



“MITCHELL COLLEGE, A PRIVATE, HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION, PROVIDES A TRANSFORMING EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE CULMINATING IN A BACHELORS OR ASSOCIATES DEGREE. WITHIN A DIVERSE AND STUDENT-CENTERED COMMUNITY AND WITH AN EMPHASIS ON HOLISTIC STUDENT DEVELOPMENT, MITCHELL COLLEGE SUPPORTS INDIVIDUAL LEARNING DIFFERENCES, NURTURES UNTAPPED ACADEMIC POTENTIAL, AND INSTILLS THE PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NEEDED FOR STUDENTS TO CONTRIBUTE TO AN EVER-CHANGING WORLD.”

- MITCHELL COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT

---





## **INTRODUCTION**

*Transforming Lives*, Mitchell College's strategic plan, communicates the College's priorities and guides the decision-making process in support of its mission. The Mitchell College Master Plan reinforces the priorities of the strategic plan through the physical campus environment. Both planning processes have served as powerful tools for faculty, staff, students and trustees to "provide direction, guidance and inspiration" for the College's future.

The 65-acre campus, originally the New London estate of Alfred Mitchell, is located in a distinctive natural setting bound by the banks of the Thames River and the varied ecology of Mitchell Woods. The natural character of the land as well as two local roads divide the campus into three districts, each reinforced by its uses. The waterfront campus, which fronts on the Thames River, has rolling dunes leading to the beach and is the site of the admissions office, which serves as the first stop for prospective students. Sloping terrain framing grand views of the Thames River and open space surrounded by academic, administrative and the student center buildings characterize the main campus. Upper campus, adjacent to Mitchell Woods, is a center of student life with several of the residence halls, the gymnasium, and a variety of outdoor recreational and athletic spaces. Two additional residential areas are located near the campus along Pequot Avenue, with notable waterfront views, and on Gardener Avenue.

With the transition from a two-year to a four-year institution and a new strategic plan, the College retained the services of Sasaki Associates, a planning, landscape and architectural firm, to create a master plan for the future of the campus. Working closely with the Master Planning Committee, comprised of a broad representation of the College community, and synthesizing the results of dozens of interviews, meetings and workshops with students, faculty and staff, Sasaki Associates developed a plan that is both visionary and implementable. Mitchell College now has the opportunity to reassert its commitment to providing a supportive learning/living environment by elevating the physical experience of the campus to one that matches the transformative educational experience already in place.

## CAMPUS PLAN

The master plan establishes a new physical identity for the campus, addresses growth and functional needs, and updates the overall image of the campus. The plan focuses the energy of the campus at the front entrance on Montauk Avenue and the central green. Each major program element has a presence on the square: student life, academic life, and administration. New façades on several of the existing buildings will create a new image with the historic buildings and landscape setting, establishing a unifying image for the College.

New buildings, additions and renovations define the campus:

- The new Academic Success Center is sited at the main entrance to the campus, creating visibility and accessibility for the college community and visitors alike. The facility is located adjacent to the Library and Information Technology Center, forming the Academic Success Commons and highlighting the cross-coordination between the departments.
- A new addition to the Clarke Center and renovations to the existing structure form the Center for Student Life. Centralized facilities make activities accessible to resident and commuter students. The new Center for Student Life and the Academic Success Commons define the entry court and introduce the campus experience.
- The addition to Nathan Hale Hall strengthens its presence on the central green. Together with renovations to the existing building, the updated spaces meet the classroom needs for current and future enrollment.
- A new residence hall on the upper campus accommodates the need for growth and the desire for contemporary housing options. The location of the new structure and associated landscape completes the residential quadrangle concept.
- The purchase of Michael's Dairy property allows the College to strategically expand, creating a true gateway on Montauk Avenue as well as a space to accommodate academic growth and a business venture for students.
- Landscape improvements throughout the campus establish identity, enhance the image and create hierarchy. An amphitheater, boathouse, formal green and intimate courtyards provide a variety of gathering spaces from the residence halls to the waterfront.







