UW-MILWAUKEE CAPITAL PLANNING ISSUES AND THEMES

The 2010 campus master plan documented specific space deficiencies related to each of the campus goals described above. In total (without residence facilities), the master plan documented a deficit of 696,977ASF compared to its current space and projected needs in ten years. These deficiencies and goals provide the framework for UWM’s capital budget planning. The issues and themes outlined here are based on conversations with campus leadership who identified numerous specific needs that fall into these basic categories.

A. General Purpose Revenue (GPR) Supported Facilities and Functions

1. Student Learning Experience

The 2010 master plan documented the need for an additional classroom space. Recent projects at UWM have begun to address this deficit through the addition of new instructional space in the Northwest Quadrant and Kenwood IRC. However, reviewing the 2014 UWM Classroom Demand Analysis, one will note that an overabundance of large format lecture halls (200+ seats) skews the overall needs analysis. UWM continues to fall short of demand for small format classrooms in the 20 – 60 seat categories. While the university can function through this shortage by bumping smaller class sections into larger rooms, this creates a less than ideal teaching environment and handicaps utilization. Further, many of the existing classrooms are furnished at an area ratio of <20 ASF/student; 50% below the UW System standard of 30 ASF/student. To begin adjusting existing classrooms to better align with System guidelines, UWM requires additional, appropriately sized classrooms.

The university also requires mediated and flexible classroom space that accommodates modern student learning pedagogical approaches. Many of our 160 classrooms are in older buildings that are difficult to reconfigure to provide the flexible, interactive learning environment required for active learning strategies. Physical limitations of older buildings such as column and bearing wall locations; floor-to-floor ceiling height limitations, and tiered/sloped floors are deterrents to conversion of existing spaces to accommodate modern peer-learning pedagogy.

2. Research Growth and Partnerships

The campus goals have clarified that UWM requires several types of facilities related to research growth and partnerships. One critical space requirement is to maintain research activities while the university addresses conditions in several research buildings are in desperate need of renovation (EMS, Chemistry, Garland/Pearse) or demolition (Physics) because of their age. There are some programs with expanding research activity (Health Sciences and Nursing) that will require new space to better meet growing student populations in these fields of study.

UWM’s goal of increasing cross-disciplinary research will require new and different types of space than traditional academic buildings consisting of classrooms, offices, and corridors. Instead, modern academic centers provide a variety of facilities (wet and dry labs, project and discussion spaces, etc.) that can accommodate collaborative work across a range of disciplines. The space needs to be flexible and assignable to different projects as needs arise over time. The facilities will need to accommodate collaborative spaces where faculty and students can interact in meaningful and spontaneous ways to develop innovative ideas.
3. Community Engagement

UWM’s extensive community engagement activities require both on-campus and off-campus facilities to accommodate this mission. UWM lacks dedicated spaces for many community engagement activities.

A critical need is for facilities that allow UWM faculty, staff and students to act as a resource for addressing problems in surrounding, underserved areas of our community. UWM provides assistance to limited metropolitan areas but could expand the reach of our engagement given the appropriate resources. Many faculty could provide more direct clinical help but lack the infrastructure to support such activity.

Another dimension to engaging our community involves cultural programming that serves both the university and the surrounding area. UWM lacks space and access systems on campus to bring in community groups to engage with our faculty and students. Welcoming and accommodating parking and transit systems are critical to UWM’s goal of community partnership.

Finally, there is a need to develop a reliable infrastructure that can provide remote connectivity between our distributed sites. This is needed to support the community engagement activities that, by their very nature, occur across the metropolitan area.

4. Student Life

Student life spaces are underdeveloped at UWM, a condition outlined by the 2010 UWM Campus Master Plan. The campus must adjust to better meet the evolving expectations and learning methods of students.

Beyond Program Revenue supported functions related to student life, there are also academic related (GPR) needs. This includes collaborative learning spaces distributed around campus. These spaces are needed to provide informal opportunities for student learning and research collaborations. These sites for impromptu interactions underlie our learning and research initiatives, and facilitate sharing of ideas and innovations.

The Golda Meir Library also falls within academic facilities that impact student life. UWM seeks to transform this facility which was originally developed and constructed to house traditional library functions (book & media archives, independent study, etc.). The success of the 2009 Learning Commons project is evident in the energy and activity observed on a daily basis, but comes at the price of constraining space for ever growing special collections and archives.

5. Operational Excellence

The campus has struggled to provide adequate and suitable space for operations. Some units are widely scattered, while others are overly compressed. The campus master plan identified the need to add space for support functions and to reconfigure existing spaces to be more efficient.

The most pressing issues are to develop a centralized IT facility and to reconfigure and expand the spaces for operations (possibly includes some space off the Kenwood campus).
6. Specific Items

Specific facilities and infrastructure presenting urgent needs for capital renovation or replacement include the following:

- Chemistry Building
- EMS Building
- Northwest Quadrant Buildings – Renovations required to fully occupy facility
- Replacement of Neeskay (Great Lakes research vessel)
- Clinical facilities serving our fast-growing Colleges of Health Science and Nursing
- Behavioral Analytic Space
- Need for adequate standby electrical power capacity to keep core technology and business systems operational in event of power disruption
- Need for Wet Lab space
- Expansion of Animal Care Facilities

Planning studies and preliminary designs relating to the NWQ and the Southwest Quadrant (“SWQ”) have documented the detailed needs and program specifics for these and other facilities.

B. Program Revenue (PR) Supported Facilities and Functions

1. Student Life

The bulk of the student life space needs fall into the PR category. These include a number of specific issues that have developed over the last few decades. The Student Union no longer meets our students’ needs since our student body is larger and includes more residential students than when the facility was built (opened in 1956 and enlarged in 1972). The facility does not provide adequate space, and there is a need to upgrade building systems that have aged beyond their expected useful lives. Beyond the Union, there is a need for small social spaces around campus to facilitate informal discussions and the sharing of ideas.

The Master Plan 2010 pointed out an athletic space deficit of 166,000 ASF. The space deficit identifies a need for a Basketball Practice Facility that will end the need to frequently use recreational space for athletic team practice thereby allowing additional recreational space availability for UWM students.

Additionally, student recreation space has not kept pace with the growth of on-campus students that have made our residence halls their home. The UWM Student Union Pre-Design Study (2015) outlined severe deficiencies and inefficiencies in the current facility. Through several open workshop sessions and by benchmarking other Great Cities Universities, goals and strategies for a new Student Union have been developed.

Although UWM has added new housing facilities, the Honors Program has a need for dedicated housing/student life space outlined in the Honors College Task Force Report (2012).

2. Operational Excellence

Operational excellence also relates to the quality of our research and overall academic spaces on campus, which are at risk due to the lack of maintenance dollars to undertake major maintenance or replace systems aged beyond their useful lives.

One pressing need is to develop a campus/regional plan to address parking and transit needs. The current system is inadequate to serve the UWM community, as documented by the Campus Master Plan as well as the UWM Parking & Transportation Study (2015). Following the 2015 Parking & Transit Study, UWM has utilized data and recommendations to introduce new programs, transportation demand
management systems, and modern access and enforcement technologies to better perform its parking and transportation services. Though increased parking capacity will always be welcomed and utilized, the university has taken a pro-active approach to making the most of the limited existing resources. Still, the university is in desperate need of expanded, remote parking lots to lesson on-campus demand for daily parking and improved on-demand shuttle systems for travel between the satellite locations and the main (Kenwood) campus.