

# Facilities Master Plan

February 2017



In 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 the University undertook an integrated planning process to assist and guide University planning and decision-making. This integrated planning process involves an overall Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) and five working groups focused on academic matters, research, student affairs, advancement, and campus facilities.

The Presidential Advisory Committee drafted the following mission, vision, and values statement:

### **Mission**

Mount Allison University is committed to learning, to creating and disseminating knowledge, and to engaging critically in the liberal arts, so that members of our community are prepared to make meaningful contributions as citizens in our community and the wider world.

### **Vision**

Mount Allison University will enhance its position as one of Canada's best undergraduate universities through creative and innovative teaching and research. We will be a national leader in engaged, active learning.

### **Values**

- **Excellence and integrity:** Individual and institutional goals are fully realized by empowering the members of our community (students, faculty, and staff) to apply the highest standards in all of their activities.
- **Academic freedom:** Intellectual freedom, which includes both free inquiry and scholarly responsibility, is a foundation of quality education and scholarship.
- **Collegiality and University governance:** We are committed to shared governance. This includes transparency and collegial processes involving members of our community.
- **Equity, diversity, and inclusion:** In all aspects of our academic mission, we affirm our belief in the fair treatment of all persons. We embrace diversity, and we seek to ensure an educational and work environment that is inclusive for all members of our community.
- **Respect:** We are a diverse community with different experiences and backgrounds, and we perform different roles in the university. Everyone at Mount Allison is to be treated with dignity and respect.
- **Community and connection:** Personal relationships are central to the Mount Allison experience. These connections span the local – where the University is an important anchor in the community of Sackville and the Tantramar region – through the global, and are aimed at improving our world. Our relationships provide the basis for building and sustaining connections through our teaching, through our research and creative activities, and through our service and outreach.
- **Sustainability:** We are committed to sustainability and stewardship. We are guided by the principle of intergenerational equity.

## Facilities Plans

The University's overall Campus Master Plan was completed in 2002 and divides the campus into three sections: the north side (north of Main Street), the south side (south of York Street), and a central campus area between York and Main Streets. The north side of campus is dedicated to large student residences and the University dining hall (Jennings Dining Hall), the south side to student life and student service facilities along with smaller residences, and the central section to academic and administrative facilities.

From 2002 to 2015 various projects were completed consistent with this master plan. This report is primarily focused on facilities planning related to the centre of campus.

### Process

The campus facilities working group — the Facilities Plan Advisory Committee (FPAC) — report is based on and informed by the work of the Presidential Advisory Committee along with the other working groups, plus interviews, town hall sessions, and data and reports concerning classroom and lab use. This report is also based on previous facilities plans along with support from an external consulting firm. The consultant's report is attached as Appendix A.

Space development and utilization at Mount Allison must first and foremost support the broad mission of the University. In addition to providing the best possible environment for students to reach their academic goals, adequate and well-maintained facilities help attract and retain students.

Building and maintaining facilities carries a significant cost. The facilities plan must take into account the quality and long-term sustainability of the physical space, the short and long-term financial implications of our space, and our environmental footprint.

## Findings and Recommendations

### A. Campus Plan

---

Work completed by the FPAC with assistance from external consultants is based on the current Campus Master Plan. It is recommended that:

- A1 this overall approach be maintained.
- A2 the intimate and pedestrian nature of the campus be maintained with a people-first approach and with vehicle access restricted to the rear of buildings subject to the needs of emergency vehicles to access facilities.
- A3 efforts be undertaken to improve and increase exterior directional signage and address signage issues inside buildings (eg: Wallace McCain Student Centre).
- A4 campus signage be focused on the needs of visitors to campus, particularly potential students and their families.

## **B. Accessibility**

---

For the purposes of this report accessible space can be thought of as space where everyone is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use.<sup>1</sup>

As noted in the consultant's report, a number of facilities are not physically accessible. The University is guided by its Accessible Facilities Policy (Policy 7610 – see Appendix C) in which larger or more significant accessibility projects are undertaken as part of overall facility renovations.

The academic and administrative facilities lacking barrier-free access include Avard Dixon, Flemington, Hart Hall, Chapel, Owens Art Gallery, and Centennial Hall. In addition, only a portion of the Music Conservatory is accessible.

