

Data and Analysis of the Urban Design Element

The Urban Design Element of the UCF Campus Master Plan gives an overview of the existing concepts and principles guiding the overall development of the campus. The desired campus character is achieved by decisions governing the placement of buildings, the organization of open spaces, the celebration of symbolic and memorable places, the approach to pedestrian and vehicular circulation, linkages to and from campus, safety, and the campus visual structure. It is important to understand the existing framework, to serve as a foundation and guide for conceptual principles involved in the structuring of future campus development.

1. Existing Context

The Main Campus of the University of Central Florida is located 13 miles east of downtown Orlando and south of the city of Oviedo. An extensive, forested wetland system exists within the southeastern portion of the campus, which ultimately drains into the Econlockhatchee River. A cypress wetland system is located in the center of the campus adjacent to the Student Union. The campus is laid out in 400-foot, 800-foot and 1200-foot concentric circles around this cypress wetland core. Gemini Boulevard comprises the outermost concentric circle beyond the 1200-foot ring. The Central Florida Research Park borders the campus along its southern edge. A 200-foot landscape buffer surrounds the overall campus perimeter, with visual breaks occurring at the entrances into the campus.

1a Character of Existing Context Area

Orange County designates the University as Institutional Future Land Use, and the area in which the University is situated is comprised of a mix of housing, industrial, planned development, and commercial uses.

UCF is bordered by areas classified for diverse use. On its southern border lies the Central Florida Research Park, whose designation is mainly for high-tech industrial use. Small commercial areas, multi-family housing, and vacant land are found to the west of Alafaya Trail, and south of University Boulevard. A planned development called the Quadrangle exists to the north of University Boulevard. This complex is made up of a mix of offices, commercial areas, and hotel facilities. The demand for space will undoubtedly grow as more corporations relocate to the UCF area.

2. Building Placement

The Student Union is at the center of campus. Surrounding the Student Union and located primarily between the 400-foot and 1200-foot radius circles are the academic and administrative buildings (Academic Core). Student housing, parking, and support facilities reside outside the 1200-foot radius circle. A dominant linear axis bisects the

entire campus from southwest to northeast. This axis links some of the most prominent campus landmarks. It starts along the Central Florida Boulevard entrance and connects the Duke Energy University Welcome Center, Millican Hall, the Reflecting Pond, John C. Hitt Library, the Student Union, Memory Mall, and the CFE Arena. Intercollegiate fields and facilities are outside Gemini Boulevard to the northeast of campus and west of North Orion Boulevard. Intramural fields and more support facilities and student housing are outside Gemini Boulevard to the south of campus. The Greek Park sorority and fraternity housing is located on the northwest area of the campus.

Certain identifiable districts have developed within the Academic Core. For example, Engineering, Mathematics, Sciences, Technology, CREOL and Chemistry are concentrated along the south eastern portion of the Academic Core. Grouping similar functions and areas of study into districts should be encouraged, since it places similar resources close to one another. This leads to greater efficiency and accessibility and a reduction of vehicular trips within the campus core. Intercollegiate Athletics is grouped into the Intercollegiate District on the north side of campus. Intramural Fields and Student Recreation are concentrated to the south of campus and north of the Research Park.

3. Organization of Open Spaces

Open space areas on campus are shaped by the buildings and landscapes which surround them. Open spaces range from the natural to the formal; from the intimate to the public. They serve a variety of functions, such as places for gathering, recreation, reflection, study, and visual and sound buffers. These open spaces can serve as nodes of diverse activities and functions, and they should be linked in a logical and sequential way. These linkages can be the glue that binds together corresponding districts, as well as the cohesive force connecting the various areas of the campus. Open space can also be characterized as a setting which features soft, suburban, curvilinear, green, and passive components.

Following is a list of some significant, high-activity buildings and open spaces:

- Reflecting Pond and Surrounding Lawn
The space between the John C. Hitt Library and the Administration Building, Millican Hall, is both defined by the two buildings and landscape features, and has a visual sequence, from the Central Florida Boulevard entrance to the spaces flanking it. The focal point of this space is the Reflecting Pond, memorable campus landmark that plays host to a UCF Homecoming tradition, the Spirit Splash.
- Memory Mall
A formal, linear open space flanked by academic buildings, this space functions as a stage for campus activities, such as tailgating during football games and ROTC formations.

- Arboretum
This area incorporates planting, research, and academic functions associated with the Department of Biology.
- Recreation and Wellness Center
An exercise hub for health and wellness, this facility is a vibrant node of student activity.
- Student Union
Situated at the center of the campus, natural boardwalks hover over the cypress strand leading up to the building.
- John C. Hitt Library
The Library serves as an active space for study, socializing, and meetings.
- John T. Washington Student Center Walkway
- This sky lit exterior walkway and outdoor gathering area , is flanked by the UCF Bookstore, restaurants, student services, and the John T. Washington Student Center. Green Area South of Memory Mall
Raised planters with grassy berms and palms, serve this area where students like to relax, sit, and walk along the adjacent, brick-paved portion of Pegasus circle.
- Lake Claire
This natural area lends itself to activities such as hiking, kayaking, or canoeing.
- CFE Arena and Knights Plaza
This area hosts large, public, interior and exterior, venues and activities.
- East and West Plaza Drive
Shopping, dining, and housing are activities that make these corridors, energetic hubs.