- 1. ACADEMIC SUCCESS COMMONS
- 2. CENTER FOR STUDENT LIFE
- 3. UMBRELLA HOUSE
- 4. BOATHOUSE
- 5. MITCHELL HALL
- 6. HENRY HALL
- 7. THAMES ACADEMY
- 8. LIVING/LEARNING HOUSING
- 9. NATHAN HALE HALL
- 10. MONTAUK HOUSE
- 11. CHILDREN'S LEARNING CENTER
- 12. SIMPSON HALL
- 13. SAUNDERS HALL
- 14. MATTESON HALL
- 15. NEW RESIDENCE HALL
- 16. YARNALL ATHLETIC CENTER
- 17. MICHAEL'S DAIRY
- 18. MICHAEL'S DAIRY BARN
- 19. FAIRHAVEN
- 20. MOORINGS
- 21. HARBOR HOUSE
- 22. ENTRY COURT AND BEACON
- 23. MAIN CAMPUS GREEN
- 24. AMPHITHEATER
- 25. FUTURE BUILDING SITE
- 26. ATHLETIC FIELDS
- 27. MITCHELL WOODS
- 28. MITCHELL BEACH

## PROGRAM

With a short-term goal of increasing the student body to 700 and a long-term goal of 800 to 1,000 students, the analysis revealed the need for the program elements identified below. The program requires approximately 37,000 gross square feet of new space to meet the requirements for the short-term goal of 700 full-time equivalent (FTE) students and an additional 14,000 gross square feet of new space to meet the requirements for the long-term goal of up to 1,000 FTE students. Reusable and redesigned space in existing buildings provides approximately an additional 18,000 gross square feet. Parking demand increases to approximately 80 additional spaces for 700 FTE students, and another 200 spaces for 1,000 FTE students for a total of 660 spaces on campus.

### PROGRAM

Academic Success Center	Dining Space Expansion
Center for Student Life	Classroom reorganization
Student fitness center	Renovated space for Library
Conference and auditorium retrofit	Boathouse/meeting space
Student offices and meeting space	Thames Academy
Wellness Center expansion	Relocated Facilities Building
Athletics renovation	New housing for 180-300 beds
Improved labs	Parking

## PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Based on Sasaki's understanding of the objectives established by the College, the physical site analysis of the campus, interviews with several campus constituencies, and an analysis of current space use and future needs, the master plan is built around five key planning principles and design concepts. A detailed inventory and analysis of space, site context, landscape, parking, circulation, and program is available in the technical appendix.

### PRINCIPLE 1:

#### *Create a Cohesive Campus Framework*

Integrate the various landscapes and land uses from Mitchell Woods to the Thames waterfront to create a unified campus environment and organizational structure. Framework for a continuous experience that unites the distinct elements of the upper, main and waterfront campuses and creates opportunities for the strategic siting of new structures and program elements.

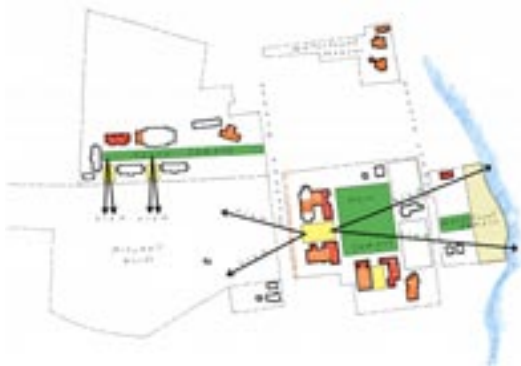




**PRINCIPLE 2:**

*Express the Mission at the Physical Forefront of the Campus*

Reinforce the mission and strategic plan of the College by locating activity centers at a central point on campus to emphasize holistic student development. Create a visible learning/living environment from the moment one arrives on campus. Channel the energy generated at the academic areas of Bingham Hall and the Library, and near the residence halls and recreational areas, by directing it towards the heart of the campus.



