UMass Boston
Campus Master Plan Update
Our Vision for the Future
2023
Dear Beacons,

In crafting our new strategic plan, *For the Times*, our principal goal was to build on our distinctive strengths – our dedication to preserving and advancing knowledge in the service of Boston, the Commonwealth, and the greater good; our resolve to be a leading anti-racist, health-promoting institution; our devotion to holistic student success; our existential commitment to a sustainable world.

At the same time, we developed a Campus Master Plan to support the strategic plan. The Campus Master Plan that follows is about amplifying our signature student- and community-centered approach to educating. It is about harnessing the ‘power of place’ in our unmatched harbor location to foster an ethic of care for all. It is about reimagining the campus in our own image, as Beacons.

It is about bold and vital ideas.

**Belonging.** We thrive as a community of people who learn from each other and from life experiences and cultures that may be different from our own. This plan articulates a connected learning environment that embraces all and highlights our diversity and equity.

**Openness.** The plan promotes an open, community-facing campus culture. On the strength of the plan, UMass Boston will emerge as a setting that encourages intellectual curiosity, and a place that feels connected to the civic life, demographic trends, and economic dynamism of our city and region.

**Sustainability.** Consistent with our commitment to environmental stewardship, this plan boldly aims to reduce our carbon footprint. It envisions energy efficient buildings, renewable energy sources, use of recyclable and locally available materials, and clean transportation alternatives.

**Collaboration.** The Campus Master Plan will also enable UMass Boston to pursue integrated, cross-disciplinary scholarship in areas we prioritize in *For the Times* – most notably, the Grand Scholarly Challenges. We can be more purposeful in curating our research and teaching to address today’s complex challenges, like climate change and inequality. It improves prospects for our scholarship to have meaningful impact in the world and deepens the academic excellence that is central to our mission.

The buildings and spaces we design shape our lives. Along with pragmatic purpose – functionality, sustainability, access to all – buildings and spaces mirror our values and telecast our aspirations. They are our architectures of care. We are immensely proud of this Campus Master Plan. It is about a campus environment that is for a university on the move – a university for the times, no matter the times. We invite you to peruse this plan and watch as UMass Boston continues to evolve.

*Sincerely,*

*Chancellor Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco*
Our Vision for the Future

“To develop a plan for our university that is data-informed, adapts best practices to our unique campus, builds on and enhances our significant existing assets, creates opportunities where we have gaps, and is bold yet realistic in its ambitions.”

- Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco
UMass Boston, for the times, no matter the times.
...we commit ourselves to a vision of higher education, basic research, and community engagement as indispensable tools for forging a more democratic, inclusive, sustainable, and just Boston, commonwealth, and beyond.

UMass Boston is a university for the times.
UMass Boston is a research university and academic community that is open and welcoming to all, with an unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our story began with our founding in the 1960s, a time of profound civic and political change that nurtured an ardent social conscience at UMass Boston. As the only public research university in Boston, UMass Boston continues to provide an accessible and affordable opportunity for higher education to a diverse population, particularly those of modest means. Then and now, education for us remains an indispensable tool for a more democratic, inclusive, sustainable, and just world.

Our deep connection to Boston
Situated on the waterfront in the heart of Boston, UMass Boston boasts an extraordinary locational endowment. We believe that an engaged UMass Boston and a thriving Boston go hand in hand. Year after year, UMass Boston brings people and ideas together to elevate Boston – through scholarship and engagement that informs public policy and shapes strong, resilient communities.

Closely aligned with the priorities of the city and region, our waterside campus is home to ecosystems of faculty, staff, and students arrayed around influential areas of discovery like biotechnology and data science. Our campus community drives groundbreaking research and scholarship in all fields of study. We embed environmental resilience across our campus culture, in our planning, curriculum, and operations. We model health and well-being, preparing the next generation of healthcare professionals and expanding Boston’s biomedical economy. We are an economic catalyst, unrivaled in providing Boston’s workforce with a versatile talent pipeline across sectors and industries. UMass Boston will continue to leverage partnerships to shape new community assets, including the development of Dorchester Bay City, the Calf Pasture Pumping Station, and other partner relationships that benefit the community and university. This will entail deepening partnerships with employers and community organizations to increase experiential learning opportunities for students and broadening stakeholder access to the UMass Boston campus.
Our students’ success

Being a Beacon is the college experience of a lifetime. UMass Boston is a place where doors swing open. It is where our students rise to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow and prepare for lives of consequence. It is where they expand the knowable world and realize flights of imagination.

