



FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY
CAMPUS MASTER PLAN

Insight Journal



FLORIDA
GULF COAST
UNIVERSITY

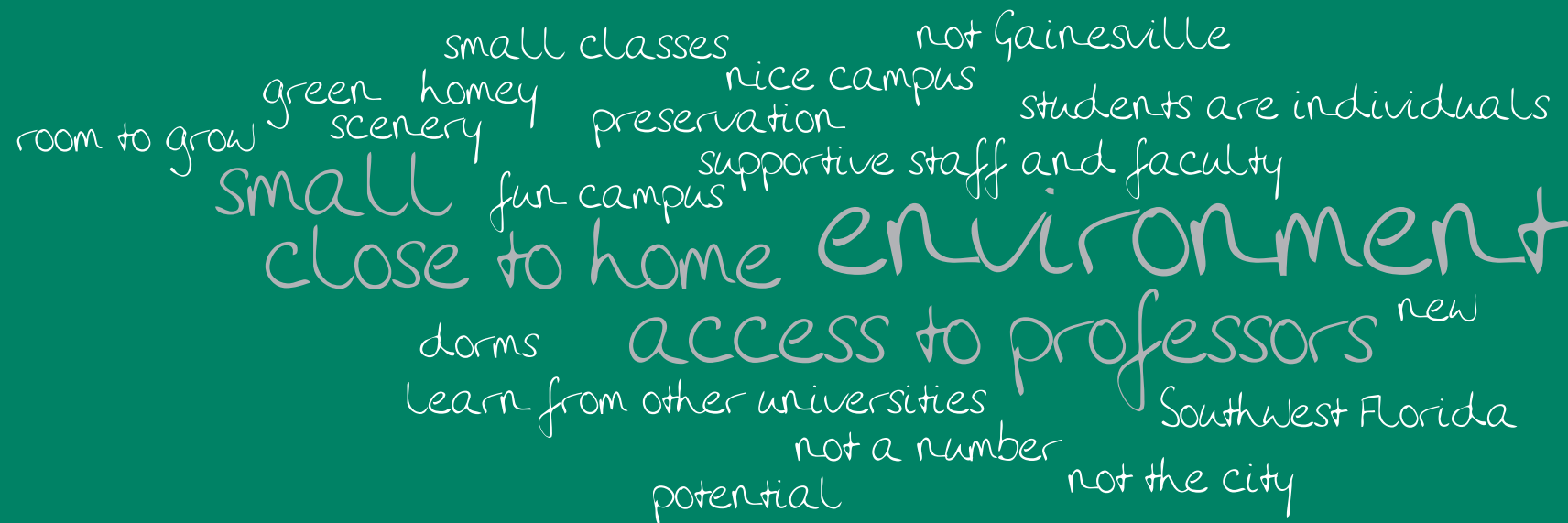
ASTORINO



"I'm happy I'm here. What I like about this campus is that it's small; you're not a number. Sitting in a classroom with 20 other people, as opposed to 300 people, really makes a difference." **STUDENT**

What sets FGCU apart from other Florida institutions of higher learning?

FGCU STUDENTS SAID:



The larger an answer, the more times it was given.

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Our challenge

Astorino's Research Services were charged with taking the Master Plan to a higher level, in part by answering the question **“What does Florida Gulf Coast University want to be?”** By focusing on the elements of Academic Facilities, Housing, Recreation & Open Space, Transportation, Conservation, Architectural Design and Landscape Design, our goal is to give the design team and the leadership of FGCU insight into what students, staff and faculty consider their ideal university experience, and how that might best be achieved through Master Planning as the university continues to be a leader in sustainability in a time of rapid growth.

How we did it

After initial background research and an overview of FGCU's publications and website, the research team attended a Stakeholder meeting with the university's cabinet in early June. Following that, we engaged in photodocumentation and observation on campus and in the immediate surrounding community. We conducted two Discovery Sessions with groups of students. With preliminary data from this primary research, we developed a student survey and a faculty & staff survey to gain additional insight into issues that surfaced. The survey also allowed us to supplement our qualitative data with quantitative data.

Who we talked to

In addition to the members of the FGCU Cabinet, Astorino Research Services were able to conduct Discovery Sessions with two groups of approximately 8 students each. During our campus tour, we engaged with about a dozen students. The survey component of our research brought in the perspectives of 628 students and 311 faculty and staff.

About the Survey

58% of **students** surveyed fell between the ages of **18** and **21**.

23% fell between the ages of **22** and **25**.

79% of **students** surveyed were **full-time undergraduates**.

8% were **part-time undergraduates**.

36% of **students** surveyed were part of the **College of Arts & Sciences**.

27% were part of the **Lutgert College of Business**.

51% of **students** surveyed responded that they decided to attend FGCU because of **the feeling of a small campus or small class sizes**.

47% of **students** surveyed responded that they decided to attend FGCU because **they live nearby/it's convenient**.

31% of faculty and staff surveyed fell between the ages of **50** and **59**.

21% fell between the ages of **40** and **49**.

59% surveyed were **full-time staff**.

28% were **full-time faculty**.

Complete survey results are located in the appendix of the book.

A LOOK AT OUR RESEARCH:

What does Florida Gulf Coast University want to be?

Students were asked to describe the **current** FGCU experience in terms of the five senses: taste, touch, sound, smell and color. They were then asked to describe the **ideal** FGCU experience in the same ways. The thing we noticed is that, for many people, responses were the same for each. What does this mean?

FGCU is doing a lot of things right. By maintaining and building upon its commitment to the environment, working hard to establish a brighter, more memorable and pedestrian-friendly campus, and keeping its personal feel, FGCU will achieve what one student called, *“a sense of a new day. Open: to ideas, people and thoughts.”*

THE CURRENT FGCU EXPERIENCE:



*“The university is **new**, lacking **tradition or wear**. This is both refreshing and a little clinical.”*

*“The campus is a **lush** setting. There is a solid **connection to the environment** and to wildlife.”*

*“Everywhere you look there’s **green**. It represents **life and growth**, which are two things this university prides itself on.”*

*“The campus is bright and vibrant, but **doesn’t linger in memory** or stand out.”*

*“Campus has a lot of **rough edges**. I imagine if you put it in your mouth, it would crunch.”*

“There is a lack of ‘buzz’ to campus, a lack of common excitement.”

*“I feel that this university is **up-and-coming in Florida** and we’re still getting our feet wet.”*

THE IDEAL FGCU EXPERIENCE:

*"Not in a busy city way, but **loud with ideas and innovation!**"*



*"It gives the sense of a new day. College should feel **open: to ideas, people and thoughts.**"*

*"Unexpected, vibrant environment encased in something **well worth trying.**"*

*"The campus should be more **unique and memorable**, a culmination of many distinct parts to make a flavorful dish."*

"Awakening, exciting, exploratory."

*"**Festive.** I wish this campus could be more lively."*

Big Ideas & Summary of Findings

BIG IDEAS

NEWNESS AND TRAILBLAZING

In the context of higher education in the United States, Florida Gulf Coast University is a newer institution. This “new” campus brings up different ideas and feelings as they relate to the “ideal” university setting. It’s not historic. Yet. However, there is a different cultural mentality among the students we had the privilege to talk to, and it’s something that extends beyond them, we think, to much of the population of south Florida. While the research team at first felt like the traditional feeling of “academia” was not present, we came to understand that it was, just in a different way than is commonly portrayed. The students of FGCU feel like they are pioneers. Like trailblazers. At FGCU they have a unique opportunity to really be a part of something—part of the formation of their own legacy and traditions. As more and more FGCU alumni succeed in the world, there will be more and more pioneers to celebrate.

A sidebar to this: As the university grows, it should keep in mind that its students, by and large, seem to really appreciate and treasure the personal feel of a small university. FGCU should strive to maintain that feel, even as enrollment jumps from one academic year to the next.

