

Abstract

Florida State University (FSU) currently has 383 buildings on 1,696 acres, serving almost 44,000 students from 130 countries with more than 16,000 traditional faculty and staff. Established in 1851, the main campus, located in the host city of Tallahassee, is on the oldest continuous site of higher education in the state of Florida. FSU can trace their first campus master plan (CMP) back to the 1930's, almost 60 years before the Florida legislature began addressing dramatic, massive statewide growth through mandated master planning. In 1993 the Florida Legislature created a Campus Planning Process for the state's public universities to follow. The statute was adopted in 1994 in recognition of the unique relationship between universities and the public facilities services of their host's local government. The end result provides predictability, coordination, and compatibility with the surrounding communities. While there is nothing novel about campus master planning, the most recent iteration of the FSU CMP seized the opportunity to reevaluate and shift the framework it operates within. The updated approach still uses the same process and procedures but restructures some language in the created documentation surround the CMP, while incorporating for the very first time, consideration and alignment with the University Strategic Plan (SP).

1.0 Institutional Benefit

In the past, FSU approached their CMP with the mindset, “If funding was not a constraint, what would we build?” Previous CMPs were used more as a comprehensive wish list that threw everything at the wall. Such thinking was naïve, impractical, and unsustainable. The net was cast too wide, and year over year, it produced a lot of frustration and disillusion among stakeholders who would watch a significant portion of the CMP reach completion considerably later than projected or go unrealized altogether.

The newest iteration of the FSU CMP reconfigures its project projection timetable outline from an annual interval framework of 1-5 years, 6-10 years, and 11+ years, and instead anchors it in three distinct timeframe, duration-based classifications: near-term, mid-term, and far-term. When previous CMPs assigned plans and projects to specific target years using an annual outline structure, stakeholders began unintentionally benchmarking the university at how well it could predict its own future, decades in advance, down to the exact year. There was an observable discouraging effect when those predictions were not entirely precise or accurate. The updated organizational structure enables stakeholders to ascertain the vision and work towards unified goals, without attaching a distinct date to project launch and completion.

The updated approach also refines the scope of projected plans to those that have the most substantial overlap with the University SP. Some of the far-reaching benefits of this new intersectional approach include it equipping planners with the ability to cultivate and construct spaces in such a way that they are the most impactful over the longest intervals. Striving for alignment upstream in development reduces the extent of unknown unknowns and creates the strongest groundwork for incurring lowest possible costs due to shortsightedness. Change requests notoriously become exponentially more expensive the further downstream they are made, so if we can integrate those needs in the initiation and planning processes, it saves considerable capital and human resource effort across the board. It’s like the idea Phillip B. Crosby introduced in management theory in 1979; “quality is free, it’s the unquality of things that costs a lot.”

The benefits of reestablishing the time boundaries and incorporating the SP into CMP will lead to cost savings over time, improved customer service (both to our institution and to our host local governments), and better expectation management. It ensures the needs of the university are met now and in the future. It enhances a harmonious and secure relationship with the host local government, and it affirms the university judiciously utilizes the host local government's resources while pursuing furtherment of the SP.

2.0 Innovativeness, Creativity and Originality

The innovativeness of FSU’s updated approach to the CMP comes from how it is being developed and evaluated. Correspondingly, a substantial amount of the value added comes from the creative simplicity of the enhancements, The FSU Facilities Services Department’s unit overseeing Planning and Space Management demonstrated major insight into CMP challenges when they cultivated a way to translate the long-term visionary desires of the dynamic university stakeholders into a pragmatic CMP.

Historically, FSU CMP’s format for outlining goals and projecting projects was structured using an annual interval for the timetable configuration resulting in a format that felt more like a check list than an CMP. The language used was, “In year one, we will..., In year two, we will..., In year three, we will...” In the new FSU CMP, the annual interval framework is reestablished with a simple but segmented, timeframe duration-based timetable structure that incorporates a near-term, mid-term, and far-term classification. Even though in theory, these are the same boundaries, the verbiage has been altered slightly. Projects classified in the near-term category are still projected for the next one to five years. The mid-term category still consists of projects projected for the next six to ten years, and the far-term category is still comprised of projects eleven or more years on the horizon. The labels have simply been re-worded. The advantages of shifting the time boundary configuration from a yearly outline to time frame segmentations include increased adaptability, improved perception of range, and enhanced management of stakeholder expectations.