**PRINCIPLE 3:**

*Maximize Existing Resources*

Build upon the existing assets already available on campus. Integrate existing buildings, new structures and the landscape through renovations and additions. Capitalize on the existing sightlines from the entrance, while remaining true to the College's commitment to simplicity. Consider alternative uses of spaces to adapt to the College's goals for growth. Preserve the history of the College, while looking toward the future.



**PRINCIPLE 4:**

*Enhance Campus Identity and Image*

Improve the overall image of the campus by creating an iconoclastic campus entrance, modern and inspiring façades and distinctive spaces throughout the campus. Orchestrate the visitor's arrival through the experience and understanding of special places and unique transitions between the built environment and the landscape. Define and connect spaces so that each retains its own identity, while contributing to the overall cohesive and distinctive image of the College.



**PRINCIPLE 5:**

*Create a Circulation Network to Improve the Campus Environment*

Prioritize pedestrian movement throughout the campus by reducing pedestrian-vehicular conflicts in the core areas of the campus. Relocate parking to the edge of campus and encourage walking. Take measures to balance functional desires with the enhancement of the visual quality of the campus. Augment the circulation network with pedestrian-friendly amenities, architecture, common wayfinding vocabulary and signage.





RESIDENTIAL QUAD



FRONT ENTRANCE AND CAMPUS GREEN



WATERFRONT



THE THREE MAIN CAMPUS DISTRICTS





**PRINCIPLE 1:**  
*Create a Cohesive Campus Framework*

The master plan integrates various landscapes and land uses from Mitchell Woods to the Thames waterfront to create a unified campus environment and organizational structure. A series of open spaces establish the framework for a continuous experience, while strategic siting of key campus buildings and visual connections unite distinct elements of the upper, main and waterfront campuses.

*Residential Quad*

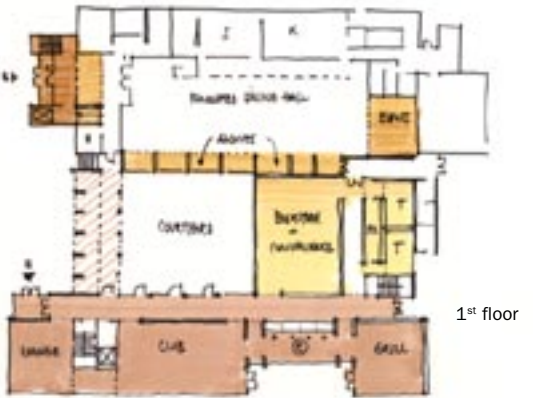
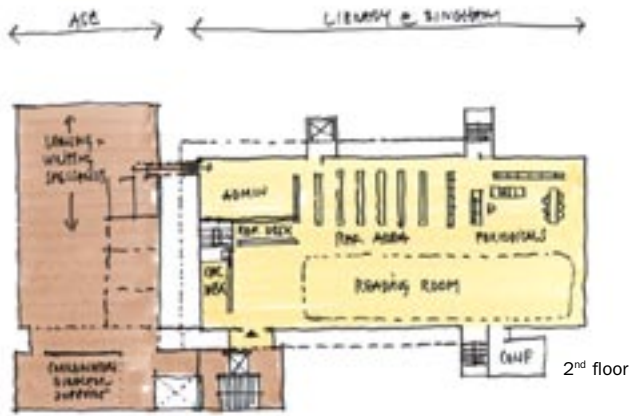
A new residence hall built on the upper campus completes the residential quadrangle concept with generous open spaces for pedestrian-oriented activities. The new courtyards created between the upper campus residence halls provide space for students to congregate in a car-free environment, while also providing a connection to the main campus through Mitchell Woods or the tree-lined sidewalks of Debiasi Drive. Pathways through Mitchell Woods provide a natural experience to and from recreational areas, the pond and the Children’s Learning Center, with access to both the upper campus and Montauk Avenue.

*Front Entrance and Campus Green*

An enhanced streetscape provides a transition between the campus and the community. Lowering the historic brick wall and using a historic iron fence allows views into campus while delineating its edge. A formal entrance on Montauk Avenue flanked by the Center for Student Life and the Academic Success Commons opens up to reveal views of the waterfront, the Thames River and a main campus green framed by new façades and historic buildings. A series of walkways traverse the main campus, creating places to gather at each junction and at the intersection with the surrounding buildings.