COMMUNITY OUT-REACH AND IN-REACH

Members of the community should feel welcome on-campus and members of the campus community should feel welcome in the neighborhood outside. College towns often struggle with the dynamic between student population and residents, and we heard that from the students we talked to as well. If relations improve, FGCU graduates will be more likely to stay in the area and to give back to the university. By doing things like marketing to the community to come use FGCU facilities and encouraging area businesses to hire students, a connection can be established and strengthened.

Internally, we noticed and heard about a need for school spirit and a feeling of community on campus. We were more likely to see students wearing shirts of other Florida schools than FGCU, and a large commuter population can make attempts to grow school spirit more difficult. Being a Division 1 school is a source of pride for the university, but most faculty, staff and students just don't feel it. The obvious answer is that they want a football team. Others suggested the addition of Greek housing. However, small improvements in things like communications on-campus could begin to build that sense of community. Better signage at the entrance to the university, eagle statues and mascots and the formation of new traditions are some ways to do this. In the end, the students we talked to said that involvement leads to pride. So however students can be encouraged to be a part of something bigger than just attending class will lead to the betterment of the university experience for everyone.



Students like the grand scale of signage for neighboring Gulf Coast Town Center.



The Nittany Lion serves as a campus destination and photo opportunity for thousands of visitors to Penn State University every year.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

ACADEMIC FACILITIES | ELEMENT 105

The classroom is an entrance to the world.

The positive response to the quality of the Academic Facilities was high, but the perceived sense of academia that exists on campus could be stronger. Academia, the sense of a shared pursuit of knowledge, and a strong campus community are key to a successful higher education experience. Different types of students, social tendencies and learning styles should be accommodated for them to feel a sense of belonging.

HOUSING | ELEMENT 107

A student's home away from home.

The university can utilize the local climate to provide students with a unique and comfortable place to call home. On-campus housing is also one of the most important parts of the student experience. Proximity encourages new encounters, relationships, and the sense of a collective community. The current lack of this feeling of community can be enhanced by increasing the diversity of offerings related to on-campus living. Give students a reason to choose on-campus housing versus moving off campus and the university as a whole will benefit through decreased student commuting, a more active atmosphere, and a sense of community.

RECREATION & OPEN SPACE | ELEMENT 108

Play is also learning.

Staff and students both responded with a positive view of the quality of the Recreation and Open Spaces at FGCU, but with some caveats - available shading and proximity to central campus were stated as issues for both groups. The increase in student population was also mentioned by students and staff as a deterrent. As FGCU looks forward, the expansion of recreational facilities and open space should be considered in context with student growth, climate concerns, and overall university goals.

TRANSPORTATION | ELEMENT 111

Getting campus moving.

When it comes to getting around (or not) campus, the four main factors that affect the quality of transport are: **proximity, reliability, safety and climate.** **Proximity:** FGCU has a goal of increasing pedestrian traffic in order to be in line with their green initiatives. However, there is a perception that key destinations are too far apart. **Reliability:** Campus shuttles have issues related to reliability and schedules. **Safety:** many members of the campus community would be more inclined to walk if campus were safer. Insufficient lighting, crossing at traffic lights and sharing pathways with bikes, golf carts and skaters deter them. In the same way, more people say they would bike or skateboard

if they felt safe doing so. Maintenance of walkways and pathways is important as well. **Climate:** an overwhelming number of respondents stated that they never ride a bike or skateboard on campus. Walking, biking, and skating were affected by the lack of shade and the overall weather conditions.

CONSERVATION | ELEMENT 113

The campus community goes green.

While the survey results alone would indicate that students and faculty/staff are doing their part to be active participants in FGCU's sustainability mission, students and some faculty and staff seem to lack true understanding of it. More could be done to increase awareness and understanding among the campus community—there is more to conservation than just recycling.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN | ELEMENT 115

Architecture is inhabited sculpture.

Currently, FGCU's architectural design is not seen as intuitively academic or distinctive from other campuses, and is lacking when it comes to reflecting the quality of learning that happens at the school. The university's main entrance, as the first impression of many, is a special instance to be

considered a priority. The research indicates that, once on campus, establishing a "classic" look is secondary to cohesiveness and integration into the landscape. Cohesion is different from uniformity, and the campus buildings do not need to be uniform. FGCU's location in Southwest Florida gives it a rich palette of colors and materials from which to choose.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN | ELEMENT 116

Landscapes have a language of their own.

While the general feel is that the quality of the landscape design is appropriate due to the use of native plants and access to sidewalks, some respondents stated that the landscape was not well maintained, or lacking in color and interest. One student summed it up when he said, "...the school is big on environment; the outdoor spaces are just as important as the indoor classrooms." Our survey revealed that respondents were a mix of those in favor and those against environmental graphics. Those against it felt that it detracts from the natural look of campus, but others thought it could be beneficial if tastefully/minimally done.

Academic Facilities

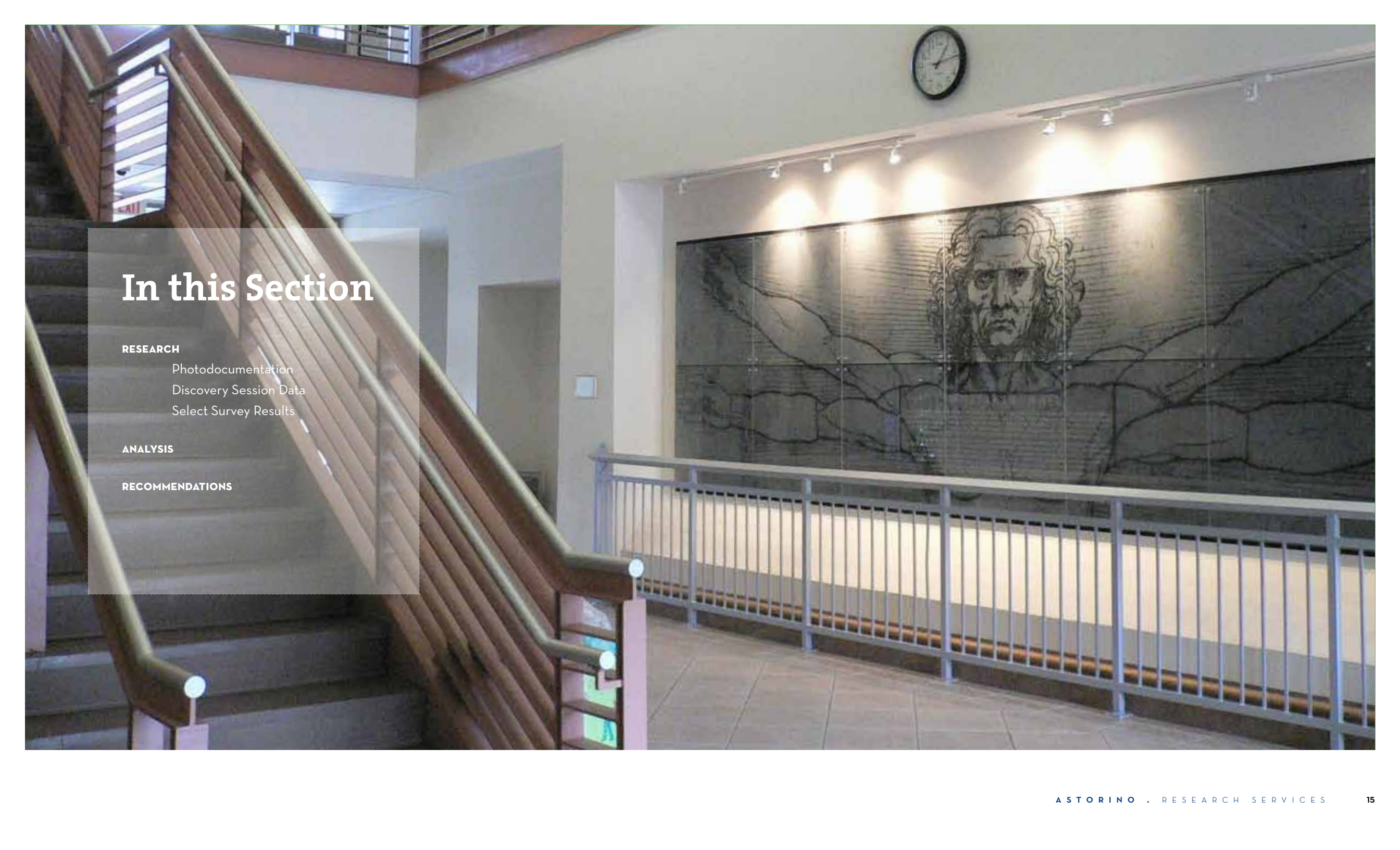
THE CLASSROOM IS AN ENTRANCE TO THE WORLD

The Academic Facilities goal of the Master Plan is to develop academic facilities required to meet the needs of the projected student enrollment and to reinforce, consolidate, and link the established clusters or zones of academic and research activity on the campus.