The FPAC recommends that:

- B1 the University prioritize accessibility projects to academic facilities used by many students, faculty, and staff.
- B2 stand alone accessibility projects be considered with specific focus on all-gender washrooms and elevators/physical access. These projects would be in spaces that do not require a significant and complete upgrade in the near future. Consistent with this recommendation, it is recommended that design work for an elevator and one or more all-gender washrooms be completed for the Avard Dixon Building and such a project be scheduled in the medium term.
- B3 the University consider universal design, in addition to compliance with building codes, when planning and designing facilities projects. Universal design is an approach that creates environments designed to respond to the needs of the widest possible range of the population<sup>2</sup>.

## **C. Classrooms and Laboratories**

---

The University has numerous classrooms and laboratories of varying quality and functionality.

Significant data concerning classroom and laboratory space was obtained during the Committee's work (see Appendix A). In order to make evidence-based decisions, data needs to be complemented with qualitative analysis. In the past, improvements to classrooms and laboratories have been implemented on an ad hoc basis or when an entire building has been updated.

---

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Resolution Agreement South Carolina Technical College System OCR Compliance Review No. 11-11-6002

<sup>2</sup> International Best Practices in Universal Design, Canadian Human Rights Commission (page 5)

The FPAC recommends that:

- C1 a separate teaching space committee, including various stakeholders, be established to ensure that classroom upgrades are completed in a planned manner designed to meet the current and future pedagogical needs of the University. This committee should work with existing committees, such as the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee.
- C2 teaching space improvements be consistent with and support actions to increase experiential teaching and learning activities consistent with recommendations made by the other working groups.
- C3 the University attempt to complete some classroom upgrades each year so each generation of students benefits from improved teaching facilities.
- C4 not all classrooms be upgraded in the same way with the same resources. Rather than uniformity, the aim should be to provide classrooms of various types and sizes to suit the teaching and learning taking place at Mount Allison. This may mean certain equipment and resources are located only in certain classrooms, that some classrooms may receive more upgrades or more costly upgrades than others, or that some classrooms may not be upgraded at all.

#### **D. Science Facilities**

---

The receipt of funding from the Federal Government's Post-Secondary Strategic Infrastructure Fund and related provincial funding has allowed the University to proceed with work in the Barclay Building as well as conversion of the Gairdner Building into a research and learning space. This is consistent with recommendations in the University's draft strategic research plan and with information from the Master Plan update summarized in Appendix C.

As this work progresses, and given the expected retirement of a number of faculty in the Department of Biology, it is recommended that:

- D1 consideration then turn to the Flemington Building with a view of updating that space consistent with research needs, work completed in the Barclay Building, and the goal of improving physical accessibility.
- D2 depending on the needs of our academic programs and researchers, a review of the functionality of the Flemington greenhouse be completed to determine if that space can be returned to its original purpose.

## **E. Library Facilities**

---

The Ralph Pickard Bell Library is in need of a refurbishment and replacement of building systems. No significant work has been completed in this space since it opened in 1970. The building's systems are past their expected life span and public spaces do not reflect current library design.

Updating the Library's systems and spaces while maintaining the Library's operations requires a phased approach covering a number of years. The entire building cannot be closed during construction. Instead, spaces in the library will be closed as they are renovated, and services and collections will need to be moved during phases of the project. It is anticipated that each floor will require one summer of intense work with additional work taking place from September to April. This would mean it could take five to six years of construction to complete the entire project.

It is recommended that:

- E1 the draft space plan be confirmed to allow for design work to begin.
- E2 the Library project be scheduled after completion of the Barclay and Gairdner projects, subject to availability of financial resources.
- E3 the refurbishment of Library spaces centre around the Library's primary mission while accommodating, to the extent feasible, related functions. This reflects the Library's location in the centre of campus, the linkages between the Library's functions and other learning activities, and the fact the Library is open and staffed longer than any other facility at the University.

## **F. Student Space**

---

There are a number of unused common spaces in various buildings that offer the potential to become study and/or gathering places for students with the purchase of appropriate furniture. This is noted in Appendix B.

The FPAC recommends:

- F1 the completion of the pilot project to purchase study-type furniture for common spaces in the Wallace McCain Student Centre. This project should include receiving feedback from students for incorporation into future projects, including work in the Library.
- F2 identification and prioritization of further spaces that would benefit from the addition of furniture when significant modifications to buildings are completed (eg: the Library).
- F3 a review of space currently occupied by the individual student mailboxes in the basement of the Wallace McCain Student Centre.

## **G. Other Central Campus Facilities**

---

The Committee recognizes that deferred maintenance and facilities challenges exist in other central campus buildings not specifically mentioned in this report. The FPAC recommends:

- G1 building assessments and, as appropriate, design work should be completed for projects that can be accomplished while other larger projects are undertaken. Furthermore, having the assessment and design work completed in a proactive manner will assist in attracting funds should new fund raising or other opportunities arise.

