

# HIGHER ED IMPACT

**DIAGNOSTIC**  
JANUARY 2015

**ai** **ACADEMIC**  
**IMPRESSIONS**



## **THE PHYSICAL CAMPUS: A CRITICAL ASSET, A KEY OPPORTUNITY**

Second Edition

By Daniel Fusch & Patrick Cain

<http://www.academicimpressions.com/news-sign-up>  
SIGN UP TO GET HIGHER ED IMPACT FOR FREE

# HIGHER ED IMPACT

Delivered free to your inbox, *Higher Ed Impact* provides you with a full tool kit to help you monitor and assess the trends and strategic challenges likely to have an impact on your institution's health and competitiveness.



## DAILYPULSE

Scan current events, timely research, and notable practices at other institutions.



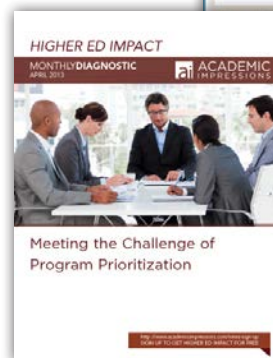
## WEEKLYSCAN

Review the week's most significant events and the most timely research in higher education, with key takeaways suggested by higher education's leading experts.



## DIAGNOSTIC

Get an enterprise-wide and in-depth look at a current, strategic challenge; identify steps to take and critical questions to address.



Learn more or sign up to receive *Higher Ed Impact* at:

<http://www.academicimpressions.com/news-sign-up>

## ABOUT ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS

We are an organization that exclusively serves higher education professionals. We offer focused and intentionally crafted learning experiences to help you address your most pressing challenges.

Our work addresses a range of issues related to student recruitment and retention, faculty support and development, alumni engagement and development, and increasing organizational productivity.

Learn more at [www.academicimpressions.com](http://www.academicimpressions.com).

Copyright © 2015 CR Mrig Company. All Rights Reserved. | 4601 DTC Blvd., Suite 800, Denver, CO 80237

# AUTHORS

---



## **DANIEL FUSCH**

**DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS, ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS**

At Academic Impressions, Daniel provides strategic direction and content for AI's electronic publication Higher Ed Impact, including market research and interviews with leading subject matter experts on critical issues. Since the publication's launch in 2009, Daniel has written more than 350 articles on strategic issues ranging from student recruitment and retention to development and capital planning. Daniel previously served as a conference director for Academic Impressions, developing training programs focused on issues related to campus sustainability, capital planning, and facilities management. Prior to joining Academic Impressions, Daniel served as adjunct faculty for the University of Denver. Daniel holds a Ph.D. in English.



## **PATRICK CAIN**

**CONFERENCE DIRECTOR, ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS**

Patrick specializes in designing professional development offerings in finance, facilities, and enrollment management for Academic Impressions. He has partnered with many innovative leaders in the higher education sector to design practical programs on such challenging and timely issues as public/private partnerships, 21st century academic and residential facilities, shared services models, and finance and enrollment management partnerships.

Patrick's educational background is primarily in secondary level curriculum design. Prior to coming to work for Academic Impressions, he spent nearly five years in secondary classrooms, most recently designing and facilitating Advanced Placement English curricula. He holds a BA and M.Ed. from the University of Notre Dame.

# CONTRIBUTORS

---



## **NANCY ALLEN**

### **DEAN OF LIBRARIES, UNIVERSITY OF DENVER**

Nancy Allen received her MLS from the University of Illinois, Urbana, and is currently the Dean and Director of University Libraries at the University of Denver. Prior to joining the DU community in 1992, she held administrative positions at Colorado State University, Wayne State University, and University of Illinois Urbana Champaign.

She was principal investigator for several major IMLS and LSTA grants for the Collaborative Digitization Program (CDP) and served for many years as the chair of the CDP Board. She has authored, co-authored, or edited 4 monographs, and 19 articles and chapters. She has written on a range of library topics from library instruction to research resources for the study of cinema and television, and on library-museum collaboration for digitization of primary resource material held by cultural heritage organizations. She has served as a member of a number of organizational boards, including the Association of College and Research Libraries Board of Directors, Center for Research Libraries, and the Bibliographical Center for Research (BCR) as well as the American Library Association's governing Council.



