

# **WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS PLANNING PRINCIPLES**

**S A S A K I E + P**

# Executive Summary

In December 2014, Wesleyan hired the team of Sasaki Associates and Eastley+Partners to develop a framework to guide campus development over the next 10-15 years. The goal: to align the University's residential campus as powerfully as possible with Wesleyan's educational aspirations.

The result of this seven month process was a set of five Campus Planning Principles:

1. Synergy of Residential and Academic Experience
2. Network of Informal Learning Spaces
3. Spectrum of Formal Learning Spaces
4. Transparency of Indoor/Outdoor Spaces
5. Engagement Local and Global

# Project Team

Bryan Irwin from Sasaki and Linda Eastley from E+P led the project effort, and were joined by Katia Lucic and Raj Adi Raman.

The project was fortunate to have as its sounding board the members of the Campus Planning Committee. These committee members included a cross section of faculty, staff and students:

Joyce Topshe, Committee Co-Chair, Assoc. VP for Facilities

Charles Salas, Committee Co-Chair, Director of Strategic Initiatives

David Baird, VP for Information Technology and CIO

Owen Christoph, Student, Class of '18

Andrew Curran, Dean of Arts & Humanities and William Armstrong Professor of the Humanities

Melissa Datre, Director of the New Media Lab

Brandi Hood, Senior Project Coordinator

Elijah Huge, Asst. Professor Environmental Studies and Assoc. Professor of Art

Joyce Jacobsen, Dean of the Social Sciences and Andrews Professor of Economics

Isabel Linzer, Student, Class of '17

John Meerts, VP for Finance and Administration

Nancy Meislahn, Dean of Admission and Financial Aid  
Ishita Mukerji, Dean of Natural Sciences & Mathematics and Fisk Professor of Natural Science

Valerie Nye, Director of Financial Reporting

Ellen Paik, Student, Class of '16

Nathan Peters, Assoc. VP Finance

Joseph Siry, Kenan Professor of the Humanities and Professor of Art History

Andrew Tanaka, Chief of Staff

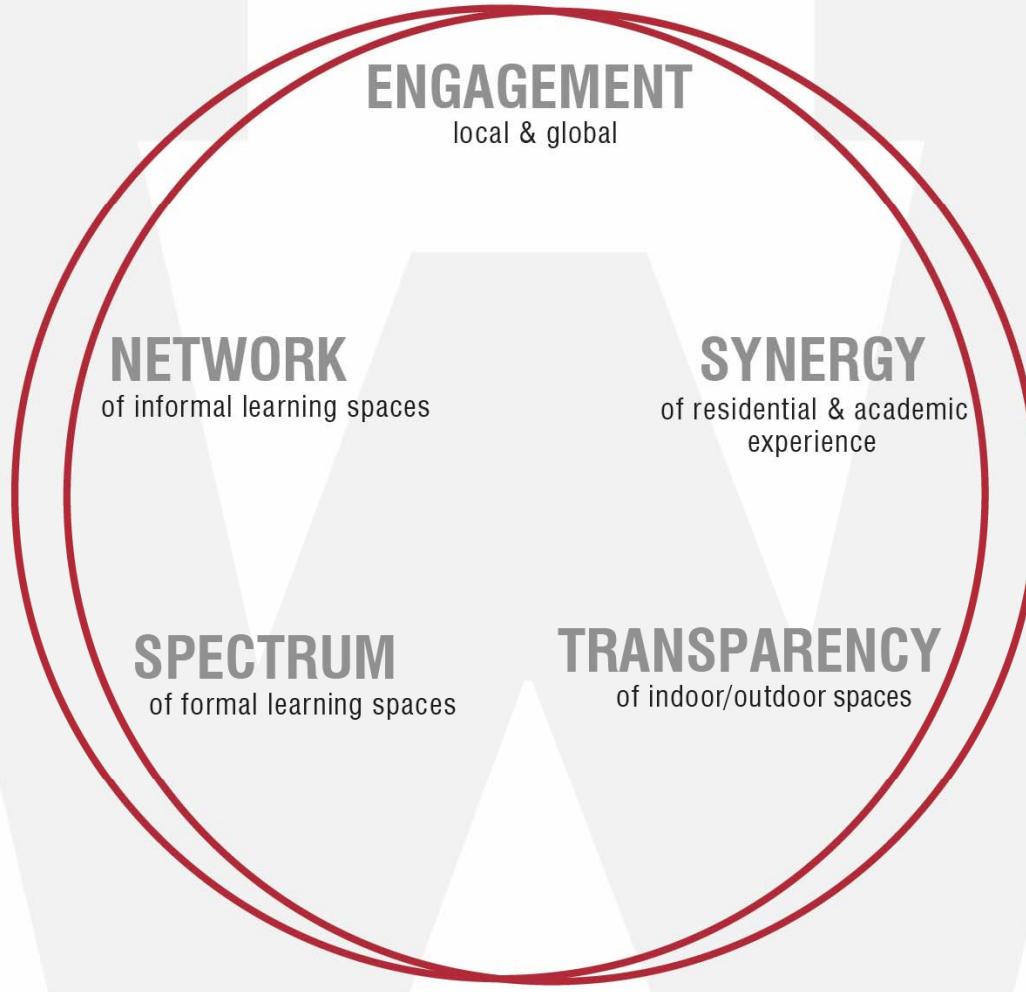
Deborah Treister, Director of Planning and Administration, University Relations

