

**2.16 Landscape Design Guidelines Element
Data and Analysis
2010-2020 Campus Master Plan Update**

a) Assessment of Coordination of Landscape Features and the Degree to which they Contribute to, or Distract from, the Visual Quality of the Campus.

1. Through 2005, the University maintained the image of campus community built within a natural environment. The natural environment, composed of sand pine scrub, pine flat woods, forested and non-forested wetlands, is the unique vegetative communities that create that sense of place for the University. We have since recognized that a combination of mechanical maintenance and/or prescribed fire is essential to keeping these areas in proper ecological balance, and to reduce the risk of wildfire. The existing development has successfully maintained the diverse tree canopy at the core of the campus. To maintain this unique identity of a landscaped campus built within its own natural environment, the landscape communities that have been replaced need to be restored or enhanced, with the campus core landscape.
2. Current landscape treatments, hardscape installations, signage, and site furnishings have been designed to reflect, as closely as possible, the standards established by the University. Campus quads, greens and plazas also bring organization, a sense of way-finding and destination to the campus. Landscape spaces must be identified and recognized as equally important to architecture projects. It is these landscape spaces that unify all current and future architecture facilities. Standardization and blending of all the elements mentioned is critical to the overall image of the campus. A continued emphasis on a strong landscape spaces and a coordinated landscape palette will re-inforce a sense of unity and way-finding to the University. Integration and understanding of urban design elements, such as gateways, landmarks, campus corners, campus edge conditions, roadway character, and pedestrian treatments will further enhance a sense of arrival, destination and place.

b) Assessment of Existing Treatments with Regard to their Impacts on Campus Safety

1. Vehicular Circulation Routes

A standardized plant palette for the streetscape is not necessary to the overall landscape theme of the University. Landscape & Natural Resources continues to reflect the diverse UCF vegetative communities with the installation of Pines, Oaks, Palms and Cypress that complement the remnant native ecosystems and provide a unique driving experience through a series of Central Florida's natural environments.

2. On-grade Parking Facilities

The implementation of gradual berming adjacent to Gemini Boulevard has allowed enough visibility for location and access to parking lots and ramps. Depending on future land use designations for surface parking lots, long term faculty and student interior parking lots can integrate tree canopy through the use of designated tree islands in accordance with the landscape standards. Coordination of tree islands around future facilities and in parking areas, will promote a more continuous tree canopy across campus.

3. Pedestrian Circulation Routes

The three 16' wide concentric ring walks are intended to be shaded with a contiguous tree canopy. Campus maps have been strategically placed along the 16' concentric rings walks to enable way-finding and destination of the walk. The ring walks contribute to the University's overall sense of way-finding. Within the concept of the urban design plan, the walks serve as the essential links to the campus green areas and the Memory Mall.

Pedestrian circulation volumes and patterns for the entire campus must respond to the constantly changing physical environment of the campus, thus changing the need for, and location of, walks. Consideration for pedestrian behavior of students must guide design and location of walks.

4. Bicycle Facilities

Currently, the number of bicycle facilities must be increased to be consistent with the amount of users on campus. The number of bicyclists will increase as the University creates stronger connections to the future development of housing along the edges of campus and within UCF. Locations of current and future facilities need to be coordinated with proposed regional bicycle routes. Aesthetically, bicycle parking areas must be organized and located at strategic places around campus rather than along the entrances or facades of buildings. Abandoned bikes must be tagged and removed in a timely manner.

5. Public Transportation Facilities

With the addition of proposed intermodal stations, transit stops have been integrated and organized into the overall circulation system. Signs and graphics are being updated and improved in 2009-2010. Further investigation of the facilities, furnishings and circulation routes is underway to complete this part of the analysis.

6. Emergency Access Facilities

Emergency access appears to be adequate, and a new emergency notification system is currently being designed and implemented across campus.

7. Planted Areas

Landscape malls, plazas and parks are being enhanced and improved as the framework for accommodating pedestrian patterns, security, way-finding and connectivity between existing buildings and future building projects. The creation of additional planted areas within the campus core will unify individual building architecture. Further investigation of soil types and vegetative communities will dictate the landscape palette for additional planted areas. Ornamental plantings will comprise both native Florida species, and introduced specimens adapted to our climate and soils. All plantings will be accessioned and labeled in cooperation with the UCF Arboretum, to promote the educational component landscape sustainability.

