SASAKI

Williams Campus Plan
October 31, 2022

Overview of Potential Projects

The team behind the Williams Campus Plan hosted an open house for the Williams community on October 20, 2022. Attendees had the opportunity to understand the "Big Ideas" driving the plan as well as to view potential project ideas for the future of the campus, provide feedback, and ask questions. The following document provides a brief overview of these potential projects, which have been identified based on findings from 18 months of campus analysis, stakeholder meetings, and engagement with the broader college community.

The potential projects expressed in this material represent a scenario for how to meet many of the needs of the campus, though they do not preclude the future consideration of other viable scenarios. None of the potential projects are approved or funded, and therefore are subject to change; they simply represent a physical manifestation of programmatic intent. While the projects presented primarily focus on health and wellness, dining, and residential life, the campus planning process is not limited in scope to these topics, nor are these projects the only ones under consideration. A sustainable approach is central to the planning process, and the development of the Campus Plan is closely aligned with that of the ongoing Energy and Carbon Master Plan. Recommendations from the two resulting plans will therefore be integrated.

For more on the planning process and ideas described herein, refer to the accompanying document ("Campus Plan Concepts Overview – October 2022").

Dining Network

The Campus Plan proposes two primary dining hubs, one to the north of Route 2 and one to the south. These general locations were selected due to the proximity to academic facilities, which is a key driver for lunch-time dining venues. Smaller satellite operations such as Eco Café, Goodrich, and others, would provide alternatives to the dining hall experience.

In this two-dining hall model, Paresky would be renovated to serve as one of two campus dining halls. A modest addition to the Park Street side of the building would provide the kitchen space necessary to meet increased demand. The ground floor would remain dedicated to retail operations such as Lee Snack Bar and a food market; Whitman's would operate on the second floor as an all-you-care-to-eat food hall. To provide expanded seating and operations capacity, many of the offices currently located at Paresky would relocate to another central campus location. Potential new locations are being evaluated as part of the ongoing Office and Learning Space study.

A new dining hall situated on the Berkshire Quad would open views to the south, of Mount Prospect and surrounding terrain, while increasing overall campus dining capacity. By strategically locating the building on the southern edge of the quad, this building could traverse the grade change between the Berkshire Quad and the plaza below, thus serving as an accessible link between the two spaces and improving circulation in this part of campus. Construction of this new dining hall would necessitate the removal of Prospect Hall; additional student housing would therefore be provided at Dodd Circle in place of Hubbell and Parsons.

Health & Wellness District

The Campus Plan envisions a new Health and Wellness district of campus that physically links medical services, IWS, and fitness and athletic facilities. This approach acknowledges the importance of mind-body wellness for the health of the broader Williams community, and centralizing these facilities is key to ensuring the services they offer are accessible.

To provide improved access to services currently housed at Thompson Health Center and Pond House for Integrative Wellbeing, this plan proposes relocating these services to a renovated Lasell Gymnasium. This strategic move would require fitness and athletic functions located at Lasell today to move to a new facility. Situated at the intersection of Spring Street and Latham Street, the new Health and Wellness Facility would support multiple fitness and athletic programs relocated from Lasell while reinvigorating the pedestrian realm at the southern edge of campus. The western wing of the new facility would feature a new field house highlighting an NCAA standard-sized indoor track. The facility's eastern wing would serve as both an ice arena and indoor event space. The center of the facility would feature fitness and strength studios as well as support spaces such as locker rooms; it would also function as an accessible corridor linking Latham Street and the new Wellness Plaza to the north of the building. Event and visitor parking would be available beneath the facility.

The Wellness Plaza, situated north of the new Health and Wellness Facility and east of Chandler Athletic Center, would be a flexibly programmed public space that would support activities in all four seasons. Benefiting from adjacencies to residence halls, health and wellness facilities, and a new dining hall, this space would be an outdoor hub that introduces new life to this campus precinct—a place for gathering, not simply passing through. While the mix of programs the plaza would support would remain flexible, certain uses might include outdoor fitness classes, performance arts, and seasonal activities.

Dodd Circle

The Campus Plan will prioritize an approach to student housing that improves accessibility, energy efficiency, and comfort of residence halls while maintaining the character and scale of existing buildings that contribute to the broader campus fabric.

To best meet the housing needs of Williams students in a manner both equitable and sustainable, the Campus Plan proposes increasing the amount of housing at Dodd Circle through a mixture of renovation and new construction. Dodd House, an iconic, historic campus building and popular residence hall, would be renovated to improve accessibility and energy efficiency while retaining its unique character. Small, inefficient buildings that currently house students at Dodd Circle would be removed (Hubbell and Parsons Houses) or converted to faculty office uses (Goodrich and Sewall Houses). The removal of these buildings from the housing pool, in addition to the removal of Prospect Hall, would necessitate the construction of new student housing; two new residence halls would therefore be sited on the northern edge of Dodd Circle. These buildings would be of a scale and character appropriate to the existing campus and would improve the overall efficiency and accessibility of the campus housing stock. Reducing the amount of paving and parking at Dodd Circle would provide the opportunity to reinvigorate Dodd Green, an outdoor gathering space supporting programs and uses that would change with the seasons.

Please share any comments you have on the ideas described here by getting in touch with the Campus Plan team at campusplan@williams.edu.