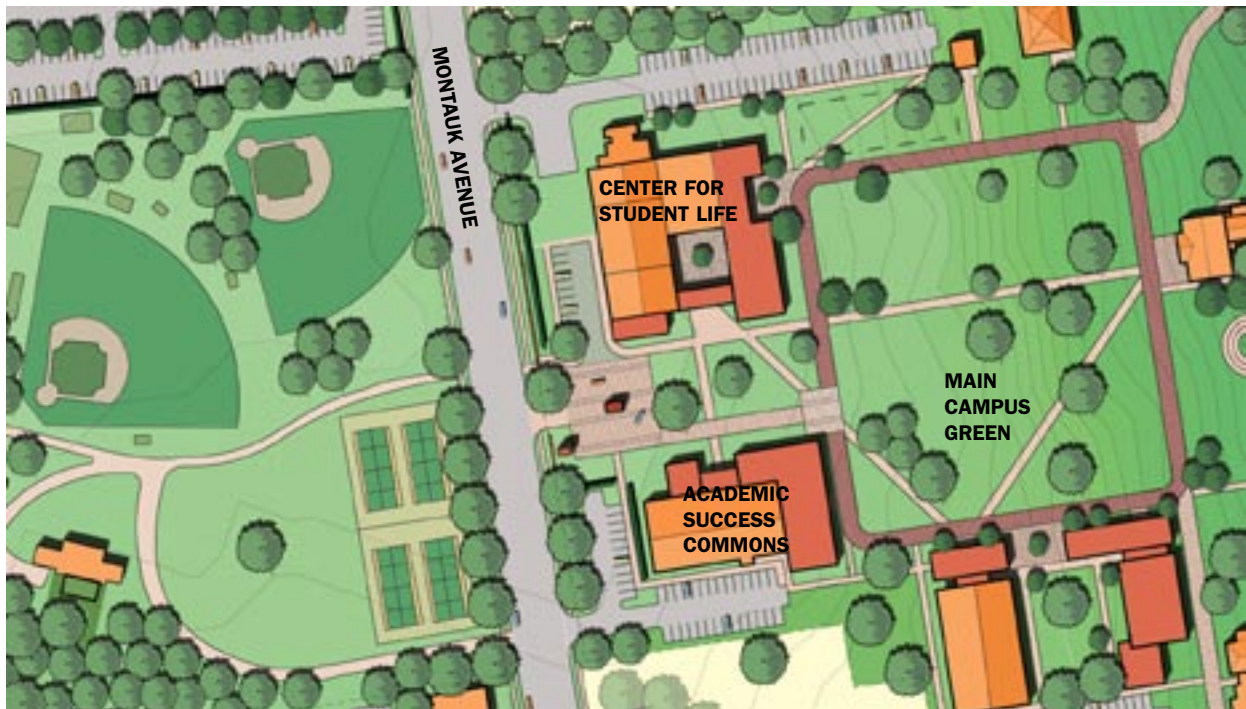
*Waterfront Campus*

Parking near Pequot Avenue is reorganized to allow for a more natural transition from the main green to the waterfront campus and the beach. Hedges block the view of the parking lot from the campus green and Pequot Avenue. Space along the dunes is preserved to provide additional places for recreational and social gatherings.



ACADEMIC SUCCESS COMMONS

CENTER FOR STUDENT LIFE



THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS COMMONS AND THE CENTER FOR STUDENT LIFE LOCATED AT THE HEART OF THE CAMPUS





## PRINCIPLE 2:

### *Express the Mission at the Physical Forefront of the Campus*

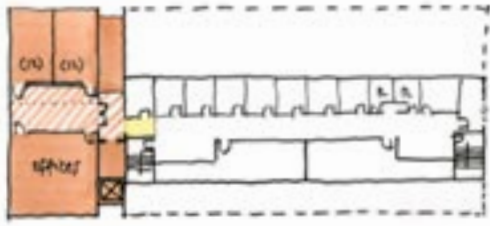
The master plan reinforces the mission and strategic plan of the College by locating the centers of student and academic life at a critical junction on campus. The placement of the Academic Student Center at the threshold of the Mitchell College campus, adjacent to a renovated and expanded Center for Student Life and Library emphasizes the College's commitment to holistic student development.