8. Site Furnishings

Compliance with the University's standards for benches, light poles, or signs will continue to enhance the overall quality and way-finding of the campus. A unified family of all site furnishings shall be developed to enable individual project designers to comply with the themes and materials chosen for the campus, and to avoid visual clutter. The family of furnishing will also reduce the high costs for maintenance and replacements that are associated with having unique furnishings for each new building project.

9. Lighting Location and Type

Lighting fixtures throughout campus must be consistent. An organized lighting system with uniform colors and fixtures creates a feeling of improved safety and enhances the experience of night-time visitors. A family of related fixtures will be chosen for use by Facilities & Safety as well as by individual project engineers and architects. These fixtures will also be chosen to reduce light pollution, and to meet LEED criteria for site development.

10. Trash Collection Areas

The use of compactors has eliminated most trash dumpsters from the core of the campus. In areas where the teaching process or building functions requires specialized trash collection, containers are to be placed within screened or landscaped enclosures.

11. Maintenance Facilities

Loading docks along Pegasus are generally exposed to pedestrian and vehicular circulation. Hardscape screening of these areas shall be reviewed as a method to conceal the activities attractively in the loading dock area. The loading needs of individual facilities should be considered.

12. Campus Edge

The campus edges and six roadway entrances serve as the primary visual image of the campus. Improving campus woodland edges, corners and entrances will have several benefits, including creating a sense of arrival and making a strong first impression on visitors.

Although the intent of the “naturalistic” buffer was to reduce the need for maintenance, stewardship of all Florida woodlands is a requirement for ecosystem function and health. A natural fire regime controls invasive understory and exotic species. The urban edge of our native buffer zone precludes our use of prescribed burns in management along Alafaya McCullough. With a limited mechanical maintenance program, and augmenting the understory with new indigenous plantings that have ornamental value, the University can create a visual connection to University architecture from outside the campus and still screen the unwanted automobile traffic on Alafaya Trail. Design concepts for the edges, corners and entrances are currently under development to address the visual image of the University.

c) Assessment of the Ease or Difficulty of maintaining Existing Landscape Features

Overall the maintenance of the constructed portions of the UCF landscape is moderately difficult. The soil is very low in organic content and does not retain moisture well. The pH of the native soil is at 7.8 to 8.0 in most areas of campus. The ideal pH range for most non-native species is 5.5 to 6.5., and most native species prefer 6.5 to 7.5.

Herbicides and insecticides have proven to be less effective due to the soil and water pH. This is addressed during spray applications by utilizing a pH buffer that is mixed with the insecticides and herbicides.

Compaction of soil and general wear and tear of the turf grass areas for campus also creates problems with maintenance. Cart and other vehicular traffic stress the turf grasses in most of the campus core. The result of this compaction prohibits healthy growth of turf, thus allowing weeds to germinate and spread. Regular manual aerating is required to allow for growth, and in some instances, installing new turf is required. We are currently investigating spray adjutants that

will reduce the compaction and help the turf sustain periods of high use and drought. We are phasing out the use of high-maintenance, low-durability St. Augustine grasses and will introduce a mixed species turf to all but specialized lawn areas. We are converting to the use of reclaimed water instead of well or potable water for all campus irrigation.

The American of Higher Education Facilities Officers (APPA) standards are currently being used by members of L-NR to benchmark maintenance activities and schedules of landscape. Upon completion of the project we will have established existing environmental issues, training requirements, and will have determined grounds staffing levels, and appropriate levels of maintenance.

d) Assessment of the Physical Condition of Existing Landscape

In general, the overall physical condition of the campus appears to be in adequate to excellent condition. Water and chemical inputs have been reduced 30 to 50% from 2007 to 2009. Reclaimed water will replace potable water for all landscape irrigation. Turf areas are being reduced in the campus core, and are being replaced with perennial and woody plants with much lower maintenance requirements.

e) Assessment of Accessibility of the Campus to Disabled Persons

New building projects require approval from the University ADA personnel and are quite thorough. A campus-wide assessment of accessibility shall be conducted as a subsequent activity. Individual buildings and facilities shall be evaluated and improved, as necessary, as renovations occur over time with scheduled maintenance and upgrades.