

Campus Plan Update – Foundational Ideas

Our discussions on and off campus have led us to identify 7 “foundational ideas” that inform the updated campus plan. These ideas have also given rise to a vision for particular spaces and for the integration of services, teachers, and material resources.

1. ***Accessibility***, ease of movement and ability to fully participate in a community are critical to most of the other issues we discuss below. Furthermore, we seek a *physical environment and a spatial organization of campus that welcomes a diversity of experiences, backgrounds, circumstances and perspectives.*
2. ***Communication, collaboration, and scholarly community*** should inform the design, configuration, location and furnishing of academic buildings and the variety of learning and study spaces they house. Students, staff, and faculty members need spaces that express our goals for a scholarly community and for a high level of academic engagement. They also need places for solitary contemplation.
3. ***The transformative effect of digital technologies*** on teaching, research, and the development of new areas of scholarly inquiry should be reflected in classroom design; course activities and assignments; how we understand the function, look, and place of libraries; learning support labs; and information delivery. Digital technologies may obviate the need for certain spaces, yet require others. *They change our human resource needs as well, and can challenge existing functional/organizational boundaries.*
4. ***The Expanding Knowledge Initiative*** reaffirms the kind of interdisciplinary breadth that has long been a hallmark of a liberal arts education, and challenges us to explore how we pursue this in the twenty-first century. The campus plan update should reflect the liberal arts goal of integrated knowledge with the opportunities generated by the EKI for new ways of working together and for new (or enhanced) areas of study made possible by the expansion of the faculty. The plan must envision teaching spaces that allow for collaborative teaching and study, and academic buildings that respect disciplinary identities while encouraging the exploration of meaningful exchanges among them. It should provide for new kinds of learning spaces that focus on skills and resources applicable to a range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary pursuits.
5. ***Inquiry based learning*** is key to a Grinnell College education. As such, it must inform our teaching and research environments and help determine the adjacencies of human and material resources needed to support it. Delivery, analysis, and production of information involve the library, gallery, Creative Computing Lab, classrooms, and research

support areas in ways that call for skilled professionals in these areas to collaborate in new ways.

6. ***Sustainable and environment-friendly design*** is likely to be the mark of a modern building that can stand the test of time, and it is essential for institutions like ours, which are answerable to future generations for the use of resources. While the campus plan is unlikely to address spaces in the kind of detail needed for sustainable design, environmental considerations, life-cycle cost, and energy use should inform all stages of the discussion.

7. ***Teaching and research environments*** should facilitate learning. *Classrooms, seminar rooms and lecture halls* should be well-proportioned and allow for flexibility of use; lines of sight should be unobstructed and facilitate the work taking place in the room; acoustics good and air-handling noise unobtrusive; technology should be mixed and tailored to the functions of the space (thus likely to vary from small seminar room to lecture hall). *Burling Library's* organization of space and services should support users' needs to access, analyze, and reflect upon a growing range and complexity of primary and secondary sources in collaboration with specialists in a variety of support disciplines. It should embody the interdisciplinary enterprise of a liberal arts education with the people and materials it brings together. *Offices* of faculty members in the humanities and social studies often double as their laboratories, where most of their research takes place and office dimensions should help accommodate this research function. Faculty members often meet with groups of students outside of class and this pedagogical activity also needs accommodation (either in offices or other kinds of spaces).