UMass Boston students study what they love. They are artists and neuroscientists, poets and engineers, athletes, advocates and accountants. They want to create things, build things, and make a difference in their communities. They seek to take on racial injustice, climate change, and health inequity. We continue to rise in the ranks of the nation’s top public research universities, affirming our reputation as a leader in producing groundbreaking research and scholarship that moves the world forward.

Our academic leadership calls for a physical infrastructure that is commensurate with the world-class teaching and research excellence at UMass Boston. We will prioritize the completion of current Campus Master Plan initiatives and alignment of our physical space with our new strategic plan, For the Times, to ensure state-of-the-art teaching, learning, research, sports and recreation, and co-curricular spaces on campus. We will complete ongoing major campus projects including the new quad and we will continue to renovate, upgrade, and tailor physical spaces to support teaching, learning, well-being, health promotion, research, and community engagement by sequencing the Campus Master Plan’s major capital projects over the next 10 years and beyond.

“Our students have backgrounds and life experiences full of challenges and achievements. A large portion of them face housing and food insecurities as well as the financial challenges of being a college student. Being primarily a commuter campus, over half of our students are estimated to stay on campus as long as they possibly can during the day before going ‘home’ to sleep. Our campus is in some ways a safe second home for many of our students. The environment we envision building has to be flexible, multi-purposed, attractive, and functional to fully support our student body.”

- Dennis Swinford, Director of the Office of Campus Planning and Sustainability
Our commitment to a healthy and sustainable community

UMass Boston will amplify sustainability initiatives at all levels. We seek to foster a consciousness of nature’s centrality to the human experience and our collective obligation to environmental sustainability. We understand that sustainability is not only about environmental and economic impacts, but it is about the overlap and interdependence of environmental and economic issues with restorative justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Therefore, we define sustainability as “an interdisciplinary effort to simultaneously support human health and well-being, preserve environmental quality, and maintain fiscal responsibility.”

From our founding, UMass Boston has attracted scholars dedicated to the pursuit of truth, beauty, and justice who questioned exclusion and the many faces of inequality. We are an institution that has long admired the power of diversity to expand scholarly ways of knowing, endeavored to redefine the boundaries of academic knowledge, and expanded the purposes of higher education. We are proud to be the most diverse university in New England and the third most diverse in the nation. We are equally proud that UMass Boston students represent our national demographic future. We thrive as a community of people who learn from each other and from life experiences that are different from our own. At UMass Boston, we democratize access to education.

“...The consummate goals of higher education cannot be achieved (or even pursued) until students feel a sense of connectedness, membership, and belonging in college.”

- Terrell Strayhorn, College Students’ Sense of Belonging: A Key to Educational Success for All Students

UMass Boston is working to integrate disparate sustainability efforts that address environmental, social, and economic issues into a purposefully integrated approach.
We welcome all. We recognize that we have tremendous opportunities to transform our campus environment to better support our mission. We aspire to create a campus context that affirms diverse identities and experiences, fosters value and respect for all community members, and celebrates differences. The proposed 2023 Campus Master Plan Update embraces our commitment to provide an inclusive and equitable campus environment that promotes integrity and student success for all students.