Furthermore, historically at FSU, the CMP did not follow the SP, or even examine it. The reformed method of approach tries to consider the SP desires and align with them. The Planning and Space Management unit developed a matrix (included below) to assess the semblance between the two plans. By initiating consideration and evaluating overlapping goals, it got the two sides talking for the very first time, collaborating earlier on in the development process, and synergizing.

STRATEGIC PLAN		MASTER PLAN						
		People			Place			
		Students First	Talent	Partnership	Connectivity	Stewardship	Heritage	Identity
Strategic Goals		Achieving student success in academic and personal development.	Attracting and retaining the best and brightest.	Building strategic partnerships to further the mission and reach of the institution.	Enhancing mobility between and through campuses.	Being good stewards of university resources and the natural environment.	Celebrating and enhancing tradition, legacy, and beauty.	Strengthening and establishing identity across campuses; enhancing the Florida State brand.
I.	Deepening our distinctive commitment to continuous innovation.	●	●	●	●	●	◐	●
II.	Amplifying excellence across our academic and research programs.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
III.	Realizing the full potential of diversity and inclusion.	●	●	●	●	◐	●	●
IV.	Ensuring Student success on campus and beyond.	●	●	●	◐	◐	◐	●
V.	Preparing our graduates for the 21st Century careers.	●	●	●	◐	●	◐	●
VI.	Investing strategically in our institution and reputation.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●



Strong alignment



Moderate alignment



Some alignment

4.0 Management Commitment and Employee Involvement

FSU management has been committed to CMP for almost 100 years, and as the oldest site of higher education in the state, the leadership understands the importance of good planning. The process is detailed, documented, transparent, announced in advance, and well promoted across multiple channels such as websites, newspapers, and email lists. Communication, feedback, and input are supported from beginning to end leading to organizational awareness and buy-in.

It starts with an Informational Meeting. Then there is the first public hearing where discussion and comments are encouraged. Comments are accepted in person, online, and via mail and are always responded to with a return receipt request to make sure responses were delivered. All information sessions and public hearings are recorded as well as documented by a court reporter. The recordings, court reporter documentation, and the proposed plan are all made available online. Meanwhile, the plan is distributed to local and state agencies while being made simultaneously available online for review and comment. FSU provides copies to the host city and any affected local governments, the state planning agency, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Transportation, the Department of State Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the applicable water management district and the applicable regional planning council. There is also a printed hard copy available during regular business hours at our main office and university library. At this point, there is 90-day statutory time period where there is two-way communication happening surrounding the feedback. During this time, adjustments can be made on behalf of stakeholder requests. After the comments are evaluated, and a second public hearing is hosted. Adjustments are discussed and additional comments are accepted. Next, the CMP goes to the FSU Board of Trustees for approval. At this point, they can renegotiate and approve the Campus Development Agreement based on the CMP and submit it to the Board of Governors for adoption. If adopted, there is a 45-day period to send copies to all commentors and anyone that is an affected person. There's a final 30-day period for folks to file request for reconsideration of their concerns and then the CMP is adopted. At this point the adopted CMP is published online, and two hard copies are located at strategic public locations.

When the Florida Legislature first mandated master plans, the main objective was to provide predictability, coordination, and compatibility with the surrounding host local governments. Despite that still being the primary function of any campus master plan, the contemporary FSU CMP is also used as a tool by groups from within and across our institution. For example, different departments and groups from the university submit the FSU CMP as a part of their supporting documents when seeking funding, grants, and accreditation. A current case features the Housewright School of Music applying for re-accreditation. Their current facility does not meet the updated specifications required for re-accreditation, but through the FSU CMP they are able to provide survey data and documentation supporting plans to upgrade their facilities in the near-term bring them back into compliance.

5.0 Documentation, Analysis, Customer Input, Benchmarking

The information from the CMP is used to evaluate performance annually. The University Vice President reports to the President who then reports to the Board of Trustees, what was projected and what was completed. The Board of Trustees then takes the CMP and the annual evaluation to the Board of Governors and requests funding for the next years' worth of plans. At requests must be justified with data. For example, there is an annual Education Plant Survey performed that directly corresponds to the annual PICO dollars requested and approved. The CMP and its information analysis is based on survey recommended data, university direction, projected growth, goals, and objectives. A digital copy is always available online and two separate printed hard copies are also available during regular business hours on at the university library and Facilities Services main building. The CMP unites the vision across the entire university and gives everyone the same starting reference point.

The updates to the CMP approach change the perceptions surrounding it, as well as strengthening the shared vision of success. It magnifies the traditional roles of the CMP and heightens synergy in the pursuit of the university's various long-term goals and objectives.