WHAT YOUR USERS ARE SAYING

“During finals week, it is impossible to find places to study around campus.” STUDENT

“[We need] more integrated technology in classrooms, informal learning environments, and student lounge areas.” STUDENT



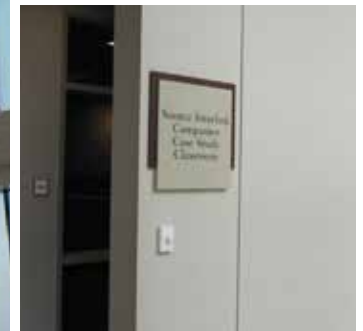
In this Section

RESEARCH

Photodocumentation
Discovery Session Data
Select Survey Results

ANALYSIS

RECOMMENDATIONS



RESEARCH:

Photodocumentation

Departments and colleges, with varying degrees of success and polish, attempt to showcase their unique identities. The Sugden Resort & Hospitality Management Building (at right), is a strong example. Older academic buildings felt more generic, while newer facilities showed careful attention to materials and small, thoughtful details.





RESEARCH:

Student Discovery Sessions

With this interactive post-it note exercise, students were encouraged to identify what they felt was working and what was not working with regard to Academic Facilities at FGCU.

In the pages that follow, we will look at some of the ideas they had for improving the current situation.

<p>+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Small classes and small classroomsUpdated and integrated technologyPrivate study roomsClean, open, new, coolLibrary renovations feel welcomingGreat engineering building	<p>-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Older classrooms not as niceOlder classrooms feel closed inLack of academic credibilityLack of sense of academiaLighting in older academic buildings can be hard on the eyesOnce class is over, there's nowhere to go
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RESEARCH:

Select Survey Results

Our survey of over 300 full- and part-time FGCU staff & faculty and approximately 625 undergraduate and graduate students took place in the last several weeks of 2010. These questions centered around the current FGCU situation, and following pages will address student, faculty and staff ideas about what the ideal situation would be like. For complete survey responses, see the appendix of the book.

88% of students and **84%** of faculty & staff rate the quality of academic facilities

at FGCU as either **Good** or **Excellent**.

54% of students either Agree or Strongly Agree that **there is a strong sense of**

“academia” on campus.

89% of students either Agree or Strongly Agree that **academic facilities should ideally be**

tailored to the needs of the specific departments housed within them.

“FGCU has outgrown its current multi-purpose spaces such as the SU Ballroom. Alico Arena is quickly becoming a destination for groups that have outgrown their spaces and availability is scarce due to the demands of a Division I Athletics Program.” FACULTY/STAFF

Which of the following aspects of academic facilities need improvement?

47% of students chose **art and decorations, personality and school spirit.**

47% of students chose **student lounge areas.**

51% of faculty & staff chose **shared outdoor spaces.**

47% of faculty & staff chose **offices.**

ACADEMIC FACILITIES

Analysis & Recommendations

ANALYSIS

The positive response to the quality of the Academic Facilities is high, with less than 20% of Students, Faculty, and Staff having a neutral or negative perception. However, the perceived sense of academia that exists on campus could be stronger. Academia, the sense of a shared pursuit of knowledge, and a strong campus community are key to a successful higher education experience.

And while perception of the campus' academic facilities is positive, little details do need attention. The campus atmosphere is affected by everything from the look and feel of the largest classroom buildings to ambiance created by the lighting used in each classroom. Different types of students should be accommodated for them to feel a sense of belonging - undergrad and grad, commuter and on-campus, day and night students—even larger students can be accommodated with desks that fit them.

“We are in need of more computer technology rooms that have no classes and are open to students so they do not have to walk all the way to the library.” **STUDENT**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Through our observations, Discovery Sessions and open-ended areas of the surveys, we've compiled specific ideas toward creating the ideal FGCU situation. These are some of them.

- More study rooms and (computer) labs are needed. Create some that are specific to majors, grad students, commuters or other dedicated groups. 24-hour labs help accommodate diverse types of students and study habits.
- Give options for students to recharge their batteries, both literally and metaphorically.
- The Student Union needs rooms/areas to hold larger groups of people than it currently does.
- Can students play a greater role in the business of the student union? Several mentioned the successes of the student-run union at UCF.
- Dedicate a room in each academic building for printing/faxing/scanning
- Large multi-purpose space, besides SU Ballroom and Alico Arena, is needed for university events.
- Outdoor classrooms would energize both faculty and students and take advantage of FGCU's unique southwest Florida location and identity.
- In a university as new and fast-growing as FGCU, the bar is set high for academic facilities and technology. Staying at the forefront in updating these facilities and technology is critical in establishing leadership among higher education institutions in Florida and beyond.

ELEMENT

107

Housing

A STUDENT'S HOME AWAY FROM HOME

The Housing goal of the Master Plan is to encourage the availability of diverse, safe, affordable housing opportunities for students on and in the vicinity of the campus.

WHAT YOUR USERS ARE SAYING

"[FGCU has] the best on-campus housing hands-down. There's a beach at North Lake—need I say more?" STUDENT

In this Section

RESEARCH

- Photodocumentation
- Discovery Session Data
- Select Survey Results

ANALYSIS

RECOMMENDATIONS





RESEARCH:

Photodocumentation

North Lake, while it has its own beach, has a generic feel. Common areas show a little more school spirit. South Village is so new that it looks resort-like, however, drainage requirements make the outdoor common area a difficult spot to play frisbee or ball, and seating areas would benefit from being covered. Both areas are short of food and recreation options and there is a feeling of being disconnected from campus.