#### *Academic Success Commons*

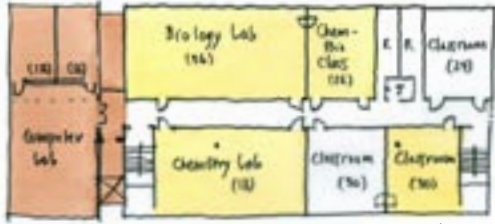
The state-of-the-art Academic Success Center brings Mitchell College teaching methods and learning differences to the forefront. The new building underscores the diverse and student-centered community inherent within Mitchell College, while supporting individual learning differences and nurturing untapped academic potential inherent within the student body. With the renovation of Bingham Hall into the Library and Information Technology Center, energy that was once relegated to the southeast corner of the campus will now be channeled into a combined Academic Success Commons at the center of campus, highlighting the collaboration and coordination between the departments. The Academic Success Center includes space for learning and writing specialists, group study, conferences, and testing. A new entrance, elevator and stairway serve as a central connector between the Academic Success Center and the Library, and provides a presence on the entrance court as well as ADA accessibility. The renovated space in Bingham accommodates growth in the Library and IT for stacks and group study. A renovated northern façade visually connects the building with the new Academic Success Center while strengthening its presence on the entry court. The light-filled and transparent Academic Success Commons creates a beacon from within and accentuates a distinct learning environment from the moment one arrives on campus.

#### *Center for Student Life*

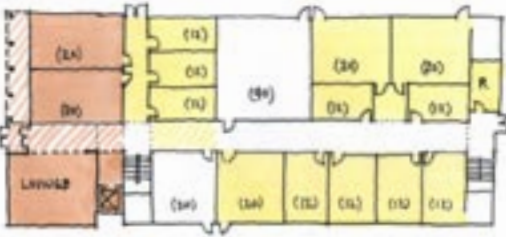
A renovated Clarke Center and eastern addition form the new Center for Student Life, creating with the Academic Success Commons a new portal on the campus. The Center for Student Life places greater emphasis on the extracurricular activities of the student body, including student organizations, study groups and recreation. The improved space creates a common area for all residential students as well as for interaction between resident and commuter populations. A renovated and expanded dining hall, new grill and expanded bookstore provide several food service options, while a new entrance, lounge, conference center and club area create multiple gathering spaces for groups of different sizes. New areas for group exercise, cardio and weights, and the Wellness Center relieve the congestion of Yarnall Gym. The program and design of the new building will enhance student retention and recruitment on campus.



