian crossings and sidewalks on College (Route 116), Park and Morgan Streets.
- Establish a signage system on the Prospect Hill trails.

Environmental Stewardship

The Plan for Mount Holyoke 2003 states that the College should become “the center of excellence for environmental education and literacy in the Pioneer Valley”. The Center for Environmental Literacy was subsequently established to integrate environmental literacy across the curriculum, developing the intellectual and physical infrastructure necessary for the campus to function as an effective laboratory for the study of landscape ecology. The College also became a signatory to the Talloires Declaration (see sidebar), which identifies broad goals for environmental stewardship.

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Sidebar: Talloires Declaration

- *Use every opportunity to raise public, government, industry, foundation and university awareness by openly addressing the urgent need to move toward an environmentally sustainable future.*
- *Encourage all universities to engage in education, research, policy formation and information exchange on population, environment and development to move toward global sustainability.*
- *Establish programs to produce expertise in environmental management, sustainable economic development, population, and related fields to ensure that all university graduates are environmentally literate and have the awareness and understanding to be ecologically responsible citizens.*
- *Create programs to develop the capability of university faculty to teach environmental literacy to all undergraduate, graduate and professional students.*
- *Set an example of environmental responsibility by establishing institutional ecology policies and practices of resource conservation, recycling, waste reduction and environmentally sound operations.*
- *Encourage involvement of government, foundations and industry in supporting interdisciplinary research, education, policy formation and information exchange in environmentally sustainable development. Expand work with community and nongovernmental organizations to assist in finding solutions to environmental problems.*
- *Convene university faculty and administrators with environmental practitioners to develop curricula, research initiatives, operations systems and outreach activities to support an environmentally sustainable future.*
- *Establish partnerships with primary and secondary schools to help develop the capacity for interdisciplinary teaching about population, environment and sustainable development.*
- *Establish a Secretariat and a steering committee to continue this momentum, and to inform and support each other's efforts in carrying out this decision.*

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Building on the work of the past several years, the College is committed to further improving the environmental sustainability of our community. The United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development defines sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs now and in the future”.

Primary goal:

- Affirm the goal of sustainability through responsible stewardship of the land.

Recommendations:

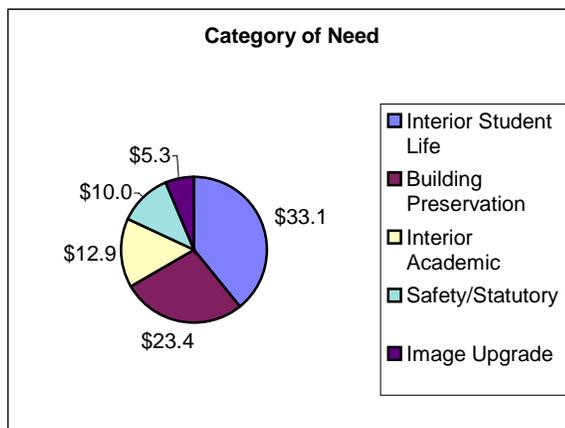
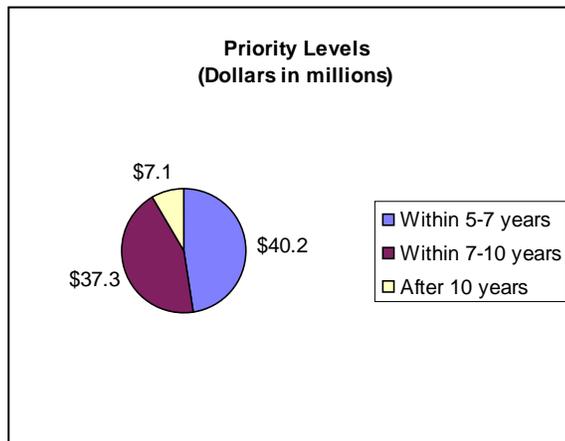
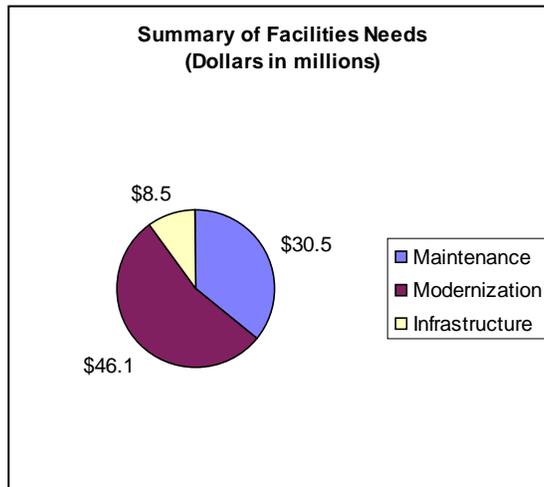
- Practice “green building” design and construction through such efforts as controlling erosion; minimizing waste through reuse and recycling of building materials; using energy efficient systems and design; controlling air quality and reducing light pollution.

