

USM Gulf Coast & Cross Creek Master Planning Committee
Work Session I – Executive Summary
August 27-28, 2008

Executive Summary

Present: Bryan Billings; Sid Gonsoulin; Robert Bass; Pat Joachim; Bob Lyman; Chad Driskell; Larry Lee; Russ Willis; Dale Ledford; Chet Allred; Hoppy Allred; Caitlyn Clawson; Jim Eley; Elizabeth Alley; Greg Havens; Tyler Patrick; Steve Jackson, Faye Mitchell, Gaylynn Parker, Tom Lansford, Rusty Postlewate, Lynn Estes, David Sliman, Edward McCormack, Shelia White, David Taylor, Ann Billings, Mary Funk, Sheri Rawls, Suzy Hebert, Steven Lohrenz, David Marchman, Clifton “Skeeter” Dixon, Steve Oshrin, Tim Rehner, Ray Scurfield, John Hayman, Christiane Bjork Elias, Lance Nail, Steven Moser, Rex Gandy, Rob Turner

Introduction and Opening Remarks

Pat Joachim, Associate Provost, Coast Campuses, opened Work Session I by welcoming and introducing all members of the Planning Team. Bob Lyman, Provost, laid the groundwork for planning of the Cross Creek campus. He indicated planning for Cross Creek would be a transparent, inclusive, and comprehensive process. Feedback from all members of the Planning Team and the constituents each represent would be sought. He further stressed that no physical elements of the Cross Creek campus have been definitively included in the Master Plan. He also stated that funding for the project has not been identified or secured. The committee needs to keep in mind the initial campus layout will include between three and four buildings being constructed simultaneously and that all colleges should have a presence on the Cross Creek campus. As part of the documentation of the Master Plan, cost estimates will be provided for both initial and later phases of development.

Bryan Billings, Planning Committee Co-Chair, shared information regarding Gulf Park Campus building repairs and renovations. Although structural engineering reports are forthcoming, intentions are to repair/renovate the front three buildings on campus. It is estimated that these projects will be completed in three years.

To obtain a greater range of input from students, faculty and staff, two open forum sessions will be scheduled on the Gulf Coast Campus as well as in Hattiesburg.

Planning Committee Meeting – 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Greg Havens, member of the Collaborative (Sasaki Associates), updated the committee relative to preplanning efforts of the Collaborative and the Leadership Team.

The Master Planning Process will be accomplished in three phases:

- Phase 1 – *Analysis* - July – September (Interviews, Reconnaissance, Affirm Goals, Data/Information Review, Program Assessment, Site Analysis, Circulation Analysis, Infrastructure Assessment, Precedents, Preliminary Concepts)
- Phase 2 – *Concepts* - October – December (Draft Alternatives, Refinement of Alternatives)
- Phase 3 – *Plan Development* - January – April (Draft Master Plan, Final Master Plan to include Land Use, Landscape, Circulation, Infrastructure, Program, Phasing Strategy, Planning and Design Governance)

Of a 2,000 acre site, 200 acres have been provided through the generosity of Development Partners. Some of the possible constraints are floodplains and wetlands. Permitting requirements need to be explored with the Army Corp of Engineers. The Planning Committee should consider multiple campuses and embrace an interconnected, holistic system.

Greg Havens provided a PowerPoint overview presentation highlighting a myriad of issues and facts influencing opportunities and challenges for the University and the Gulf Coast region. USM has a great area of influence that spans from Alabama to Louisiana, which in turn provides partnership opportunities with employers such as the Military, Entertainment, Manufacturing and Health. According to Sasaki’s PowerPoint presentation, 60% of the entertainment employers are located within a 15 mile radius of the Gulf Park campus.

- Sasaki presented an overview of the magnitude of the Cross Creek space via maps.
- Hosting web-ex conferences to gather a greater variety of input from the Gulf Coast Business Council, surrounding City Mayors and school Administrators should be scheduled over the next thirty days.
- The estimated enrollment figures will be outdated by the time the Cross Creek site is developed and should reflect 5,000 students instead of 3,000. USM Gulf Coast’s current enrollment for Fall 2008 is near 2,800 students.
- The committee should not just be considering the Cross Creek campus, but the Gulf Coast as a whole and how the whole will work together.