## **DR. GEORGE M. BROWN**

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RECREATION AND ASSISTANT TO THE VICE PRESIDENT OF STUDENT AFFAIRS, UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA**

Dr. George M. Brown is the Executive Director of University Recreation and Assistant to the Vice President of Student Affairs at The University of Alabama. He has served within Student Affairs for 29 years. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration in 1982 from Trinity University and his Master of Arts in Health, Physical Education and Recreation in 1983 from Miami University. He completed his Ph.D. in Health Education and Health Promotion in 2010 from The University of Alabama. He has served in many leadership areas and presented on numerous occasions within NIRSA (National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association) and is a current and active member of the ACHA (American College Health Association) and NASPA (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators). He serves within the Student Affairs Executive Council at The University of Alabama and has chaired the Student Health Advisory Committee for the past six years. His research interest is physical activity and holistic wellness among college students. He has adjunct appointments within the College of Human Environmental Sciences as well as the College of Education at The University of Alabama. He oversees and directs a comprehensive University Recreation department with over 35 full and part-time staff in addition to over 350 student employees. University Recreation at The University of Alabama annually serves over 80% of the total student population.

# CONTRIBUTORS

---



**NEIL CALFEE**

PRINCIPAL, NPC GROUP

Currently the principal of NPC Group, specializing in the creation and negotiation of public/private Partnerships, Neil Calfee previously served as Arizona State University's director of real estate development. He has over 15 years of experience in development and management of complex development projects involving partnerships between government entities and the private sector.



**LISA FERREIRA**

ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL, GOODY CLANCY

An Associate Principal for Goody Clancy, Lisa Ferreira has over 20 years of experience of successful project leadership and is very experienced in the management of technically-complex student life and academic projects. She was Project Manager for the design team for the Warren and Moore Residential Colleges at Vanderbilt, as well as for the recently completed Sheehan Hall Residential and Dining complex at Worcester State University in Massachusetts. Other recent projects include the South Residence Halls and Dining Commons at the University of Chicago, and New Residence Hall Buildings at the University of Notre Dame.



**ERIK KOCHER**

DESIGN PRINCIPAL AND RECREATION SPECIALIST, HASTINGS+CHIVETTA

With 36 years of experience with award-winning design, Erik Kocher is a sought-after speaker nationwide at industry recreational conferences. He serves as Design Principal and Recreation Specialist of Hastings+Chivetta Architects, guiding the majority of the firm's recreation and sports projects. Erik has completed a vast array of collegiate recreation facilities, including over 150 projects. His design excellence comes from the physical expression of sound ideas, innovation, and creativity combined with an open flow of communication. Erik received a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from Grinnell College and Master of Architecture from Washington University. NCARB Certified and LEED Accredited, he is a registered architect in 23 states.

# CONTRIBUTORS

---



## **STEVEN PARFENIUK**

### **VICE-PRESIDENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION, SHERIDAN COLLEGE**

Steven Parfeniuk is the Vice-President of Finance and Administration at Sheridan College. Steven holds a Bachelor of Commerce from McMaster University and a Masters of Arts in Educational Leadership from Royal Roads University. Steven also is a Certified Public Accountant and a Certified Management Accountant. Steven will begin a doctoral program at Royal Road University in the Winter of 2014. Steven has held senior leadership positions in education for more than 20 years and has been at Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning since 2010. Over the past 20 years Steven has been responsible for negotiating public private partnerships in several Ontario communities including Thunder Bay, Burlington, Mississauga, and Brampton. Steven is an avid triathlete and a four-time ironman finisher.



## **KEN SMITH**

### **VICE PROVOST FOR RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, VIRGINIA TECH**

Ken was named the university's vice provost in January of 2013. As vice provost, he provides institutional leadership on issues related to strategic planning and institutional effectiveness and the accomplishment of goals through academic budgets, space plans, and instructional space renovation and improvement. He also oversees the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, the Office of Assessment and Evaluation and the Center for Survey Research. Ken has served Virginia Tech as a university budget manager, finance officer for the provost, and associate provost. Ken has both chaired and staffed multiple committees charged with overall improvement of special sessions operations at Virginia Tech. He holds a PhD in Educational Leadership from Virginia Tech.