3<sup>rd</sup> floor



2<sup>nd</sup> floor

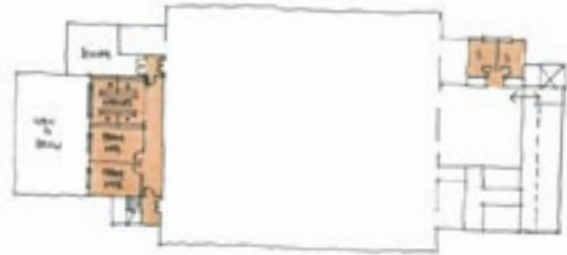


1<sup>st</sup> floor

NATHAN HALE HALL RENOVATION AND ADDITION



NATHAN HALE HALL RENOVATION AND ADDITION ACCOMMODATES SPACE FOR GROWTH NEEDS



2<sup>nd</sup> floor



YARNALL ATHLETIC CENTER

1<sup>st</sup> floor



3<sup>rd</sup> floor



2<sup>nd</sup> floor



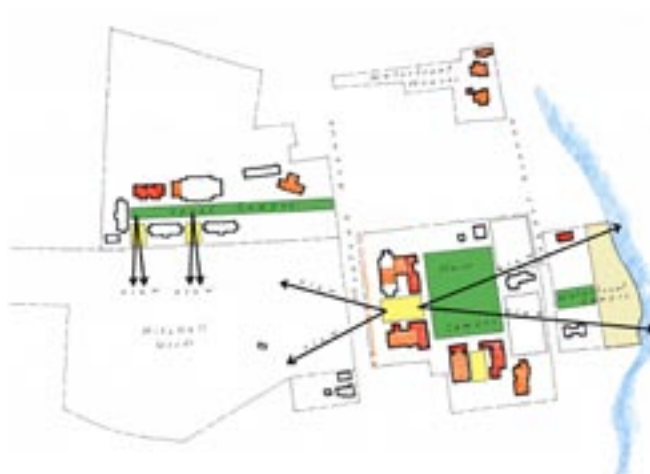
1<sup>st</sup> floor



ground floor

THAMES ACADEMY





**PRINCIPLE 3:**  
*Maximize Existing Resources*

Working with the available assets on campus, the master plan integrates existing buildings, new structures and the landscape through renovation, enhancement and expansion. The planning process considers several alternative uses of spaces to adapt to the College's goals for growth.

*Nathan Hale Hall*

Upgrades to Nathan Hale and an addition on the north side of the building create more seminar-style classrooms that reflect the teaching goals of small classes, teacher accessibility and individual attention to learning differences. Consolidating classrooms and labs makes better use of the existing building, while the addition allows for much-needed study, computer, meeting and lounge space associated with the classrooms. Improving ADA access alleviates past impediments for the diverse campus community, while simultaneously creating a new façade for the building.

*Yarnall Athletic Center*

With a new student recreational area created in the Center for Student Life and the transformation to a Division III Athletics program, the Lighthouse in Yarnall is converted back to space for the growing Athletics Department. Expanded locker rooms and fitness areas provide much needed space, while new classrooms and team-meeting spaces in the former Lighthouse allow for the integrated strategic initiative of scholar athletes.

*Living/Learning*

The Bond House and former Library building are renovated to accommodate the new Thames Academy, a pre-college transitional student experience. The home for the Academy includes college-style dorm rooms, classrooms, computer space and gathering areas in a uniquely retrofitted space on the periphery of the campus. An additional living/learning residential building adjacent to the Thames Academy increases housing options for Mitchell College and provides a transition between the Thames Academy and the main academic area of the campus. The possible themed housing would provide an opportunity for students to give back to the community, as mentors for the Thames Academy or as a reward for exemplary students in the S.T.A.R.S. Program. As housing for upper classmen, the new residence hall creates a residential progression culminating in the most contemporary housing in the center of campus. The site of the new housing has views of the waterfront, as well as access to both the main green and an intimate courtyard formed with Nathan Hale and the Thames Academy.



MICHAEL'S DAIRY BARN PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A STUDENT BUSINESS VENTURE AND INTERACTION WITH COMMUNITY



EXISTING VIEWS ARE MAINTAINED



AMPHITHEATER SITE BUILT INTO THE HILL



THE BOATHOUSE AND AMPHITHEATER CAPITALIZE ON EXISTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND ENHANCE THE CONNECTION TO THE WATERFRONT



### *Waterfront Houses*

The waterfront houses of Moorings, Fairhaven and Harbor House, located on Pequot Avenue with waterfront views, are maintained as valuable assets to the College campus until additional housing options are provided on campus. Modest upgrades and renovations are executed as needed, but significant renovations are deferred while a variety of alternative options are studied.

### *Property Acquisition and Disposition*

Purchasing Michael's Dairy property and renovating the barn for the Small Business Center showcases this growing academic department. The property acquisition creates the opportunity for a real-life business venture for students, instilling the professional knowledge and skills needed for students to contribute to life after college as well as a point of interaction with the surrounding community. The new property can accommodate studio art space and a central and accessible space for campus safety. Purchasing Michael's Dairy provides the chance to reincorporate the former Mitchell College property as part of the campus and the opportunity to create a true gateway into the campus along Montauk Avenue.