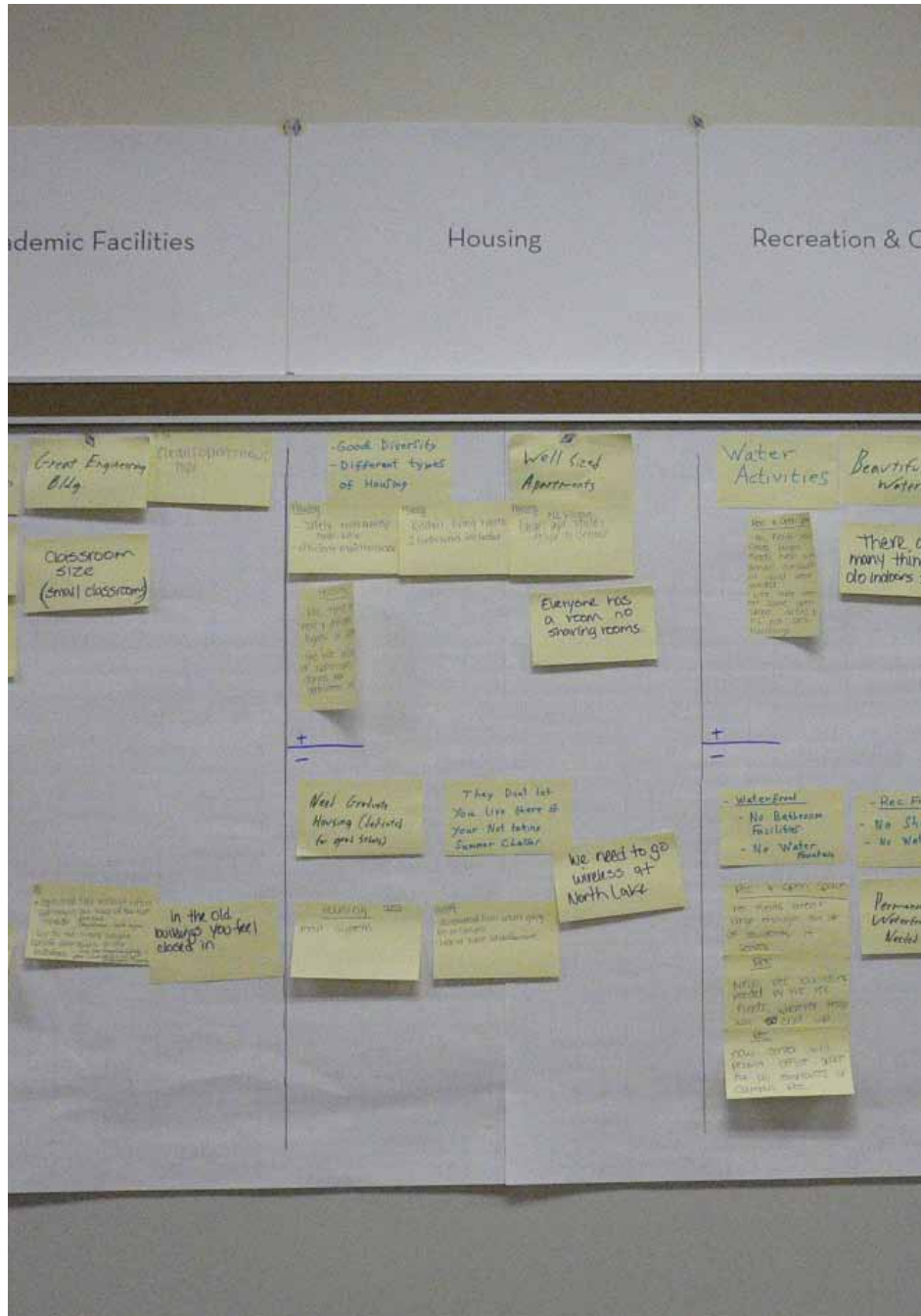


RESEARCH:

Student Discovery Sessions

With this interactive post-it note exercise, students were encouraged to identify what they felt was working and what was not working with regard to Housing at FGCU.

In the pages that follow, we will look at some of the ideas they had for improving the current situation.



+

- Well-sized apartments
- Efficient maintenance
- Safety, i.e. emergency cords
- Diverse types of housing
- No sharing of rooms
- Special interest halls

-

- No dedicated grad student housing
- Can't live there if you're not taking summer classes
- Feels disconnected from Main Campus events, etc.

RESEARCH:

Select Survey Results

Our survey of approximately 625 undergraduate and graduate students included primarily students who lived on-campus at North Lake, those who lived off-campus with their family, and those who lived off-campus with roommates. The questions centered around the current FGCU Housing situation, and following pages will address student ideas about what the ideal situation would be like. For complete survey responses, see the appendix of the book.

69% of students would rate the **quality of on-campus housing at FGCU** as **Good** or **Excellent**.

54% of students either Agree or Strongly Agree that **they like sharing housing with upper-/underclassmen**.

17% of students either Agree or Strongly Agree that **there are many nearby dining options**.

48% either Agree or Strongly Agree that **there are many amenities, recreation facilities, and things to do near their residence**.

59% either Agree or Strongly Agree that **they want a greater variety of housing options** to choose from.

49% Agree or Strongly Agree that **they look forward to living off-campus**.

“For a small campus, it is never too far to walk! Students are spoiled here.” F/S

HOUSING

Analysis & Recommendations

ANALYSIS

On-campus housing is an opportunity for both students and the university itself. Here, the university can utilize the local climate – sunny skies and a nearby beach – to provide students with a unique and comfortable place to call home. On-campus housing is also one of the most important parts of the student experience. Proximity encourages new encounters, relationships, and the sense of a collective community.

The current lack of this feeling of community can be enhanced by increasing the diversity of offerings related to on-campus living: more special interest housing, Greek housing, summer housing, places for students to meet outside of their rooms and improvement in dining amenities. Give students a reason to choose on-campus housing versus moving off campus and the university as a whole will benefit through decreased student commuting, a more active atmosphere, and a sense of community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Through our research, we've arrived at specific ideas toward creating the ideal FGCU situation. These are some of them.

- Naming North Lake buildings with names other than A, B, C, D and painting them different colors from a “South Florida” palette would make them feel more homey and less generic.
- Both North Lake and South Village could benefit from richer signage.
- Create dedicated on-campus housing options for grad students, families and/or spouses, and even class- or degree-specific dorms.
- More housing options in South Village could make it an attractive option for students besides freshmen.
- Make accommodations for students staying the summer, even if they aren't taking classes. Having more students on campus brings more energy during what are typically quiet times.
- Greek housing should be discussed as a possibility.
- More dining options and later hours would meet the needs of more students.
- Development of a self-sustaining community would be in line with FGCU's sustainability mission and a differentiator for the school.
- Studies have shown that natural light is important in common areas.

Recreation & Open Space

PLAY IS ALSO LEARNING

The Recreation and Open Space goal of the Master Plan is to provide adequate recreational options for the campus community in a diverse open space environment that links the campus and the larger community.

WHAT YOUR USERS ARE SAYING

“When I’m on campus and don’t have to work, it’s nice to use the school’s gym because they have quality equipment and I tend to know a lot of people working out there.” STUDENT

“We need [recreational facilities] to support the rapid growth that this campus is going to sustain in the near future.” STUDENT

“The fitness center needs to be bigger if it allows students, teachers, athletic teams and visitors [to use it].” STUDENT



In this Section

RESEARCH

- Photodocumentation
- Discovery Session Data
- Select Survey Results

ANALYSIS

RECOMMENDATIONS



RESEARCH:

Photodocumentation

As campus population grows, almost all of these facilities, especially the fitness center, will need to grow with it. Students and Division 1 athletes will need separate spaces in which to train or work out. Some strong university athletics branding is seen at left, which the university as a whole could take a cue from. In many instances, both with recreation and open spaces, more shading was mentioned as a need. The waterfront trailer, with port-a-potty outside, is not on par with some of the other facilities seen here.

RESEARCH:

Student Discovery Sessions

With this interactive post-it note exercise, students were encouraged to identify what they felt was working and what was not working with regard to Recreation and Open Spaces at FGCU.

In the pages that follow, we will look at some of the ideas they had for improving the current situation.



+

- Water activities
- Beautiful waterfront and bonfire pit
- Library lawns
- Many things to do, inside and out
- Many new, large rec fields
- Intramurals

-

- No permanent, hurricane-proof waterfront building
- Sharing space with athletics inhibits student use
- Clubs, intramurals coordinators separated across campus
- Waterfront: no bathroom, drinking water, not enough storage
- Rec fields and tennis courts - no water fountains, no shade

RESEARCH:

Select Survey Results

Our survey questions for Recreation and Open Spaces centered around the current FGCU situation, and following pages will address ideas about what the ideal situation would be like. For complete survey responses, see the appendix of the book.

61% of students and **62%** of faculty and staff would rate the **quality of Recreation and Open Spaces at FGCU** as **Good** or **Excellent**.

61% of students use the **fitness center** most often, and **56%** of students take advantage of **waterfront sports and activities** most often.

38% of faculty and staff report that they use the **gym** the most, and **34%** say they utilize the **arena** most often.