Samuel Wachsberger, Student, Class of '17

Ruth Weissman, Provost and VP for Academic Affairs

Michael Whaley, VP for Student Affairs

Barbara-Jan Wilson, VP for University Relations



Wesleyan's evolving campus has served the community well over the years. What principles should guide its evolution in the future? Certainly technology is changing the way students learn. At the same time face-to-face interactions are at the core of the residential experience. How can that experience be leveraged to make learning as powerful as possible? In working with the Wesleyan community we arrived at five principles that we recommend Wesleyan keep in mind as it makes decisions about future learning spaces on campus.

# SYNERGY OF RESIDENTIAL AND ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Seek more integration of the academic and residential experience.



Spaces such as Nicolson Lounge offer the opportunity to create vibrant thresholds between academic and residential activities.



## SYNERGY OF RESIDENTIAL AND ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE: ACTION ITEMS

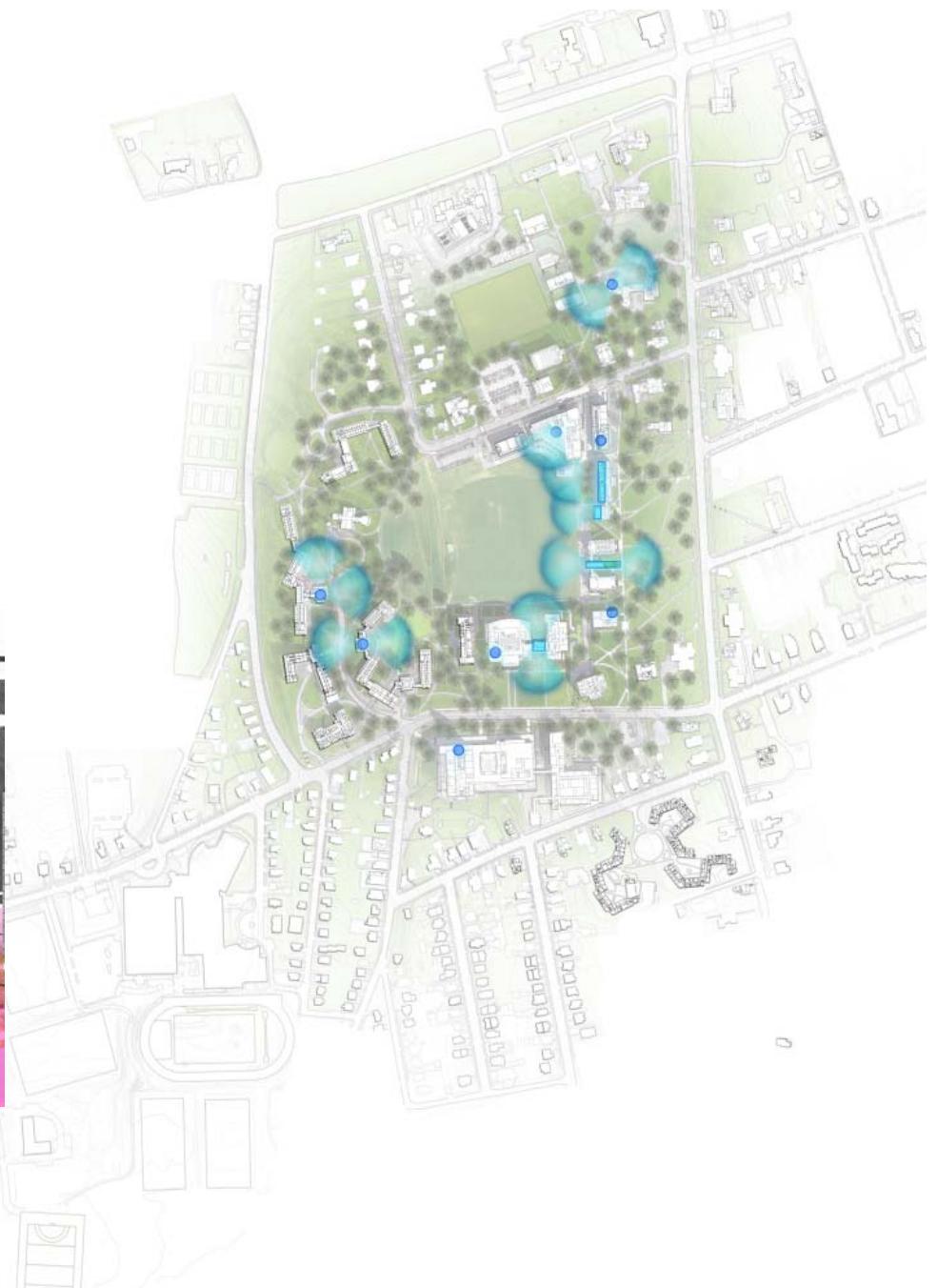
- Determine best balance of social vs. learning spaces
- Develop a consistent vocabulary of furnishings that support active and social learning
- Address issue of ownership and culture of responsibility within common spaces in residence halls
- Create more consistency with residential programming amongst the spaces in residence halls
- Expand offering of activities for students on weekend evenings
- Make residence halls more distinctive with respect to character and identity
- Add quiet study spaces with natural light in residence halls
- Create study nodes across campus including furnishing existing corridors and common areas
- Add group study nodes in CFA and residence halls
- Consider progressively independent housing models that enhance community yet maintain independence
- Ensure that learning and residential spaces provide the platform for social, environmental and fiscal stewardship through education and action