The disposition of the Eastwinds residence on Gardener Avenue provides necessary funds for the purchase of more suitable properties. The isolation of the residence hall location and constant maintenance makes the structure an impractical investment holding.

Relocating the main Facilities Building off-site frees up prime land at the center of the campus, while creating a more appropriate and efficient setting for back-of-the-house operations. The removal of the Small Business Cottage and the greenhouse also free up space in the center of the campus for the Academic Success Center and allow maintenance funds to be focused on more flexible spaces.

### *Landscape*

Landscape additions and enhancements capitalize on the existing assets by remaining true to the College's commitment to simplicity. Sightlines are maintained and enhanced to preserve the uniqueness of the setting. The brick wall at the entrance recalls the history of the estate and the transition to a college campus, while modifications point toward the future of the institution.

### *Boathouse*

Built as a storage and maintenance facility, the Boathouse also doubles as a place for sailing instruction and campus or community conferences. With the reintroduction of the sailing program, the Boathouse highlights the campus' connection to the water and provides a picturesque setting for potential students and alumni alike. A new contiguous dock creates the opportunity for rental income from the old dock or disposition with the waterfront houses, when appropriate.

### *Amphitheater*

An amphitheater built into the slope next to Mitchell Hall offers an outdoor setting for plays, concerts and lectures, with the dunes and Thames River providing the backdrop.



NEW BUILDINGS CREATE A VARIETY OF GATHERING SPACES



EARLY SKETCHES OF THE MONTAUK AVENUE ENTRANCE WITH MODIFIED WALL AND ICONIC BEACON



EARLY RESIDENTIAL QUADRANGLE CONCEPT FOR THE UPPER CAMPUS





**PRINCIPLE 4:**  
*Enhance Campus Identity and Image*

The master plan improves the overall image of the College by creating an iconoclastic entrance as well as distinctive spaces throughout the campus. A new landscaped entrance on Montauk Avenue as well as modern façade additions to the Clarke Center and Bingham Hall provide the campus with a strong identity and visible signage for visitors and potential students. Modifying the existing historic wall maintains the presence on Montauk Avenue, while allowing for more transparency into the campus. The modified wall acknowledges the history of the campus, while looking toward the future through the design and materials. Additional landscaping and signage along Pequot Avenue creates a consistent campus image for prospective students arriving at Henry Hall.

Unique transitions between the built environment and the landscape create intimate spaces throughout the campus. The eastern addition to the Clarke Center forms both an internal courtyard separated from the main entrance by a breezeway and a patio area on the east side with views of the main green. The contemporary architectural form of both the Clarke Center and the Academic Success Center activate the entry court as well as the main green. Upper campus courtyards between Matteson, Simpson and Saunders diminish the separation between the buildings and create a variety of gathering spaces for the students. These informal spaces are distinct, yet connected, so that each retains its identity while contributing to the overall image of the College.



PATHWAYS ARE RESERVED FOR PEDESTRIANS AND EMERGENCY OR SERVICE ACCESS ONLY



PARKING IS REMOVED FROM THE CENTER OF CAMPUS CREATING A HIGHER QUALITY PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT



PARKING IS CONSOLIDATED AND REMOVED FROM CORE CAMPUS AREAS





**PRINCIPLE 5:**

*Create a Circulation Network to Improve the Campus Environment*

The master plan prioritizes pedestrian movement throughout the campus by reducing pedestrian-vehicular conflicts in the core areas of the campus. The circulation network is efficient, pedestrian-friendly and visually pleasing. Simplifying vehicular traffic patterns alleviates complicated wayfinding and establishes points of reference for the entire campus. Pathways are reserved for pedestrians, and emergency access, delivery and service where necessary. Pedestrian-friendly amenities, such as benches and lighting, along with consistent wayfinding vocabulary and signage, augment the circulation network and define spaces for movement.

Relocating parking from the center of the campus balances functional desires with enhancement of the visual quality of the campus. With the entire campus located within a five-minute walking circle of the entrance to the Clarke Center, parking options are never more than a few minutes walk. Adequate parking is made available near street entrances, preserving the core areas of the campus for pedestrians and minimizing the visual impact of parking lots. Relocating the Facilities Building reduces the presence of maintenance vehicles on the main campus, while screening and containing the Clarke Center loading dock eliminates large trucks from the main entrance.