"I love the group classes. They motivate me." STUDENT

When asked **which aspects of Recreational Facilities need the most improvement**,

44% of students and **44%** of faculty and staff answered that **shade** was needed.

34% of students indicated a desire for recreation **locations to be closer to central campus**, **32%** of faculty and staff indicated that **more building space** should be allotted for these uses.

When asked **which recreational amenities most interest them**, students most frequently chose

park-like areas, gymnasium, and pool.

RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

Analysis & Recommendations

“The [fitness center] expansion should be done in a way that comes as closely as possible to the ‘final’ stage of the facility. While I understand the need for piece-meal building, we should shoot for a finished product and it better be LEED Platinum!” **STUDENT**

ANALYSIS

Play, fitness, and the time and space to relax are important components of the University experience. The Florida climate allows endless opportunity for recreational activities, but campus design does not.

Staff and students both responded with positive views of the quality of the Recreation and Open Spaces at FGCU, but with some caveats - available shading and proximity to central campus were stated as issues for both groups. Future deterrents to use, including the increase in student population and consequent increase of use of the facilities, were also mentioned by students and staff in both the survey and Discovery Sessions. Plans for a new rec center have been in the works for some time, and as FGCU looks forward, the expansion of other recreational facilities and open space should be considered in context with student growth, climate concerns, and overall university goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Through our research, we’ve arrived at specific ideas toward creating the ideal FGCU situation. These are some of them.

- The new rec center will ideally have office space for all employees of campus recreation. If offices, storage, and recreational facilities are physically separated out of necessity, what are some ways that the university can keep a feeling of connection among them? In addition to color palettes, furnishing and branding, communication amongst them will be critical.

- Students, faculty and staff needs their own facilities, separate from university athletics programs. Some faculty and staff would prefer a faculty- and staff-only fitness center, especially if they are paying for the privilege of working out in university facilities. A larger number of faculty and staff report not using any of the recreational facilities. University leaders need to decide if they want to change that, and if so, how can they begin to do it?
- Extended hours to mitigate crowded conditions and accommodate late-night visitors
- Shade and drinking water at all outdoor fields, courts and at the waterfront
- Communication is critical if the university wants to attract students to recreational facilities like the fitness center. Many students didn’t realize it existed, where it was, or how to use it.
- Recreational facilities should be more convenient for commuters. Many of them seek gym memberships off-campus. Encourage them to spend more time on campus and get to know others.
- Faculty and staff both mentioned the lack of a football stadium. As a division 1 school in need of an injection of school spirit, this is an item that came up repeatedly in several sections of our survey.
- **Students, Faculty and Staff also suggested:** a track in the gym, more rec fields, a permanent waterfront building, outdoor basketball courts, a track, a roller hockey rink, a blob at the waterfront, facilities for housing boats, a climbing wall, racquetball courts and a football stadium.

Transportation

GETTING CAMPUS MOVING

Transit, Circulation and Parking Sub-Element: The goal of this sub-element of the of the Master Plan is to encourage options for flexible transit and vehicular access to the campus and to array parking in accessible concentrations around the perimeter of the academic core.

Pedestrian and Non-vehicular Circulation Sub-Element: The goal of this sub-element of the Master Plan is to strengthen the functional and aesthetic nature of pedestrian movement between and among the various areas of the campus.

WHAT YOUR USERS ARE SAYING

“It will always be more convenient to drive.”

STUDENT

“Buses should only be used for people with medical disabilities. Everyone else can enjoy the health benefits of walking.” STUDENT

“It is too easy to use a golf cart, and walking is not expected or encouraged.” F/S



In this Section

RESEARCH

- Photodocumentation
- Discovery Session Data
- Select Survey Results

ANALYSIS

RECOMMENDATIONS



RESEARCH:

Photodocumentation

While cars (and buses) are kept out of the central academic core of the university, they are dominant elsewhere on campus. Outside the core are vast areas of surface parking and many parking garages, with more under construction. Driving around, things feel auto-centric and not pedestrian-centric. Within the core, however, pedestrians share the paths and sidewalks with skateboards, golf carts, and bicycles. It seems that existing bike racks and skateboard racks could be better placed or utilized. More shading, again, would give incentive to students, faculty and staff to choose alternate transport. The university, with its sustainable initiatives, needs to decide how these different means of transportation should best and most safely share the roads and walkways.



RESEARCH:

Student Discovery Sessions

With this interactive post-it note exercise, students were encouraged to identify what they felt was working and what was not working with regard to Transportation at FGCU.

In the pages that follow, we will look at some of the ideas they had for improving the current situation.

<p>+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Bus runs every day, services on campus housingMore parking is being created. Most is well-placedBike- and skateboard-friendly campusMultiple shuttle stops in housing	<p>-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">No parking close to largest buildingsNo shuttle service on weekends or during breaksShuttles run sporadically (drivers wait for them to fill up)Crossing at traffic lights can be dangerous to pedestriansHard to park close to library
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RESEARCH:

Select Survey Results

Our preliminary research indicated that transportation is a very significant issue for the campus community, and our survey results validated that. Of the students that completed the survey, 430 were commuters and 187 lived on-campus.

41% of students and **35%** of faculty and staff rate the **quality of Alternative**

Transportation at FGCU as **Good or Excellent**.

BIKES

85% of students and **86%** of faculty/staff indicate they **never ride a bike on campus**.

59% of students said they drive and **33%** feel the distance is too far.

SKATEBOARDS

93% of students say they **never skateboard** on campus.

SHUTTLES

19% of students and **1%** of faculty and staff say they **always or usually use the shuttle**.

60% wanted **increased frequency of stops/increased routes**, and

57% wanted **fun or eco-friendly shuttles**.

22% of students and **59%** of faculty and staff thought the shuttle service should

be **left as is**.

“With FGCU’s core values, it’s appalling that we have these shuttles running all over what is really a small campus—we are discouraging physical fitness AND polluting the air and using resources all at the same time.” F/S

SELECT SURVEY RESULTS, CONT'D

"I bring my skateboard with me. I'm always moving. People do not complain to me about it." STUDENT

"The skateboard parking racks are pointless. No skater will ever leave their set-up in one of them." STUDENT

WALKING

75% of students and **65%** of faculty and staff said **weather conditions affect their** frequency of walking on campus.

65% of students and **54%** of faculty and staff said **shade or covered walkways** would encourage them to walk more often.

PARKING

59% of students said **more garages** and **54%** said **parking closer to largest/most significant buildings** would improve the parking situation.

WALK/BIKE/SKATEBOARD

61% of students and **53%** of faculty suggested adding **additional routes** to improve the ability of students to walk, bike and skateboard around campus.

46% of students suggested **improving existing routes**, and **37%** of faculty and staff thought **walking or biking route maps** might help.

TRANSPORTATION

Analysis

ANALYSIS

While 41% and 35% of students and faculty, respectively, rated the quality of transportation as “good” or “excellent,” the numbers suggest that there is room for improvement. When it comes to getting around (or not) campus, the four main factors that affect the quality of transport are: **proximity, reliability, safety and climate.**

Proximity: FGCU has a goal of increasing pedestrian traffic in order to be in line with their green initiatives. However, there is a perception that key destinations are too far apart. Thus, there is a campus-wide perception (real or imagined) that it is just “easier” to drive than it is to walk. In the survey section on Housing, we heard that residences were perceived to be too far from campus, and again, this lack of proximity can be a deterrent to walking, biking, or skateboarding.

Reliability: Campus shuttles are an option not utilized as well as they could be. Issues related to reliability and schedules were at the core of this. Again, it was perceived as better to rely on one’s own transportation.

Safety: many members of the campus community would be more inclined to walk if campus were lit

more safely and consistently throughout. They have hesitation about crossing at some of the traffic lights and have a hard time sharing pathways with bikes, golf carts and skaters. In the same way, more people said they would bike or skateboard if they felt safe doing so. Maintenance of walkways and pathways is important as well.