# CONTENTS

<b>FOREWORD: RECONSIDERING THE PHYSICAL CAMPUS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>RETHINKING YOUR CAPITAL PLANNING PROCESS: FOCUSING ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING WITH WELL-DESIGNED STUDENT LIFE FACILITIES</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING WITH WELL-DESIGNED ACADEMIC FACILITIES</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>FUNDING FACILITIES AND FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CURRENT MARKET</b>	<b>29</b>

# FOREWORD: RECONSIDERING THE PHYSICAL CAMPUS

---

Improvement and stewardship of the physical campus is key to your institution's competitiveness. It is critical to treat your physical campus as a resource, and manage it effectively and efficiently.

With more intentional management of your facilities, you can:

- Positively impact college choice (for students and faculty)
- Foster learning and student success
- Foster a sense of community and pride in the campus
- Better prioritize needed renovation and new construction

Yet too often, institutions make ad hoc and reactive decisions. And just as often, critical decisions are made without all of the key voices at the table -- from academic leaders to the registrar, student housing, and facilities management.

For this issue, we've interviewed officials from across the college campus who have shown proven success in fostering cross-campus planning and buy-in around investments in physical facilities. These experts from the trenches bring outside-the-box thinking and a strategic, proactive perspective. We hope their advice will be useful to you.



# RETHINKING YOUR CAPITAL PLANNING PROCESS: FOCUSING ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

---

The key opportunity for chief academic officers, chief financial officers, and capital planners is to establish a data-informed prioritization process for capital planning efforts -- one in which campus projects are prioritized based on how academic, residential, and recreational facilities on campus can be best used to improve enrollment and retention.

We recently spoke with capital planning consultant Neil Calfee and had a deep conversation about how the capital planning process is changing (and how it needs to change) and what institutional leaders may want to rethink going forward. Currently the principal of NPC Group, specializing in the creation and negotiation of public/private partnerships, Neil Calfee previously served as Arizona State University's director of real estate development. He has over 15 years of experience in development and management of complex development projects involving partnerships between government entities and the private sector.

What follows are some key takeaways from our conversation:

## HOW THE CAPITAL PLANNING PROCESS IS CHANGING

---

When asked what key factors he sees driving the capital planning process now that weren't so critical 5-10 years ago, Calfee drew attention to three in particular:

## THE PREVALENCE OF ONLINE LEARNING

Calfee: “Students can now take core classes via the web which might take some pressure off of traditional classroom spaces. That capacity may allow for enrollment growth in the existing campus footprint without the need for additional building space. However, additional capital expenditures related to information technology may be growing exponentially to support your on-line learning environment.”

### ✓ Critical takeaway

Work to understand your online footprint and how it may grow in your planning horizon; it may give you capacity and flexibility in your buildings that you never knew you had.

## THE “DUCT TAPE” APPROACH HAS FAILED

Calfee: “The ‘duct tape’ approach isn’t working anymore. For countless schools, the great recession meant getting by with severely constrained capital budgets that could address only the direst of needs on a campus. Those in the campus facilities business knew this trend was unsustainable and the costs would only get higher the longer facilities were limped along. Now better financial times are here and many capital budgets are forced to address the decade of building and systems neglect rather than planning for that next great research building or library (much to the chagrin of many a university president).”

### ✓ Critical takeaway

Addressing deferred maintenance and renovation isn’t necessarily “sexy,” but it is essential to the long-term viability of your campus assets. To see how several institutions have adopted innovative approaches to budgeting maintenance, see our past articles [“Taking a Proactive Approach to Energy Savings and Deferred Maintenance”](#) and [“Getting Buy-in for Deferred Maintenance.”](#)

## PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS ARE HERE TO STAY

Calfee: “Public/private partnerships, or P3s, have been around for a decade, but they were in their infancy a decade ago and much was yet to be learned about whether they would be a viable option for capital facilities on college campuses. Today, P3s are common throughout higher education and have proven themselves viable options when structured correctly. Student housing and parking are the most common applications, but academic and research space are emerging markets as well. P3s are not just for the flagship-public institutions either; these deals come in all shapes and sizes and there are finance options and developers to fit virtually any institution.”