## **H. Co-location and Underutilized Space**

---

The Committee notes that there are departments that may benefit from being physically adjacent (eg: Modern Languages and Literatures with other Humanities departments and Computing Services with Facilities Management), that the University has underutilized space in some buildings, and that maintaining space requires significant financial resources. It is recommended that:

- H1 co-location of departments be considered where such a change supports the overall goals of the integrated plan and is financially supportable.
- H2 opportunities should be explored to remove the cost of some facilities from the Operating Fund by repurposing the building. For example, if Computing Services and the PCTC could be moved from the Bennett Building, that facility could be leased or otherwise used for an activity that would support the cost of the building, as has occurred previously.

## **I. Conclusion**

---

Mount Allison's facilities range in age from three to 160 years old. Maintaining and adapting these facilities to best support the mission of the University is a continuous process. The intent of the 22 recommendations made in this document is to provide support and guide this process.

## **Appendix B — Policy 7610 — Accessible Facilities Policy**

---

**Subject:** Accessible Facilities Policy

**Group:** Institutional

**Approved by:** The President

**Approval date:** June 20, 2013

**Effective date:** June 20, 2013

**Administered by:** Vice-President, Administration

### **INTRODUCTION**

Mount Allison must take reasonable steps to accommodate those with mobility challenges so that they can be employed by, and receive services from, the University.

Unfortunately, making all of the University's facilities accessible over the short term is far beyond the University's financial capacity given that most of its facilities were constructed before making them accessible was a requirement or an expectation.

As a result, the University must deal with this issue in a planned way so that it makes the most effective use of available financial resources while at the same time ensuring that it meets its obligations in this area.

### **POLICY**

It is the University's policy

- a) to deal with accessibility issues whenever it is reasonable to do so as part of a capital project,
- b) to take whatever steps are necessary and reasonable to accommodate a specific individual, which steps could include
  - i. making an area accessible to that individual, or
  - ii. moving an activity to another area, and
- c) to provide information to the community, through appendices to this policy which are updated on an annual basis, about
  - i. the steps that have been taken (See [Appendix A](#)) and
  - ii. the steps that are planned (see [Appendix B](#))

to make the University's facilities accessible.

[https://www.mta.ca/Community/Governance\\_and\\_admin/Policies\\_and\\_procedures/Section\\_700/Policy\\_7610/Policy\\_7610/](https://www.mta.ca/Community/Governance_and_admin/Policies_and_procedures/Section_700/Policy_7610/Policy_7610/)



## Appendix C

The Master Plan update report (Appendix A) provides information on both current use and the most appropriate use (fit for function) for a number of buildings. The following table provides a synopsis of that information.<sup>3</sup>

Building	Current Use	Optimal Use
Barclay	Chemistry and Biochemistry department Teaching and research labs, offices, and support space	Laboratory space (teaching and research) related to “wet” activities
Sir James Dunn	Mathematics and Computer Science and Physics departments Physics laboratories, offices, and support space Common use classrooms Common use computer lab	“Dry” activities such as classrooms, offices, and dry research
Flemington	Biology department Teaching and research labs, offices, and support space Large auditorium space	“Dry” activities such as classrooms, offices, and dry research activities consistent with cellular layout
Gairdner	Vacated in 2013 by Fine Arts department	“Wet” lab spaces with requirement for large column-free spaces
Avard Dixon	Faculty of Social Sciences departments Social Science research space, offices, and support space Common classroom space	Dry activities such as office, classroom, seminar, and computational research
Crabtree	Psychology and Modern Languages and Literatures departments Psychology and Modern Languages and Literatures research, teaching labs, offices, and support space Animal research area (psych/bio), common classrooms, vacated offices and small cubicles, storage space	Basement level best suitable for storage/ low usage. Ground floor best suited to research, teaching, and office space. Main floor suited to high-quality large and small teaching spaces. 2nd & 3rd levels most suitable to small instructional, office, and support space
Hart Hall	Focus small common classrooms, small Humanities libraries, offices, and support space for Humanities	best used for office and smaller meeting/seminar spaces

<sup>3</sup> The report did not consider the Marjorie Young Bell Conservatory of Music or the Purdy Crawford Centre for the Arts. Both of these buildings are dedicated to a particular function, are suited to their current use, and there are no plans to change their use.