- The Entertainment Industry Program is very interested in Gulf Park's Administration Building; however, the Administration Building suffered 70% structural damage. More will be learned when the structural engineering evaluations are complete.
- While the identity of the Jackson County site needs clarification, USM's presence close to Mobile is important.
- USM will not offer 100 or 200 level courses at the Jackson County site; these classes will be offered by the community college.

Regional Analysis

- USM's current area of influence extends from Alabama to Louisiana.
- Recent data suggest the University's future area of influence should include the Interstate 10 corridor stretching from West Florida into Texas.
- Classes currently offered at the USM sites:
 - Stennis Space Center (Hydrographic Science, Marine Science, Geography, Business Administration)
 - Cross Creek Future (Traditional Liberal Arts, Business, Education and Psychology, Health, Science and Technology)
 - Gulf Park (Entertainment Industry Studies, Mass Communication, Museum Studies, Musical Theater, New Media, Executive Format Programs)
 - Healthmark (Once Cross Creek campus is open, the Student Services Center will be abandoned)
 - Keesler (Technical and Occupational Education, Technology Education, American Studies, Political Science)
 - GCRL (Coastal Science)
 - Jackson Co. (Industrial Engineering Technology, Engineering Technology, Paralegal Studies, Management).
- Other institutions within the gulf coast Southern Miss impact area are the campuses of William Carey University and Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College.
- There are numerous opportunities with major employers who could be partners in the future growth of the Gulf Coast Campuses and the majority of these are within fifteen miles of either Gulf Park or Cross Creek.
 - Military
 - Entertainment
 - Health
 - Manufacturing
 - Plastics
- David Marchman, School of Construction, pointed out the construction aspects of the Gulf Coast as an area with growing needs. For regional demographics, see web site posting of the Executive Summary of the conference call with Ed Ranck.

Site Analysis

- A new road is being considered that would ultimately connect the Gulf Park and Cross Creek campuses.
- The master plan should recognize that USM Gulf Coast students are both time-bound and place-bound.
- Currently four of Gulf Park's 33 buildings are operable.
- The master plan should include a comprehensive stormwater management strategy.
- The final design phasing should consider both fiscal and physical constraints.
- The following should be considered:
 - Floodplains
 - Wetlands (always need to be aware of what we do and how it affects our surroundings)
 - ✓ Consideration should be given to creating a 50' buffer surrounding the wetlands
 - ✓ Permitting Requirements need to be explored with the Army Corp of Engineers
 - ✓ Utilities, water, and sewer lines are scheduled for completion between 2009 – 2010
- Possible constraints with local habitat
 - Dusky Gopher Frog
 - MS Sand Hill Crane
- 38% of the site is wetlands. When applying a 50' buffer zone surrounding wetlands, the development opportunity is further narrowed.

Preliminary Space Program

- Maximize space by planning for combined community and University use.
- General assumptions guiding planning/phasing should be based on enrollment growth assumptions of a 5,000, 7,500, 10,000 and 12,000 headcount over the next 5 – 25 years.
- The space will be based on teaching, research, office, library stack, library reading, student life, residential, support and parking.

Site Organization Planning Charrette – 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Considering that the Cross Creek Campus has not been definitely sited, the Collaborative provided three different site options for evaluation by the Planning Team.

- Although student housing on campus is currently prohibited by state law, housing for students, staff and faculty should be planned in close proximity to the campus borders.
- The notion of an iconic front door and the importance of the first building were discussed as critical components of the master plan.
- Members of the planning charrette favored locating the University and the town center north of the power line that intersects the property. The fact that the university would be a destination point rather than in close proximity to I-10 is favorable.
- The campus should be visible as it is approached from I-10.
- The design should include secondary roadways north and east of town center to afford residential units easy access to the university.
- A preferred site plan would locate the research park on the south side of the utility easement and residential units north and east of campus and town center thus reducing the noise burden on the residential units and making housing more marketable.
- Vehicular access and connectivity near the soon-to-be-opened high school emerged as concerns. In one sense, it facilitates access and engagement with potential university students, yet concerns about traffic congestion at that intersection prevailed. The Collaborative plans to devote a great deal of thought to this sensitive challenge.
- It was recommended that the town center span even farther west and north along the gateway street to increase the length of adjacent programming between the University and the town center.
- Traffic calming efforts need to be included and represented throughout the design.