# NETWORK OF INFORMAL LEARNING SPACES

One of the most powerful aspects of the Wesleyan experience is the network of idiosyncratic informal learning spaces. This network should be strengthened and enhanced to enable serendipitous encounters.



Wesleyan has many "in between" spaces, such as the connector building (above), that could become energized informal learning areas.



## NETWORK OF INFORMAL LEARNING SPACES: ACTION ITEMS

- Inventory and map informal spaces
- Create an informal learning prototype and test its success. Have it online in time for the spring 2016 semester
- Assess best digital application to allow students to search and find available space to study / do group projects within the network of existing classrooms. Consider assigning this task to the student technology club
- Test kit-of-parts, including furniture, work surfaces and technology beginning with the 24-7 Study, Digital Media Lab and DIY Spaces
- Define metrics for success: utilization, stewardship, and number of programs
- Experiment with techniques to keep materials/furniture from being removed from that space. Consider card access, security cameras, RFID tags
- Add informal learning spaces in and around Judd, Connector between Olin and PAC, Butterfields, Freeman Athletic Center, Fisk, Nicholson Lounge, Westco, North College, CFA Garden, East West Walks behind Olin and College Row. Allbritton has the most desired model
- Create more warm hangout spaces without adult presence
- Add gathering spaces where students and faculty can bump into one another
- Create engagement spaces that counter disciplines being in silos
- Provide various scales: small 'home-base' spaces, larger 'district scale' spaces, and a network of 'serendipitous meeting' nodes
- Actively perform post-occupancy evaluations in order to improve and enhance prototypes

# SPECTRUM OF FORMAL LEARNING SPACES

Create more flexible learning spaces appropriate for teaching and learning in new ways.



Creating a spectrum of learning spaces on the ground floor levels of the existing buildings will broaden teaching opportunities and enliven the campus.



## SPECTRUM OF FORMAL LEARNING SPACES: ACTION ITEMS

- Perform space utilization assessment. Link this assessment to course scheduling, and include a discussion of departmentally controlled spaces
- Create formal learning spaces that are flexible, inviting(magnetic) and comfortable
- Focus on right-sizing to make sure that classrooms are not over-furnished
- Prioritize one classroom of each type and create range of choices for team based learning configurations. Begin with Fisk, Judd, PAC and the Sciences
- The Classroom Committee should include faculty and leadership from the Center for Pedagogical Innovation
- Construct an experimental classroom at the Center for Pedagogical Innovation
- Determine what team based learning spaces will look like, how many, and where
- Accommodate accessible education including traditional learning models, on-line and hybrid learning models, and community learning
- Establish an annual budget for upgrades to learning environments

## TRANSPARENCY INDOOR/OUTDOOR SPACES

A more seamless connection between the interior and exterior landscapes would enrich the campus experience and encourage an attitude of sustainability.



Layering a series of passive and active outdoor spaces along College Row, shown above, will strengthen the core of the campus.