Climate: an overwhelming number of respondents stated that they never ride bikes or skateboards on campus. While the survey indicated that this was due to the large amount of respondents being commuters, our primary research also showed that walking, biking, and skating were affected by the lack of shade and the overall weather conditions, as well as perceived proximity.

Recommendations

Moving forward, the university must look at ways to mitigate the effects of sometimes harsh weather, improve reliability of alternative transport, incentivize its use, and get the word out about the benefits of choosing alternative transportation. Specific recommendations gleaned through our observation, Discovery Sessions and open-ended survey responses include:

- Provide bike, rollerblade or skateboard (free) rentals
- Continue the work being done to implement a zip-car program
- Many suggest not allowing on-campus students to drive to class

WALKING

- A pedestrian bridge at traffic lights might move cars and people more easily and safely
- Light the back road exit for safety
- Banners, chalk signs or art on sidewalks can add interest to a walking route
- Add more shade and/or trails through tree-lined areas
- Widen sidewalks to accommodate pedestrians, bikes, skateboards and golf carts
- Skaters/bikers need to respect pedestrians more - campus police on bikes could help
- A line down the middle of sidewalks would encourage keeping to the right
- Incentivize walking through extra credit, coupons or in other creative ways

“I believe that the university should be developed similarly to a theme park...when a person parks in a parking garage, it should be expected that all further transportation would be pedestrian.” F/S

- Moving sidewalks could ease the perception of certain distances being “too far” to walk
- Spray misters could be added along uncovered walking routes

BIKING

- Bike paths at university entrance show a commitment to alternative transport

SKATEBOARDING

- Skateboard racks are generally not worth the investment, as most skaters prefer to take their skateboards into the classroom

SHUTTLES

- Time the shuttle routes - have schedules available and posted
- Offer a shuttle running directly from North Lake to South
- Do not allow buses to idle

- University should hold shuttle drivers accountable—friendliness came up as being an issue
- Add express routes in the event that more stops are added to existing routes
- Shuttles should be more fun and/or eco-friendly (open-air, double decker, electric)

Note: Some members of the campus community feel the shuttles should be eliminated altogether

PARKING

- Separate events parking from housing
- Set clear entrances and exits for lots and garages
- Parking lots covered with solar panels are in line with the university's sustainability initiatives
- Stork parking can be offered for pregnant students, faculty, staff or visitors
- Offer choice or lower-cost parking for eco-friendly cars or motorcycles
- Short-term parking at the library for quick book return

GOLF CARTS

Note: Some members of the campus community feel the golf carts should be reduced or eliminated

- If golf carts are here to stay, brand them for consistency and train drivers to follow the same rules when on campus pathways

"I think taking the shuttle could be dissolved if we had the ability to rent bikes on campus; it is not that big. And the buses we have should be 100% biofuel or solar—we are a sustainable university, are we not?" **STUDENT**

"The university should continue to work with Student Government to encourage the bike-share and zip car programs. Where are the signs promoting biking, skating or walking, the programs to give students information about health benefits, bike-route maps with miles traveled, and why aren't the campus trails mapped? I would like to see the university incorporate these into the master plan." **STUDENT**

Conservation

THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY GOES GREEN

The Conservation Goal of the Master Plan is to be a model for conservation policies to improve the environment and to improve air, water, and open space quality in the vicinity of the campus.

WHAT YOUR USERS ARE SAYING

“I feel like FGCU has so much potential, because we really want to be environmentally oriented.” STUDENT

“We do a very poor job of showing what FGCU values—cigarette butts and trash is what a visitor sees—not affirmation of living sustainably.” F/S

“We need to reflect a compromise between man and nature.” F/S



In this Section

RESEARCH

- Photodocumentation
- Discovery Session Data
- Select Survey Results

ANALYSIS

RECOMMENDATIONS



RESEARCH:

Photodocumentation

Conservation and sustainability are about more than recycling. From solar panels to special parking for low-emissions vehicles, from smart choices in development and new construction to preservation of wildlife and flora, FGCU is making strides to live up to its mission of sustainability. More can be done, though. Maintenance practices and alternative transportation are two areas where improvements can be made.

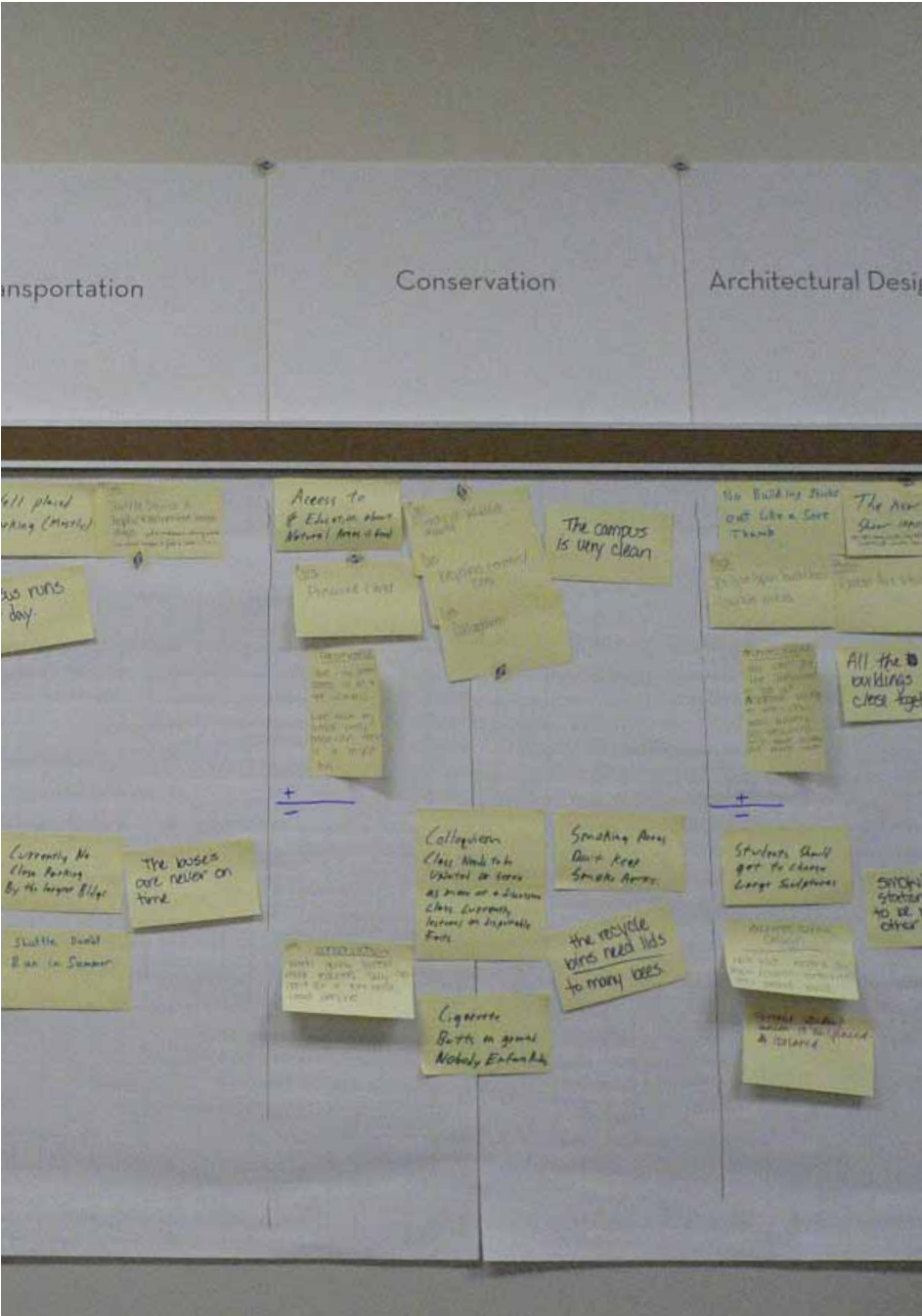


RESEARCH:

Student Discovery Sessions

With this interactive post-it note exercise, students were encouraged to identify what they felt was working and what was not working with regard to Conservation at FGCU.