Site planning options will be presented to the Development Partners by the Collaborative and members of the Leadership Team. Future iterations of the site plan will reflect consensus among the Planning Team and Development Partners.

Southern Mississippi Planning & Dev. District Focus Session – 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

David Taylor, Transportation Planner for Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC).

- The GRPC represents the three coastal counties of Hancock, Harrison and Jackson.
- Mr. Taylor stated that there are many developments; however Cross Creek Community is the largest.
- The GRPC provides transportation planning coordination and guidance for the three counties.
- A current project is the westward extension and widening of Landon Road.
 - In the short term, Landon Road will be widened to Canal Road and in the long term to County Farm Road.
- At the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) level, the GRPC can only take on projects in urbanized areas. Considering the recent population growth north of the I-10 corridor, the definition of 'urbanized' may be reevaluated in the next few years to include the Cross Creek site.
- Other relevant projects underway include:
 - An intersection analysis for safety improvements on Canal Road at Landon Road.
 - An intersection study at Beatline Road and Red Creek Road, just south of County Farm Road.
 - The GRPC is currently considering a two-lane road to Long Beach Research Park.
 - An extension to Klondyke Road is being considered as a potential corridor to connect Long Beach to I-10. If an interchange is not built at Klondyke and I-10, then the extension would connect to a frontage road adjacent to I-10.
 - In the future, the Canal Road interchange is going to be abandoned and replaced by a new interchange related to the new Port Road that will run between I-10 and 28th Street.
- Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) needs to be engaged when a new interchange is under consideration (private developers are considering a new interchange from I-10 into the Cross Creek site).
- Public transit currently runs along Hwy. 49 and goes beyond Landon Road.
- I-10 is regarded as the 'Corridor of the Future.' The GRPC is looking for ways to improve the economic viability of the road.
- The master plan should consider hurricane evacuation options, which are available from the State.
- GRPC can provide updated traffic counts, which are also available on their website.
- GRPC is also preparing a bicycle sustainability map, and recommended that the master plan take it into consideration.
- Loraine Road has the only bike path in Harrison County.

Student Life Forum – 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Feedback from break out sessions on August 28, 2008, included:

Gulf Park Campus

- Although the average age for students is 33, USM attracts students from 18-80 years of age. 90% are transfer students.
- USM is currently engaged with Noel Levitz in a recruitment and enrollment management strategy. The plan is at the 75% completion stage.
- Currently the Gulf Park location has very few student life amenities and facilities.
- 55% of students are currently located at Gulf Park.
- A café was suggested; however, due to the dispersed nature of the campus, USM does not have the capacity for students, faculty and staff to gather at one single location to support a café.
- The campus bookstore should be moved to the Gulf Park location.
- Gulf Park is currently in the process of partnering with a local business in downtown Gulfport to connect students with a fitness center.
- The campus needs to be a place "to be"—a destination point for learning and social interaction that is safe and attractive.
- Childcare is not offered on site. Data indicates little demand for this type of service.
- The auditorium in Gulf Park's Advanced Education Center (AEC) can accommodate up to 500 people.
- Daytime commuter students tend to arrive one hour early, grab something to eat and attend class.
- Evening commuter students tend to leave directly after class.
- The definition of "traditional daytime student" does not apply at USM Gulf Park. Most students hold full or part-time jobs in addition to attending classes.
- While USM desires to attract a younger population, USM Gulf Park has always been and will largely remain a commuter campus.
- A Student Satisfaction Survey was conducted to determine preference and importance of student life offerings.
- The number one attraction to USM Gulf Coast is the academic offerings; the number one barrier for USM is the limited schedule.
 - A significant percentage of faculty teach in Hattiesburg and on the coast, which limits scheduling capacity.
- Students between the ages of 18-24 are primarily concerned about services; students older than 25 are primarily concerned with academic offerings.