As stewards of the environment, the university has developed a Campus Master Plan that incorporates sustainable site development, energy-efficient building design and materials, renewable energy sources and technologies, use of recyclable and locally available materials, and clean transportation alternatives. We promote buildings that are both resource-efficient in construction and operation and supportive of human health and well-being. Additionally, UMass Boston understands the campus landscape itself has the potential to sequester carbon and provide coastal resilience against storm surge. Campus Master Plan recommendations elevate the relationship between landscape performance, stormwater management, and climate change adaptation and mitigation.
Key Campus Master Plan Themes

A comprehensive analysis of the existing campus and its ability to support the university’s population and strategic plan, along with input from a diverse range of stakeholders, shaped the Campus Master Plan and its key themes. The process was inclusive and transparent, seeking input from students, faculty, and staff through town halls, surveys, stakeholder interviews, and workshops. Stakeholder responses in all engagement formats focused on several overarching themes that informed the development of the final plan:

• Diversity, equity, and inclusion are core values that drive institutional practices.
• UMass Boston is a health-promoting institution focused on well-being and an ethic of care.
• Investment in a high-quality learning environment will support an enhanced student experience for students of all identities and backgrounds.
• Environmental and racial justice align with sustainable economic and planning decisions.
• UMass Boston’s location can be leveraged by enhancing physical and programmatic connections to Boston.

The campus creates a climate that affirms diverse identities and experiences, fosters value and respect of all community members, and celebrates differences.
Assumptions and Drivers

- On-campus undergraduate enrollment will remain constant; graduate enrollment is likely to increase slightly.
- Remote and hybrid learning and engagement will continue to increase in popularity and frequency, and the university will seek ways to support this and other changes in teaching modalities.
- Enhancing the student experience through the renovation of the heritage buildings is a significant priority.
- Over time, the university will look to strategically add additional space through both traditional and innovative means.
- The university will seek to make physical and meaningful connections with neighbors on the peninsula and within the Boston metropolitan region.
- The university will encourage the integration of the Calf Pasture development with the Strategic Plan and the Campus Master Plan.

The Campus Master Plan provides a long-range vision for the future of the campus that is both visionary and realistic, and it builds on the successful implementation of the 2009 Campus Master Plan. While the 2009 Plan focused on remediation and infrastructure stabilization, this Campus Master Plan aligns with the planning principles established during the planning process and prioritizes campus investments that will help establish a cohesive physical campus that supports the university’s new strategic plan.

All members of the campus community are included, respected, and valued in all spaces.
PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The planning principles are goals set forth to align UMass Boston’s mission and vision with the physical campus. Closely aligned with the strategic plan, they were developed through a consensus-driven planning process. They reflect the culture, traditions, aspirations, and context of UMass Boston. While ambitious in nature, the principles inform the intent, direction, and priorities articulated in the Campus Master Plan and will serve as a benchmark against which future planning decisions can be measured.

1

Create a welcoming, inclusive, and health-promoting UMass Boston campus.

- Create an equitable physical environment that is welcoming and inclusive and that serves students, faculty, staff, and community members of all identities and backgrounds.
- Foster a sense of belonging through improved way-finding and building connectivity.
- Improve campus edge identity and arrival experience.
- Enliven ground floor spaces with increased transparency and improved building access.
- Integrate the campus with the waterfront and the surrounding community.

2

Invest in a high-quality and inclusive learning environment that supports the university's core values.

- Reinvest in heritage buildings to align with current pedagogies and eliminate the disparities between existing campus facilities.
- Provide new and enhanced physical space to support teaching, learning, research, and community engagement.
- Create a more sustainable campus to reflect the university’s commitment to the environment and to ensure future growth and longevity.
3 Create a physical campus that supports community-university reciprocal engagement.

- Leverage the campus location and provide increased community access to support academic priorities that advance UMass Boston’s urban mission.

- Cultivate collaborative strategies and partnerships that integrate campus plans with those of the larger community.

- Explore opportunities to expand beyond Columbia Point to enhance community, workforce, and economic development and increase experiential learning opportunities.

4 Leverage assets and resources to support a sustainable, resilient, and nimble campus.

- Prioritize sustainable site development, energy-efficient building design and materials, renewable energy sources and technologies, use of recyclable and locally available materials, and increased reliance on clean transportation alternatives.

- Maximize the versatility of space and infrastructure to accommodate modifications to meet future needs.

- Minimize carbon emissions and meet our commitment for net zero by 2050.

- Prioritize projects at a variety of scales that have the greatest impact.
Space Needs Assessment

A Space Needs Analysis was completed during the planning process to quantify our space needs and enable us to make data-informed decisions. Understanding our existing space will help us leverage campus assets and align space with our strategic vision moving forward. The planning process evaluated both qualitative and quantitative space deficiencies and identified opportunities to modernize the learning environment for students, optimize existing facilities, and realize new construction to have the most significant impact on student success in the future.

