

CONNECTING learning to life



Figure 1. Campus aerial photo: The Cofrin Center for Biodiversity

University Connections Background

One of the major objectives for the project was to assess the “university connection”. With the development situated in close proximity to the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Campus, both the students and developers felt the need to incorporate the university’s perspective on the area. The university connections group was assigned the task of determining potential contributors on campus and assessing their stance on the development. The group identified the administration, biodiversity center, and student body as vital in assessing the campus’ attitude towards the proposed development.

The Administration

As part of the assessment of the campus perspective, the university connections team interviewed Chancellor Bruce Shepard and Assistant Chancellor for Planning and Budget Dean Rodeheaver to obtain an administrative perspective on the development. Both the Chancellor and Assistant Chancellor were delighted to be included in this conversation. They think that it is important for the university to create and maintain connections within the Green Bay community. Coordinating with developers around the area can create connectivity and dispel the perception that the campus is isolated from the community.

The Chancellor sees the project area as a potential resource for student housing. Off campus student housing is not seen as competition, but it needs to be coordinated with planned university housing expansion. The university doesn’t want to create a “lose lose situation” for developers and the school. If the area were to have more options for housing (i.e. townhouses, duplexes, apartments) and employment opportunities, it could be an incentive to live off campus for students. Creating quality housing off campus, not “student ghettos” or sub par housing, can create a neighborhood sense that non-traditional students and graduate students would welcome.

While discussing the potential business types in the area, the Assistant Chancellor recommended that the area not have “big box” retailers. Through the schools research for the University Master Plan they learned that the UWGB community is not looking for more chain retailers. The Assistant Chancellor advises that “consistent architecture makes better character”.

Student Poll

In an attempt to capture the views of the UWGB student community, the university connections group conducted a three-day student poll to gather opinions of the student body on the proposed development. Several specific questions involving the potential for connections between the university and the proposed development were presented to students who voluntarily participated in the poll. A group of 138 students participated in the three day poll.

Of the 138 students polled, 89% indicated that they felt most students would support a mixed residential/commercial development near campus. When asked if they thought the proposed development would contribute to the quality of life on and around campus, 81% of students indicated they thought it would. 59% indicated that they would consider living within the proposed development if it were approved. When asked if they would like to see some connectivity between the development and campus, 82% of the students indicated they would like to see a connection. 82% also indicated that they would utilize a trail system linking the development to the existing UWGB trail system. 75% of the students indicated that they thought extending the Green Bay Metro bus system to the new development was a good idea. When asked if they prefer that the UWGB campus remain isolated from the development area, 30% of the students indicated they would like campus to remain isolated. 68% indicated that they would like to see some connectivity. Approximately 2% of students polled did not comment on the subject.

The subject that most students commented on was the issue of campus isolation. Some of the comments were as follows:

“I do not like the fact that campus is so isolated from “the outside world”, so any connections and development would be appreciated!”

“I really don’t like how we are secluded from EVERYTHING – this is one of the reasons why I am thinking of transferring to a different school”.

“We need more activity around campus. We are in the middle of nowhere!!!!”

“I chose UWGB because it was isolated. I grew up in an isolated community and I like it that way. Cities are not my style, but I had to move to one for college. UWGB was the best choice for me because it has a small town feel with plenty of peace and quiet away from the main city.”

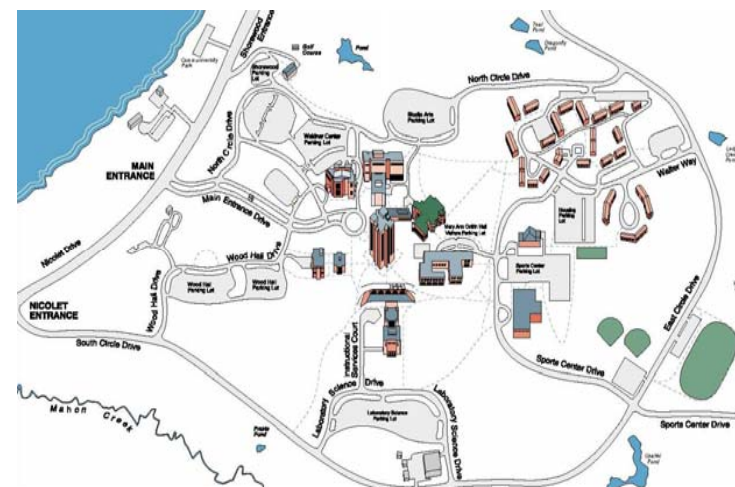
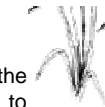


Figure 2. Campus map: Information Services Guide



Cofrin Center for Biodiversity UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN - GREEN BAY



Figure 3. Trail entrance: The Cofrin Center for Biodiversity

Cofrin Center for Biodiversity

The environmental aspects of the development are the focus of our recommendations; thus, the university connections team interviewed Dr. Robert Howe, a UWGB professor in Natural and Applied Science and director of the Cofrin Center for Biodiversity.

Preservation of green space was seen by both the developers and the class as an important aspect to incorporate into the development. Dr Howe was asked, “What he thinks is important when developing an area with consideration to the natural setting?” He confirmed that preserving the existing natural areas and buffering around them should be a high priority.

While discussing the concept of creating a “walkable” community in our development, Dr. Howe gave advice on his experiences. He believes that creating a recreational circle to link homes and businesses creates a more walkable community. He recommends designing the area so that it holds “community character” and believes that placing businesses that are commonly “quick trips” along a recreational circle would encourage bicycle transportation and community uses other than recreation.



Figure 4. Trail entrance: The Cofrin Center for Biodiversity