Cross Creek Site

- Currently, there are very few places for students to gather informally. Indoor and outdoor leisure/gathering spaces should be incorporated in the Cross Creek design.
- At Cross Creek, the Student Life Department would like to see a one-stop service center that acts as the heart of the campus and accommodates financial aid, the registrar, business affairs, student affairs, dining opportunities, career services, the health clinic and community outreach activity, etc.
- Student services begin in the parking lot. Due to the high percentage of commuter students, parking should be safe and still provide a sense of place. Sense of place refers to a destination point for learning and social interaction that is safe and attractive.
- Although USM Gulf Coast will primarily serve commuter students, the sense of place on campus should not be compromised.
- The Cross Creek campus will need an auditorium.
- Student organizations need appropriate meeting spaces. This is especially important for honors clubs.

Faculty and Academic Deans Forum, 9:00 – 11:30 am

Feedback from break out sessions on August 28, 2008, included:

Space Needs

- Additional classroom and demonstration spaces are necessary; classrooms should accommodate up to 80 seats.
 - Except for the AEC Auditorium which seats 500, currently the largest lecture hall seats 150 students
 - Rooms with 65 to 80 seats are most common
- Graduate Assistant and teaching assistant offices are needed.
- Classrooms should be designed to better accommodate audio and visual equipment.
- Classrooms should be designed as flexible spaces that easily respond to growth and diversity of offerings.
- Rooms should be equipped with moveable furniture and technology for distance delivery.
- Group study space and workspace should facilitate interactive learning.
- Broad based lab space should be considered for curriculum other than science and math, i.e., exercise science, history.

Library

- The library should be at the center of the campus and create a vibrant hub.
- The student center and library should be located together but without duplication of services.
- San Jose State was cited as having a model library.

Faculty Space Needs

- The campus should be designed to support the concept of a shared community of academics where the faculty are at the heart of the campus.
- Faculty need to be near students and colleagues for mentoring purposes.
- Having a common space to socialize and interact is needed.
- In terms of faculty research space, faculty need to be near labs; labs should be properly secured.
- Research space should be designed to encourage interaction through clustering.
- Accommodations should be made to support undergraduate research; this is increasingly important for science and technology.

Art & Letters

- Class size for 300 and 400 level courses should be appropriate for optimal teaching and learning.
- Hotel research management is being explored as a possible program.
- Meeting spaces should be designed to facilitate partnerships.
- Administrative spaces should serve as welcoming areas.
- The arts would be advantaged with larger spaces than currently exist.

Day Care

- A daycare program is being explored as a potential element in the future that could invite potential clinical partnerships.

Health

- A Counseling & Health Center should be considered.
- Opportunities to partner with outside gyms or recreation facilities should be explored.
- The concept of a health-focused learning lab should be explored.
- USM needs larger gathering spaces for recreation and fitness, and includes both indoor and outdoor spaces.

Mental Health

- Mental health programs should include social and community services.

Nursing

- Nursing is in need of conference rooms, meeting rooms and large gathering spaces that accommodate up to 100 students.

Business

- USM would like to grow the MBA and Masters of Public Accounting programs.
- Executive format programs will locate at the Gulf Park campus.

Science Building

- The science building will include nursing classrooms and labs as well as administrative offices.

Action Item:

- Faye Mitchell will supply Sasaki with a list of Hospitals with which the USM Nursing Schools currently enjoy partnerships.

3:30 – 4:00**Leadership Team Wrap-Up**

- Moving forward, Sasaki should provide phase one facility recommendations that represent a logical growth pattern.
- The buildings should be flexible and designed to easily accommodate future additions and expansions.
- Landscape ideas and the layout of buildings should be fully articulated.
- The parking analysis needs to be fine-tuned and determine when it is necessary to switch from surface to structured parking.
- The private developers need to be engaged in this process.
- The Collaborative should schedule web-ex conference calls when necessary to delineate progress of future site plan iterations.
- Work Session II is scheduled for October 8-9, 2008.