In aggregate, the space assessment identified 315,000-385,000 net square feet (NASF) or 570,000-700,000 gross square feet (GSF) of space needs campuswide in the near- and mid-term. The Campus Master Plan focuses on creating an equitable student experience while also responding to the university’s unmet needs for student space and learning environments. Implementation will be achieved through a variety of strategies including renovation and efficient utilization of existing space, new construction, and creative partnerships.
Future campus investments, both renovations and new construction, will be driven by pedagogical shifts in program or course-delivery methods, accreditation requirements, enrollment shifts, faculty/staff population and workplace strategies, research trends, external partnerships, and the age and condition of existing facilities. The plan envisions near-term projects which could be completed within 10 years, as well as long-term initiatives which would occur beyond the 10-year planning horizon. While future flexibility is important, qualitative drivers of alignment include:

- Places to collaborate, formally and informally, for faculty, staff, and students
- Communal spaces that support the holistic entirety of the graduate and undergraduate student population including commuters, non-traditional students, and marginalized communities
- Flexible and adaptable instructional space
- A range of study spaces across all buildings to create equitable learning and study opportunities for all students, regardless of discipline
The Campus Master Plan Supports Our Vision for the Future.

The Campus Master Plan is the culmination of ideas generated through a rigorous planning process. Reimagining all aspects of our built environment will strengthen the foundation of our campus, and our new Campus Master Plan will help us leverage our location and facilities in pursuit of our mission. Developed concurrently with our new strategic plan, For the Times, the Campus Master Plan seeks to align physical space on campus with the strategic plan and with the university’s mission and vision.

The plan prioritizes the renovation of our six original buildings which represent our heritage, Wheatley, McCormack, Healey, Quinn, Service and Supply, and Clark – so that the student experience is equitable across all facilities and disciplines. In addition to building renovations, the Campus Master Plan includes strategies that support campus connectivity, comfort, safety, well-being, wayfinding, and choices that can reinforce a sense of belonging and signal an environment that welcomes a diversity of individuals, perspectives, experiences, and activities.

The Campus Master Plan further identifies projects that help realize the university's strategic goals by addressing campus-wide initiatives and new on-campus development. At a campus level, gateways, building connectivity, open space, and access to the water will create a more welcoming and inclusive campus. Activation of the new quad with transparent and active student space, both through renovations and new construction, will strengthen the campus community and will support sustainability and well-being.
An active and vibrant quad
Planning Concepts

- Campus Gateway
- Improved Arrival Experience
- Major Circulation Axis
- Secondary Circulation Axis
- Water Views
- Heritage Building Renovation
- Increased Transparency/Infill
- Central Receiving
- New Development Site
- Integration with the Calf Pasture
Urban Design Framework

The UMass Boston Columbia Point campus opened its doors in 1974 as an inward-facing set of buildings and open space that created a fortress-like separation from its neighbors. Recent campus additions, including the removal of the original Science Center and construction of the ISC, as well as landscape improvements along the campus’ southeast edges, have turned the campus outward to embrace the Boston Harbor and adjacent private and Commonwealth uses.

The Campus Master Plan envisions an even more powerful opportunity for the campus to blur its edges and to provide the campus and wider community with a legible network of corridors, open space, and landmarks. The plan’s urban design framework builds on the planning principles in an effort to knit together existing structures, emerging open space, and future built projects into a cohesive whole.

Opportunities for Renovation and New Construction

The planning process identified future development sites, quantified their development capacity, and proposed appropriate programmatic uses. The assessment of our existing space highlighted that there is a significant disparity in the condition of our existing buildings. Although we teach our students that they are entitled to the best, our physical plant does not convey that message consistently. While new construction strives to create an ideal quantity of additional space, we must prioritize renovation of our heritage buildings to provide high-quality equitable and physically accessible space, support academic success, and enhance the student and staff experience. Investment in the renewal of existing space will consider infrastructure, location, capacity, accessibility, and programmatic needs. The Campus Master Plan explored the transformative opportunities of heritage building renovations using Wheatley Hall as a prototype.