Future policy initiatives discouraging freshman onsite parking and rewarding carpooling or the use of public transit would reinforce a pedestrian-oriented environment and encourage walking throughout the modest campus.



**PHASE 1**

- Academic Success Center
- Facilities Demolition
- Clarke Center Renovation
- Upper Campus Residence Hall
- Bingham Hall Parking Lot
- Montauk Avenue Entry Court and Landscape
- Upper Campus Landscape Renovations
- Upper Campus Parking Lot Expansion
- Pequot Avenue Entrance
- Acquire Michael's Dairy Property
- Sell Eastwinds Property



**PHASE 2**

- Clarke Center Addition and Courtyard
- Nathan Hale Hall Renovation and Addition
- Bingham Hall Renovation into Library
- Debiasi Drive Landscape
- Renovate Main Campus Green
- Nathan Hale Hall Parking Lot
- Clarke Center Parking Lot and Service Entrance



**PHASE 3**

- Bond House/Library Renovation into Thames Academy
- Athletics Department Renovation and Expansion into Lighthouse
- Michael's Dairy Barn Renovation



#### PHASE 4

- Living/Learning Housing
- Nathan Hale and Living/Learning Courtyard Landscape
- Future Mixed-Use Building Site

#### Based on Funding-----

- Campus Wayfinding and Signage
- Waterfront Housing Renovations
- Boathouse, Dock and Landscape
- Synthetic Field



### PHASING

Implementation of the master plan over time is dependent on several factors, including fundraising, public approvals, and the complex logistics of continuing use and occupancy of buildings. Collectively, the elements of the master plan create a cohesive, high-quality campus image, elevating the physical attributes of the campus to support the College's mission. The priority projects create visible and memorable buildings, enhancing student recruitment and retention. In line with the College's goals, the master plan employs an implementable strategy of reusing existing space whenever possible to maximize current assets and build upon the history and natural amenities of the site.

The initial phase of the master plan directly reinforces the College's dedication to assisting students with learning differences and untapped potential, while simultaneously improving the College's identity and accommodating residential student growth. The second phase increases student amenities and renovates and expands existing space in line with the teaching philosophy. The third phase creates a home for the Thames Academy and reactivates the former Mitchell College Dairy Barn. The fourth phase anticipates future growth with a variety of mixed-use spaces for living and learning. One forms a courtyard with Nathan Hall Hall, while the other is an opportunity for smaller scale structures east of the Center for Student Life. In the long-term, both locations create the opportunity for themed housing that activates the campus green. Based on funding, the synthetic athletic field and boathouse, dock and associated landscape projects may be initiated at any time, while the waterfront housing renovations and campus wayfinding and signage system may occur incrementally over time.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The Project Team would like to acknowledge the following people for their time and commitment to the master plan as well as numerous members of the board of trustees, administration, faculty, staff and students for their cooperation and participation.

### *Members of the President's Cabinet*

Mary Ellen Jukoski, President of the College  
Joanne Millovitsch\*  
Kristin Lambert\*  
Kevin Mayne\*  
Peter Troiano\*  
Suzanne Risley\*  
Jane O'Brien Friederichs

\*Also members of the Master Planning Committee

Jack Scott, Chairman of the Board of Trustees Buildings and Grounds  
Committee

### *Master Planning Committee*

Ben Apraku-Boateng  
Don Benoit  
Kim Blake  
Carol Lynn Bligh  
Vicky Brennan  
Teg Cosgriff  
Brian Fee  
Scott Horton  
Andrew Nyveldt  
Jennifer O'Donnell  
George Sielski  
Kimberly Silva

### *Sasaki Associates*

Stacey Ebbs  
Vinicius Gorgoti  
Lynn Hoffman  
Dan Kenney  
Parul Mittal







MITCHELL  
COLLEGE

437 PEQUOT AVENUE NEW LONDON, CT 06320