- Promote energy conservation through the use of alternative-fuel vehicles; supporting campus conservation efforts; implementing energy-saving improvements to existing facilities and exploring opportunities for expanding cogeneration capabilities.
- Practice environmentally sensitive grounds standards through enforcing tree and soil protection measures during construction and strengthening the stewardship of Stony Brook and Upper and Lower Lakes.
- Manage hazardous materials use and disposition effectively, working to minimize the use of hazardous materials and using environmentally responsible materials.
- Continue to strengthen recycling efforts through improved penetration of current recycling programs, extending recycling to other materials and purchasing post-consumer content products.
- Seek opportunities to expand conservation efforts to new areas.
- Incorporate environmental stewardship and sustainable practices into the fabric of all campus planning and operations.
- Continue integrating environmental literacy across the curriculum, finding innovative ways to connect environment with the broader curriculum, developing opportunities for research/scholarship and service in the areas of environmental stewardship and expanding the use of the campus as a teaching laboratory. Areas of particular value for teaching on campus include the meadows and wooded areas of Prospect Hill; the wetlands, vernal pools and meadows of Long's Farm area; the stream, lakes and surrounding wetlands of central campus and the woodlands adjacent to the Orchards Golf Course.

Facilities Design and Maintenance

Mount Holyoke's physical facilities are an enormous asset, both in financial terms and in terms of their attractiveness and functionality. Despite a mix of building styles, the campus retains an internal coherence that most colleges lack. While in general the College's facilities currently serve it well, there are areas that will require significant investment over the next generation.

Although Mount Holyoke's building exteriors have been well maintained over the years, the age of the campus and limited modernization over the past several decades have resulted in the need for significant maintenance and renovation work. A recent study by Sightlines, Inc. identifies \$85 million of deferred maintenance, modernization, and infrastructure that should be completed over the next ten to fifteen years. A multi-year zone maintenance plan is being developed to assure that such work is done cost-effectively.



Improvements to the residence halls represent over 50% of the \$85 million total need. Of the eleven buildings on campus needing \$1.5 million of work or more, nine are residence halls. The College needs to begin renovating all residence halls, capturing opportunities for more variety in living space (more singles, suites and apartments) and social space (more floor lounges, small cooking/dining facilities and study/computer spaces). An important consideration in planning renovations is insuring that most

residence halls continue to house both first-year and upper class students. Dining Services spaces should also be incorporated into the residence hall renovations. Building on the successes of Prospect, Wilder and Blanchard, we should continue to enhance the variety, convenience, and social interaction of the dining program.

Most of the College's classrooms have not been renovated in decades. Therefore, we must systematically invest in classroom changes—including spatial rearrangements, furniture, lighting and technological infrastructure—that will improve the physical conditions for successful class discussions, lectures, and the seamless use of technology by students and faculty. As academic and residential buildings are renovated, we should try to increase the number of informal meeting spaces, small group discussion rooms, and seating areas.

In the last fifteen years, the campus computing infrastructure has expanded dramatically, with fiber optic cable to and within all academic, administrative and residential buildings. However, significant challenges are likely to remain as we continue our efforts to incorporate technology into the campus and into the academic program. The greatest challenges currently are the explosive growth in demand for bandwidth and the pervasiveness of laptops and personal digital assistants. Both wired and wireless approaches are almost certain to be needed to support our increasingly technical environment.

The air conditioning of buildings at Mount Holyoke has not in the past been comprehensively considered. While a number of academic and administrative buildings on campus have air conditioning, the decisions were ad hoc and focused on assessments of particular buildings. In recent years, all major renovations of academic and administrative buildings have included air conditioning. Given the increasingly intense year round use of the campus facilities, both academic/administrative and residential, in the future, all new construction and major renovations to facilities should include air conditioning, done in as environmentally responsible a manner as possible.

Primary Goals:

- Reinvest in the physical facilities to ensure the continued beauty, functionality and value of one of the College's major assets.
- Consider environmental sustainability in all facilities design and maintenance planning.

Recommendations:

- Build a new residence hall and begin to redesign and renovate the residential and dining spaces on campus to provide a greater variety of living options for students.
- Make improvements to academic spaces, including Dance and Theatre facilities, Clapp Laboratory, Reese Hall and the Ciruti Center.