4. Campus Visual Structure

Permanent buildings on campus range in height from one to seven stories. The exteriors of these buildings are predominantly brick. Architectural details, done in concrete, metal panels, and some curtain wall areas, are the only general exceptions. The predominance of brick, accompanied by the relative scale of the buildings on campus, helps create a significant level of visual continuity. The campus is shaped by the natural landscape from which it has been carved. The concentric organization gives further structure to the visual environment. Pegasus Circle (400-foot), Mercury Circle (800-foot), Apollo Circle (1200-foot), and Gemini Boulevard help students with visual wayfinding. During orientation, students are reminded that if they lose their way, they should stay on one of the circular loops and they will eventually end up back where they started.

5. Existing Functional Linkages

5a) Automobile

Primary vehicular access to the campus is through University Boulevard, Alafaya Trail, Research Park, and McCulloch Road. Accessibility to the main campus from the eleven- county service area and the area campuses is through various major roadways including I-4, the Beeline Expressway, the East-West Expressway, and State Road 50. University Boulevard is considered to be the main vehicular entry into campus. Centaurus Drive, Gemini Boulevard North, and Central Florida Boulevard are the other important formal entrances. The Central Florida entry displays the most formalized type of entry into the campus, because of its axial relationship to campus landmarks.

Pedestrian hazards are created whenever vehicular circulation crosses parking lots, as it does in many instances throughout campus. UCF has been working to identify and mitigate existing hazards and to limit future hazards through effective planning and design.

5b) Bicycle

Bicycles provide many students with an economical and efficient source of transportation, due to the proximity of off-campus housing. There are many bicycle paths found throughout campus, including those flanking Libra Drive and Gemini Boulevard North, and going from Alafaya Trail along Central Florida Boulevard to the Administration Building. Bicycle racks are currently provided for approximately 6,500 bicycles on campus. Bicycling is a healthy and environmentally supportive alternative and should be encouraged as a means of reducing vehicular traffic on campus.

5c) Pedestrian

The UCF campus was planned and developed with the pedestrian in mind, and based on a maximum walking time of eight minutes to the center of campus. The 1200-foot outer radius (Apollo Circle) was implemented to serve this purpose, with the 800-foot radius (Mercury Circle) providing a five minute walking trip to the campus center. A third ring, (Pegasus Circle), on a 400-foot radius, encircles the center of campus. A network of secondary pedestrian paths with corresponding offshoots provides access between buildings throughout campus.

5d) Transit

UCF is meeting timely demand for transportation of its students by offering both on-campus and off-campus shuttle service. The Black and Gold Line is an on-campus only shuttle. It consists of two routes, clockwise (gold) and counterclockwise (black), that make eight stops at strategic campus locations.

The UCF Shuttle Transportation System serves many off-campus locations and consists of thirteen regular routes between UCF and nineteen local student residential communities, as well as the Central Florida Research Park. It provides safe and convenient transportation services to and from the main campus of

UCF. Round trips are also provided to the Rosen Campus and the Health Campus at Lake Nona. The transportation service allows students to leave their vehicles at their place of residence. There is no per-trip cost to ride, and students have the available benefit of central access in the core facilities of the campus. The campus destination points are strategically selected to allow students a short distance to classrooms or campus activities.

6. An analysis of the evolution of the development pattern of University buildings and open spaces.

There has been significant development on campus since 2000. The Convocation Center, student housing, retail space, and a football stadium have been built on the north section of campus, adjacent to North Orion Boulevard. The Physical Sciences building and Engineering Building III have been built in the southeast part of the academic core. Parking Garage A is located along Gemini Boulevard at the University Boulevard entrance. A new Psychology Building is located on the north end of the academic core adjacent to a new green space known as Memory Mall. Most of this new development has been spreading concentrically from the original campus development.

As program needs continue to demand more academic and support space on campus, development should respect the evolution around the circular pattern of the campus, while maintaining a relatively dense pattern. Particular attention should be paid to the creation of attractive open spaces, reinforced by careful site-planning. Of important concern is the preservation and enhancement of axial pedestrian links to and from the center of campus, which work to create long views and facilitate wayfinding on campus.

7. An identification of and assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of alternative spatial configurations by which future development on the campus may be organized. This analysis shall include consideration of methods to improve energy efficiency and alternatives for coordinating the pattern of buildings and spaces along the University/community boundary (graphic and companion narrative).

Buildings should be organized in a way which complements and frames the open spaces around them. The careful creation of open spaces provides the framework for memorable, symbolic places on campus, and provides a context for future programming and the pedestrian experience on campus. The importance of these spaces cannot be underestimated, and indeed becomes the catalyst around which future buildings and pathways respond and are mindful.

An example of this type of development is along Memory Mall. Buildings along its edge reinforce the existing axial relationship. Parking Garage D is directly to the east, providing support to both the academic area and the Convocation Center. This axial relationship has been continued across the Student Union and

mirrored as the front door to the campus where the Duke Energy University Welcome Center is located.

Spatial configurations mentioned above are important for place making and establishing pedestrian importance on a college campus. Axial relationships to the center of campus should be enforced and in fact programmed in future growth framework- while maintaining the circular paths and roadways important to the history of the University of Central Florida.

8. An identification and assessment of alternative future activity location and linkage concepts for the campus and the context area (graphic and companion narrative).

The Academic Villages housing complex and the Recreation and Wellness Center south of the Student Resource Center (SRC) created a new activity hub. Links to the center of campus from this area should be reinforced, particularly through the SRC. Furthermore, in addition to the proposed northeast academic spine, the area at the north end of Central Florida Boulevard provides an excellent opportunity for future development. Integration of the Duke Energy University Welcome Center and academic buildings around an open green space activate that area of campus and present a collegiate entranceway to the college.