In the pages that follow, we will look at some of the ideas they had for improving the current situation.



- +
- Colloquium
- Access to education about nature/natural areas
- Recycling efforts
- Student initiatives: SG, Wildlife Club
- New signs marking wildlife conservation sites in housing and on campus

-
- Classes with no textbooks: students print out pages anyway—isn't green
- Cigarette butts on ground
- Smoking areas don't keep smoke away

RESEARCH:

Select Survey Results

Both Students and Faculty & Staff responded to survey questions around Conservation. For complete survey responses, see the appendix of the book.

72% of students and **75%** of faculty and staff think the **quality of Conservation and Sustainability** at FGCU is either **Good** or **Excellent**.

65% of students responded that **Conservation and/or Sustainability** are either **Important** or **Very Important** in their personal lives.

"We're all about conservation, and that is reflected throughout our campus." F/S

"We look like a school for chain smokers, instead of a school who cares about the environment." STUDENT

VALUES

I value a landscape with native trees and plants:

82% of students and **94%** of faculty and staff either **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**.

I care deeply about preservation of Florida's natural habitat:

71% of students and **88%** of faculty and staff **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**.

I care deeply about wildlife native to southwest Florida:

75% of students and **87%** of faculty and staff **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**.

"I feel that FGCU has so much potential, because we really want to be environmentally oriented." STUDENT

ACTIONS

I support the university's sustainable mission through my use of alternative transportation:

51% of students and **39%** of faculty and staff either **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**.

I take personal steps to conserve energy and resources while I am on campus:

66% of students and **87%** of faculty and staff either **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**.

I take advantage of the natural habitat and surroundings while I am on campus:

60% of students and **59%** of faculty and staff either **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**.

IMPROVEMENTS

I am aware of how to do my share towards achieving FGCU carbon neutrality within 20 years:

35% of students and **35%** of faculty and staff **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**.

Cigarette butts and smoking areas need special attention for improvement:

74% of students and **74%** of faculty and staff **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**.

Signage/interpretive materials that highlight sustainable efforts need a bolder presence on

campus: **58%** of students and **61%** of faculty and staff **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**.

Analysis

While the survey results alone would indicate that students and faculty/staff are doing their part to be active participants in FGCU's mission, our primary research, as well as the responses to our open-ended questions, paint a slightly different picture. Students, who valued the premise of sustainability, lack true understanding. "I thought I was doing my part by recycling" was one such response indicating that more could be done to increase awareness and understanding among the campus community.

Furthermore, while 51% of students stated that they use alternative transportation on campus, the results from the Transportation portion of the survey contradict this, and strongly. Here, the research showed us that students and faculty/staff are primarily using cars to get to and from campus.

It is also important to remember that public perception is swayed by little encounters each day – a clean campus projects a green image.

Overall, the intention of the campus community is good, but action is not following words.

"I thought I was doing my part by just recycling." **STUDENT**

CONSERVATION

Recommendations

Through our research, we've arrived at specific ideas toward creating the ideal FGCU situation. These are some of them.

- Eliminate sales of bottled water on campus. Instead, offer refilling stations for refillable bottles.
- Offer branded FGCU reusable bottles
- A green wall would benefit the university's bottom line and could serve to attract positive PR.
- A more consistent signage package for nature trails, along with interpretive signage, can highlight the unique and preserved flora and fauna of the university's land.
- Disposal of cigarette butts must be made easier and more fool-proof. Many survey respondents would like to see smoking on campus banned altogether.
- Students expressed lots of interest in an on-campus, student run fruit and vegetable garden and stand as a way for students and the community to engage. It could also be tied to academics (business courses, etc.)
- Get creative with the design of recycling bins - they should match the campus culture.
- A green dorm would offer unique living experience for students with interests in the environment.
- Sell local foods at cafeterias and dining areas
- Begin to introduce solar powered outdoor lighting

"We should live our "sustainability" image. by this I mean that we communicate and live sustainably by leaving the cars in the garage when you arrive. This policy would then drive our urban landscape in a non-traditional way, towards pedestrians, away from the car." F/S

Architectural Design

ARCHITECTURE IS INHABITED SCULPTURE

The Architectural Design Guidelines goal of the Master Plan is to create a unified architectural environment that defines and creates a coherent series of interconnected and pedestrian-scaled campus open spaces.

Includes planning, wayfinding and the visitor experience.

WHAT YOUR USERS ARE SAYING

“The buildings make me feel as if I am walking into a hospital.” STUDENT

“The entrance is very bland. It does not announce that there is even a Division I university there. It’s very forgettable.” F/S



In this Section

RESEARCH

- Photodocumentation
- Discovery Session Data
- Select Survey Results

ANALYSIS

RECOMMENDATIONS



RESEARCH:

Photodocumentation

The campus architecture as a whole is clean and cohesive, perhaps a little generic, with seemingly constant new construction. As the look and feel of the architecture evolved, some signature features like bell towers were designed as part of the fabric of campus. Covered walkways and porticos knit the academic core together. Building identifiers and names, as well as “back of house” entrances, need more attention. The main entrance is another opportunity for improvement.





RESEARCH:

Student Discovery Sessions

With this interactive post-it note exercise, students were encouraged to identify what they felt was working and what was not working with regard to Architectural Design Guidelines at FGCU.

In the pages that follow, we will look at some of the ideas they had for improving the current situation.

- +**
- Bright, open buildings
 - Newer academic buildings are beautiful, more windows, taller
 - New buildings show innovation
 - Lounge areas
 - Covered walkways outside academic buildings
 - All academic buildings are close together
 - Buildings look coherent

-
- Construction is going on continually
 - Some buildings look cheap

RESEARCH:

Select Survey Results

Both Students and Faculty and Staff responded to survey questions around Architectural Design Guidelines. For complete survey responses, see the appendix of the book.

FGCU has a signature or distinctive style of architecture that sets it apart from other campuses:

61% of students and **59%** of faculty and staff either **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**.

The campus buildings reflect a vibrant sense of academia:

43% of students and **37%** of faculty and staff **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**.

Buildings should vary in style depending on the departments or activities that occur within:

72% of students and **55%** of faculty and staff **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**.

The buildings at FGCU are a source of pride for the school:

42% of students and **59%** of faculty and staff either **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**.

The entrance experience to the university is impressive:

37% of students and **38%** of faculty and staff **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**.

I appreciate most of the public art/sculpture on display in the buildings and at building exteriors:

57% of students and **52%** of faculty and staff **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**.

Students were asked which of the following aspects affect their enjoyment of the **interior** of buildings in an academic setting (listed in order of perceived importance):

92% of students rate **comfortable furnishings** as **Important** or **Very Important**.

86% of students rate **lounge spaces** as **Important** or **Very Important**.

62% of students rate **soothing colors** as **Important** or **Very Important**.

54% of students rate **unique décor** as **Important** or **Very Important**.

52% of students rate **natural light** as **Important** or **Very Important**.

52% of students rate **controlled lighting** as **Important** or **Very Important**.

Students were asked which of the following aspects affect their enjoyment of the **exterior** of buildings in an academic setting (listed in order of perceived importance):

71% of students rate **integration into the landscape** as **Important** or **Very Important**.

51% of students rate **diversity of styles** as **Important** or **Very Important**.

50% of students rate **classic/timeless design** as **Important** or **Very Important**.

Analysis

FGCU is a growing campus, and some growing pains are inevitable. Constant construction shows a university trying to keep up with its enrollment. Currently, the architectural design is not seen as intuitively academic or distinctive from other campuses, and is lacking when it comes to reflecting the quality of learning that happens within.