The ten-acre UMass Boston-owned Calf Pasture development site presents an extraordinary opportunity to leverage the benefits of public private investment in a transit-oriented, mixed-use project. The Calf Pasture development provides the potential integration of residential, academic, and private sector uses with the adjacent campus and neighbors on Columbia Point. Adaptive reuse of the Pumping Station, envisioned as the centerpiece of the new development, is an opportunity to create a public-facing amenity for the university. A mixed-use building along University Drive North adjacent to the Pumping Station could potentially provide space for academic colleges, research, and public–private partnerships. The development also provides the opportunity for new residential buildings along Beacons Walk to create synergies with existing student housing, dining, athletic, and proposed recreation uses. Highly transparent active uses such as retail and dining at the ground floor would establish Beacons Walk as a vibrant neighborhood amenity serving both the campus and the surrounding community. The site north of University Drive offers additional opportunities for mixed-use, university-focused development.
Beacons Walk
Strategies for addressing the space deficit:

- Leveraging existing facilities through renovation
- Efficient and flexible utilization of existing space
- New construction
- Creative partnerships and other innovative opportunities
Illustrative Campus Master Plan

**Heritage Building Renovation**
1. Wheatley Hall
2. McCormick Hall
3. Healey Library
4. Quinn Administration Center
5. Service & Supply
6. Clark Athletic Center

**Other Campus Facilities**
7. Integrated Science Complex
8. West Garage
9. Campus Center
10. University Hall
11. Residence Hall East & West
12. Softball Field
13. Monan Park
14. Fox Point Dock

**New Construction**
A. Academic Building A
B. Academic/Recreation B
C. Academic Building C
D. Academic Building D
E. Academic Building E
F. Central Plant
G. ISC Addition
H. Campus Support Building
I. Clark Athletic Center Addition
J. Multi-purpose Field & Structured Parking

**Calf Pasture Development**
K. Historic Pumping Station
L. Calf Pasture Development Site

**Site Improvements**
M. Central Receiving
N. Grand Stair
O. Open Space/Plaza
P. Transit Hub

- Heritage Building Renovation
- New Construction
View looking northwest
Wheatley as a prototype

The disparity among buildings is perhaps most apparent in Wheatley Hall where current conditions impact productivity, restrict program and faculty growth and negatively impact the self-image of our students, faculty, and staff. The building was named in honor of Phyllis Wheatley, the first African American published poet who was once enslaved, but freed in 1773. We have a responsibility to our students and our community to reflect the significance of her accomplishments through the realization of a major renovation.

Wheatley Hall houses over a third of the university’s general-purpose classrooms, thus its condition impacts a large percentage of our campus community. Using Wheatley as a prototype, the planning team explored opportunities to transform the heritage buildings through phased major renovation that would clarify circulation, provide enhanced student spaces, increase transparency and daylight, and facilitate flexible learning spaces to support multiple technologies and pedagogies. The proposed renovation of Wheatley includes increasing exterior glazing, infilling the perimeter structure at the ground and second floor, and potentially extending the upper floor court to the ground floor and enclosing it to create a central student space filled with natural light.
Glass walls infill to the line of existing structure to provide additional classrooms and student space. The atrium extends to the Plaza Level providing natural light to a central student space. Active learning classrooms and open labs surround the atrium.

LEVEL 06

LEVEL 05

The atrium stair extends to Levels 05 and 06 to provide open circulation between floors. Activity based work areas include communal areas for collaboration, open work areas, huddle rooms, and meeting rooms.

LEVEL 04

The fourth floor provides active learning classrooms, class labs, and college/program hubs. Student space terminates corridors and overlooks the atrium.

LEVEL 03

The third floor houses the research facilities, active learning classrooms and college/program hubs. A large double height class lab provides an opportunity for an engineering lab. Student space terminates corridors and overlooks the atrium.

LEVEL 02

The second floor provides active learning classrooms, class labs, and college/program hubs. The central atrium provides daylight to interior student space and workspace. Student space terminates corridors and overlooks the atrium.