## TRANSPARENCY INDOOR/OUTDOOR SPACES: ACTION ITEMS

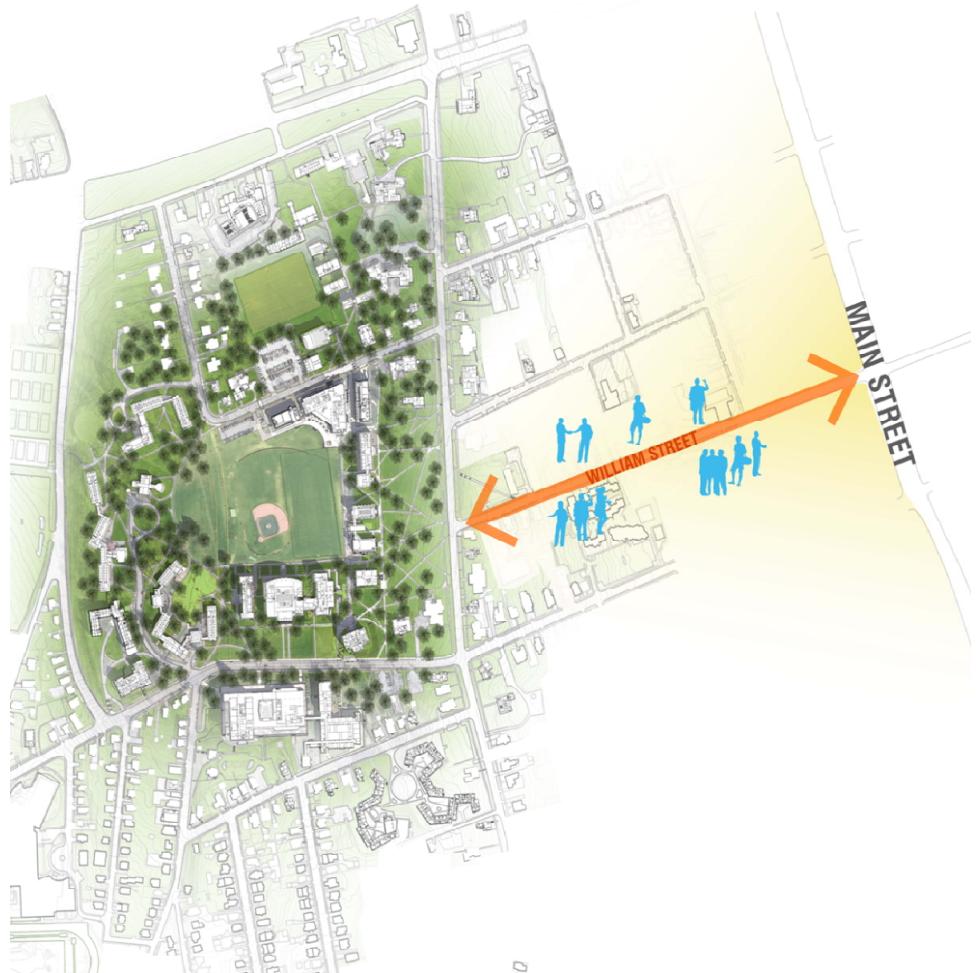
- Increase the use of glass and transparency to showcase formal and informal learning in action
- Invest in one open space initiative for every one major building renovation
- Implement an outdoor space prototype adjacent to an indoor informal learning space
- Optimize the use of existing indoor and outdoor recreation space and add additional spaces on campus for recreation and contemplation
- Create a more robust linear open space between Allbritton and Usdan. Re-align Athletic Fields to gain open space at the center of campus
- Create an alternate landscape expression for CFA
- Enhance opportunities for outdoor seating including: in front of college row, CFA, Exley, Butterfields, Foss Hill and Pi Cafe
- Engage students to design creative signage at crossroads in sidewalks to highlight destinations including: Long Lane Farm, chicken coops, riverfront, permaculture garden, etc.

## ENGAGEMENT: LOCAL AND GLOBAL

Wesleyan and the City of Middletown are inextricably linked and should seek out opportunities to collaborate. An emphasis on sustainability will foster a sense of stewardship among the students as residents of Middletown and citizens of the world.



Through strategic cooperation, Middletown's Main Street could become a vibrant extension of the Wesleyan experience.



## ENGAGEMENT: LOCAL AND GLOBAL: ACTION ITEMS

- In collaboration with the City of Middletown, develop an overlay district to address zoning, streetscape, view corridor, and basic pedestrian connectivity between Main Street and campus
- Focus on the William Street corridor as a first priority
- Seek out areas of shared interests, such as the riverfront boating and rowing activities, and build upon them
- Bring one or more Wesleyan programs to Main Street to encourage pedestrian traffic
- Pilot an outdoor music and art event with Wesleyan musicians on Main Street corners
- Promote learning as good citizenship: Create a more permeable campus for greater community access and support a relationship with the community that is grounded in generosity of spirit
- Develop a campus experience that balances engagement and safety; consider expanding card entry systems for learning spaces after hours