- Renovate classrooms systematically, providing infrastructure with the flexibility to support evolving pedagogy.
- Create sufficient additional space to relocate all faculty offices onto the central campus and to provide for emerging interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary needs.
- Relocate the Admission Office onto central campus to ensure that the first impression received by prospective students and their parents is of the campus.
- As buildings are constructed, renovated and modernized, find environmentally sustainable ways to provide HVAC systems.

In Conclusion

The purpose of this document is to set forth the guiding principles and standards that will shape the College's planning for improvements to its landscape and facilities. *The Plan for Mount Holyoke 2010* and subsequent planning documents will identify in greater detail particular projects, priorities and timelines for particular periods of time.

APPENDIX A

Consulted Materials

The following studies and reports were used in developing the Landscape and Facilities Master Plan. While all were valuable reference documents aiding the committee's deliberations, only some of the recommendations made in the documents have been adopted by the committee and incorporated in the plan.

- Master Planning Study, Parsons Consulting Group, March 2000
- Landscape Master Planning Recommendations, Carol R. Johnson Associates, Inc., June 2001
- Integrated Assessment of Facilities Needs, Sightlines Facilities Asset Advisors, February 2001
- Space Utilization Study, Parsons Consulting Group, May 1999
- Green Requirements for a Comprehensive Campus Master Plan, Review Draft, May 1999
- Report of the Study Group on Student Life Facilities, January 1998
- Progress Report of the Campus Master Planning Committee, Spring 2000
- Parking, Traffic and Crosswalk Study, Hesketh Associates, Summer 2002.

APPENDIX B

Mount Holyoke as a Botanic Garden

The Botanic Garden extends campus-wide and is composed of a greenhouse complex, an arboretum of woody ornamentals, gardens with mixed woody and herbaceous beds and borders and several specialty gardens. The recognition of the campus as a botanic garden has important implications for the implementation of both landscape planning and environmental stewardship initiatives.

The mission of Mount Holyoke's Botanic Garden is to maintain a diverse, well-documented and accurately labeled living plant collection that supports and enhances teaching and research for the faculty and students of Mount Holyoke College and provides a valuable educational resource for the greater community. The plant collection will be displayed in a well-designed, visually pleasing manner that is accessible to all and promotes knowledge of and interest in plants. The Mount Holyoke College Botanic Garden is committed to promoting conservation of the world's natural resources and a better understanding and appreciation of the relationship between humanity and the rest of the natural world.

The campus horticulturalist plays a central role in the support and enhancement of the College's Botanic Garden, by acting as the primary interpreter of the landscape master plan as it is enacted on the campus; advising the Grounds staff as they implement the College's landscape policies and design standards; reviewing all landscape projects, recommending plant materials, approving designs and auditing installations; and providing guidance on correct horticultural policies and practices.

The collections policy of the Botanic Garden integrates the goals for campus landscaping, the improvement of the collection and strengthening environmental stewardship. Key aspects of the policy include:

- Maintaining a managed, naturalistic environment on central campus with some showpiece specialty gardens and natural environment on edges of campus.
- Except for the natural habitats, using a mixture of native plants and non-native plants from climactic zones similar to that of the Connecticut River.
- Avoiding the use of exotic species in areas surrounding the constructed part of campus.
- Exercising care in introducing exotic species to insure that they will thrive without excessive levels of care and that the implications of their introduction on the local ecology are understood.
- Maintaining some existing non-native/invasive species in areas other than the constructed part of campus to serve the academic program as teaching opportunities.
- Enacting key landscape management principles, including:

- Renewing the tree canopy by planting at least one new tree for each tree that must be removed.
- Improving views and vistas.
- Limiting maintenance requirements.
- Enhancing safety on the campus.
- Incorporating sustainable design principles into landscape projects.
- Protecting against soil compaction and sustaining soil quality.
- Developing and using landscape management zones to govern the level of maintenance provided to various parts of the campus landscape

An important role of the Botanic Garden is to provide support to the academic program. This is done by:

- Providing for the needs of the teaching collection.
- Acting as a resource for students.
- Working with the Center for Environmental Literacy.
- Providing specimen inventories and other data.

The Botanic Garden also has responsibilities for research, education and community outreach, including:

- Participating in the index seminum, an international seed exchange program. Such participation increases the gene pool of plant materials and brings professional recognition to the College's botanic garden.
- Making the collection more accessible to the community by labeling plant materials and developing interpretive materials.
- Offering lectures and other programs (for example, the spring flower show).
- Working with other institutions, including the New England Plant Conservation Plan to monitor rare plants in the area and the National Arboretum.
- Providing volunteer opportunities for the community.