PLAZA LEVEL

Glass walls infill to the line of existing structure to provide additional classrooms and student space. The atrium extends to the Plaza Level providing natural light to a central student space. Active learning classrooms and open labs surround the atrium.
We're just getting started.

The Campus Master Plan Update is intended to be a living and flexible document that guides decision-making for the future of the physical campus. The plan does not sequence new construction but instead maintains flexible implementation by minimizing enabling projects which would dictate an order of completion. It supports the four cross-cutting commitments identified in *For the Times* by advancing the university's teaching, research, and service mission; fostering an antiracist and health-promoting institutional culture; providing physical opportunities for collaborating with community partners; and modeling operational excellence.

UMass Boston's future will be shaped by a variety of factors including student demographics and academic market demand, changes in technology, political priorities, the ability to secure funding, and the local and global economy. Partnership opportunities, course delivery methods, research initiatives, student life amenity and dining trends, housing demand, sports and recreation needs, and deferred maintenance priorities will inform implementation decisions during the tenure of the Campus Master Plan. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced additional uncertainty about the future of work and gathering that reinforces the need for flexibility to adapt to changes in society and higher education. The Campus Master Plan provides a coherent vision that will allow the university to react to these challenging forces and respond to opportunities in the near- and long-term. The planning principles, concept plan, goals, vision, and strategies identified in the plan are designed to guide our decisions in anticipation of change.

The Campus Master Plan recommendations are bold and, while daunting, are not different in scale from the campus transformation achieved in the ten years following the 2009 Campus Master Plan. That plan catalyzed 420,000 gross square feet of academic space, over 1,000 residential beds, 1,400 parking spaces, and a transformative campus quad. Like the 2009 plan, implementation of the current Campus Master Plan will occur over time and as funding becomes available. The Campus Master Plan prioritizes the renovation of existing space, specifically the heritage buildings, to meet programmatic needs, improve adjacencies, address deferred maintenance, and increase efficiency. The plan incorporates strategies and recommendations that reinforce the strengths of the campus and address challenges and opportunities to create a better physical environment for the entire campus community.

Recognizing that land area and funding capacity may limit on-campus growth, the university will also explore options that provide flexibility in meeting programmatic needs through alternative means including leased space, satellite locations, and potential partnerships such as the future Calf Pasture mixed-use development, Dorchester Bay City, and other off-campus opportunities that provide unique avenues for alignment with the university's mission.
Watch our transformation

Key challenges lie before us as we confront unchecked climate change, healthcare disparities, the reckoning of racial inequalities, assaults on truth and civility, and a rapidly evolving world of work. At the same time, the future of higher education is shifting to great urban centers and must embrace the cultural wealth and diversity that is the demographic future of Boston and the Commonwealth. In these times, UMass Boston, as the only public research university in the great city of Boston, and as the most diverse public university in New England, is poised to be indispensable, more relevant, and more valuable than ever before.

Looking ahead, watch as new campus spaces for connection emerge to bring our community closer together. This includes the completion of our new quad that will transform the center of campus from a construction zone into a beautiful, five-and-a-half-acre green space and hub for student life. Watch as our new strategic plan charts new pathways to student success. Watch as our investments in the life sciences, technology, and other fields create new ties to the local economy.

Now and moving forward, when we set our gaze on our blue Beacon, we are filled with pride because it reminds us that UMass Boston is true to its values and for the times.
Welcome to UMass Boston
Acknowledgments

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Greg Fenning – WSP-USA Buildings
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Paul Male – Faithful & Gould
Credits

General Resources:
Research Guides at University of Massachusetts Boston (libguides.com)

2009 Campus Master Plan

University Roots - UMass Boston (UMass Boston.edu)

Aerial view of UMass Boston's ColUMass Bostonia Point campus, circa 1979 - UMass Boston Historical Photographs - Open Archives at UMass Boston

UMass Boston Archives

Boston Historical Commission

Gaining Ground by N. Seasholes


Goody Clancy

Elkus Manfredi

FEMA Flood Map from www.FEMA.gov

cli-MATE: MRCC Application Tools Environment

Climate Ready Boston

historicboston.org