The university's main entrance, as the first impression of many, is a special instance to be considered a priority.

The research indicates that, once on campus, establishing a "classic" look is secondary to cohesiveness and integration into the landscape, but that can still be achieved with different colors and materials. Cohesion is different from uniformity, and the campus buildings do not need to be uniform. FGCU's location in Southwest Florida gives it a rich palette of colors and materials from which to choose.

Future architectural design within the master plan should not only consider long term goals of the university and its leadership, but strive to establish a signature campus personality, and a welcoming feel for students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

"The entrances of the communities near FGCU outshine our entrance." F/S

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Recommendations

Through our research, we've arrived at specific ideas toward creating the ideal FGCU situation. These are some of them.

- We recommend architecture that is cohesive instead of so uniform and sterile to many students. Explore variations on color palettes, materials and roofing. Celebrate diversity, not homogeneity by adding personality. Colleges are places for ideas.
- Shade: man-made or natural. This issue pervades several of the Master Plan Elements discussed thus far. Natural shading along key pedestrian walkways is needed to encourage walking/skateboarding. This is also true for key recreational facilities.
- A more welcoming/more impressive branded university entrance is important, especially as it grows.
- The naming of buildings are great opportunities to make statements about what the university wants to be. Academic Building X doesn't say much to a prospective student or faculty member.
- Identification of buildings: typography seems to be an afterthought. It's too consistent and bland and the scale is not appropriate, nor is it integrated with the architectural design. It needs a nicer execution by signage professionals to be in line with the quality of the learning that happens at FGCU.
- Allow members of the campus community to have a voice in choosing some or all sculpture and/or public art, through something like an internet poll.
- Utilize rooftops for gardens or lounge areas as part of the university's Southwest Florida identity.
- The campus overall needs more color, whether through building exteriors, plantings or banners.
- The rear entrances to many of the buildings in the academic core face parking lots and therefore have not been identified, landscape, or otherwise treated in the ways that front entrances have been.
- University leadership need to decide whether this is intentional (a pedestrian-centric choice) or whether these back-of-house entrances are important to the impressions of the users that enter them.

"the vision of the urban design plans needs to be articulated and communicated to staff. I see the courtyard in front of Howard Hall as the logical Central Business District of the university. It could be the hub for retail and service locations and a prime focal point of the university, along with green space." F/S

Landscape Design

LANDSCAPES HAVE A LANGUAGE OF THEIR OWN

The Landscape Architectural Design Guidelines goal of the Master Plan is to create a spatial order and landscape vocabulary that unifies the campus in a manner that is inviting, safe, and that allows the natural and formal landscapes to complement one another.

WHAT YOUR USERS ARE SAYING

“Since the school is big on the environment, the outdoor spaces are just as important as the indoor classrooms.” STUDENT

“[Landscape] is necessary to help students get through the day-to-day stresses of classes and trying to achieve. It’s always nice to feel like campus is home for the students. You should feel like there’s a place you can go to relax and take some time to gather your thoughts, work on some work and enjoy the Florida weather before your next class.” STUDENT

“This campus is the nicest part of Lee County other than the beach.” F/S

In this Section

RESEARCH

- Photodocumentation
- Discovery Session Data
- Select Survey Results

ANALYSIS

RECOMMENDATIONS

This photo: the grand entrance to neighboring residential Miromar is impressive for its architecture and landscaping. It gives a strong first impression, which the university wants to do also in order to include itself among the ranks of well-respected Florida institutions of higher learning.



RESEARCH:

Photodocumentation

Landscaping at FGCU seems to consist largely of native plants and, while some areas are manicured, much of it seems to be left in a more natural condition and even overgrown. It may seem to visitors that hardscaping and landscaping were an afterthought and no real plan is in place. Water features are a nice touch seen in several spots. Not a lot of color was seen in the form of flowering plants or otherwise.



RESEARCH:

Student Discovery Sessions

With this interactive post-it note exercise, students were encouraged to identify what they felt was working and what was not working with regard to Landscape Design Guidelines at FGCU.

In the pages that follow, we will look at some of the ideas they had for improving the current situation.

+

- Sidewalks everywhere
- Pleasant and interactive
- Palm trees
- Nice use of native plants

-

- Needs more color

RESEARCH:

Select Survey Results

Both Students and Faculty and Staff responded to survey questions around Landscape Design Guidelines. For complete survey responses, see the appendix of the book.

67% of students and **59%** of staff rate the **quality of landscape design at FGCU** as either **Good** or **Excellent**.

65% of students and **63%** of faculty and staff answered that **shade on walkways/ pedestrian paths** is needed.

63% of students and **54%** of staff said **more colorful flowers** are needed.

“Walking around campus, especially near the academic buildings, a person would never know what university they were at.”

F/S

“Depending upon budget allocation for landscaping, I believe that FGCU does a great job incorporating landscaping into the general building plan. Operational costs (mowing, fertilizer, etc.) need to be taken into account when designing a landscape to prevent issues with resources and maintenance in the future.”

F/S

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Analysis

When considering future landscape design in the master plan, both practical and aesthetic issues should be balanced. While the general feel is that the quality of the landscape design is high due to the use of native plants and access to sidewalks, some respondents stated that the landscape was not maintained, or lacking in color and interest. In fact, our own observation revealed many areas that were overgrown. One student summed up the importance of thoughtful landscape design when he said, "...the school is big on environment; the outdoor spaces are just as important as the indoor classrooms." FGCU should plan for a consistent experience, both inside and outside of the classrooms, which reflects and support the overall mission.

Our survey revealed that respondents were a mix of those in favor and those against environmental graphics. Those against it felt that it detracted from the natural look of campus, but others thought it could be beneficial if tastefully/minimally done. If the university decides not to pursue environmental graphics, it should think about how school spirit could be fostered in other ways.

"There should be NO plants that are not native to Florida and the specific ecosystem upon which FGCU was built."

STUDENT

Recommendations

Through our research, we've arrived at specific ideas toward creating the ideal FGCU situation. These are some of them.

- Landscape with the pedestrian in mind, not the vehicle.
- Include brighter colored flowers at the main entrance and throughout
- The entrance should be more grandly landscaped
- Use the eagle throughout to foster school spirit
- Integrate more shaded areas, including shade trees along asphalt walkways to combat heat
- Incorporate an outdoor amphitheater
- A huge tree in the library lawn would be a nice place for students to sit or gather
- Incorporate a fragrance or butterfly garden
- Label the landscape, environment, and public art through informative signage and kiosks
- Plantings can encourage interaction. For example, labyrinths for meditation, touchable plants, and plantings that attract birds, butterflies or small lizards.

ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHICS

- There should be a permanent programmable sign at the main entrance instead of the trailered police sign.
- Many feel that environmental graphics should be temporary only, on buildings only, or only made of sustainable materials.
- Banners, etc. should be tasteful and minimal, so that they integrate with the natural look and feel of the university.

“We are a green campus, and our dedication to native plants is impressive and inspirational. My only recommendation is for the landscaping to be more dynamic. Let people see how beautiful native plants can be, and how they can be both native and artistic.”

STUDENT

“Yes [to environmental graphics] at this stage in our growth, because we need to expand our presence in the community and promote the unique aspects of higher education in SW FL that we offer.” F/S

“We need more mature trees on campus. I understand the university is still relatively new, but older trees provide more shade, and, to me, a stronger sense of academia.” F/S

“We use landscaping now in a very traditional way, along vehicular corridors. What I propose is almost the opposite—landscape with the pedestrian in mind, not the vehicle.” F/S



What does FGCU want to be?

By maintaining and building upon its commitment to the environment, working hard to establish a brighter, more memorable and pedestrian-friendly campus, and keeping its personal feel, FGCU will achieve what one student called,

“a sense of a new day. Open: to ideas, people and thoughts.”

PHOTO CREDITS

cover: flickr.com, hyku