### ✓ Critical takeaway

Take the time to evaluate whether a public/private partnership may be a good fit for your campus--as a successful partnership might let you spread your scarce resources further. Also, work to understand what ensures the strongest partnership with a third-party entity. This may require deep evaluation and articulation of campus cultural values and financial parameters in the planning process, to ensure stronger integration of P3 facilities into the existing capital suite on your campus. For a look at critical considerations in approaching a P3, see our article [“Funding Facilities and Facilities Improvements in the Current Market,”](#) later in this edition.

## HOW THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE CAN DRIVE CAPITAL PLANNING DECISIONS

---

“So many campuses have been designed to zone or separate learning, living, recreating and socializing,” Calfee remarks. “Yet now you can see numerous examples of buildings that have been constructed and have found tremendous success in blurring these distinctions, resulting in far more engaged students and better institutional efficiencies.”

“How does this multi-use concept relate to your capital planning? Whereas you may have been planning separate capital projects related to classrooms, student engagement spaces, or recreation; have you considered how any of those functions may cross over to be utilized as something else? The growing prevalence of Living Learning Communities and Residential Honors Colleges showcase the effectiveness of combining uses and how student engagement and success can be enhanced by doing so.

“For example, a new classroom within a residence hall can serve a learning purpose during the day, and at night converts to student meeting space. It is a matter of applying flexibility to your thinking and assumptions that may give your spaces more flexibility and functionality. Try combining categories in your capital plan and see what happens. If done correctly, you may find a powerful tool that enhances student engagement that also multiplies the effectiveness of your capital investments.”

### Critical takeaway

To increase student engagement and success, think multi-use and flexibility -- not Lazy River. Combining living, learning, socializing, and recreation can be powerful in engaging students while giving you better efficiencies of space and more flexibility over time.

## BALANCING MISSION AND MARKET

---

Third, we discussed with Calfee what data sets about external realities (both threats and opportunities) are key to establishing effective capital plans. Calfee offered several cautionary notes on this topic -- namely, to improve your market base by allowing your capital plans to reaffirm your mission. “Your capital plan needs to reflect the goals and priorities of your institution,” he stressed, “not the laundry list of external factors that divide an institution’s attention and blow it off course. Theoretically, externalities such as sustained enrollment

growth or large increases in research funding should be the result of your institution realizing its goals, and the capital plan should be in lock step to facilitate that success. Yet what happens all too often is that the capital plan and institutional goals are not aligned, or even checked against each other. It's not uncommon to find an institution scrambling to meet the needs of the very thing it proclaimed quite publicly that it wanted to achieve!

“For example: If an institutional goal is to revolutionize the way math is taught to college students through small group learning and reliance on technology, your capital plan probably shouldn't include an addition of a 400-seat lecture hall to the math building. Yes - that building addition has probably been in the capital plan for a decade and it's finally ready to be funded, but it's now obsolete based on your institution successfully achieving its goal of revolutionizing the instruction of math - a self-made externality is now affecting your capital plan.

“There are certainly unforeseen factors outside of your institution's control which will impact your capital plan, and for those cases you should include contingencies and be willing to make tough choices. But oftentimes capital plans are created in a way that does not sufficiently align with the institution's goals and either the implementation of that plan and/or achieving an institutional goal causes a conflict in your capital allocation process - because the time and effort wasn't taken to ensure these institutional elements were in alignment.”

### Critical takeaway

Above all, create your capital plan to support your institution's goals and mission directly. If the goals or mission change, so must the capital plan.

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO INCLUDE

---

“What stakeholders must be a part of the process in 2015?” we asked.

“Your graduating class of 2025,” Calfee remarked. “Okay, a fifth grader may be a bit young to bring into your capital planning process -- but that’s who you should be planning for. By the way, if you are gearing your long term capital plan to meet the needs of millennial students you are already behind the curve in 2015! The millennials are your next generation of professors, not students. By 2018 the next generational wave will be on your campus; they are affectionately referred to as “Generation Z.” There is a growing body of work which attempts to define the characteristics of this particular cohort of now-children, but suffice it to say that the expectations and needs of these students will be different than those of the millennials.

“So what is a capital planner to do in the face of yet another generational shift? A good first step is to acknowledge it’s coming and then seek to understand how that next group might impact your campus. The conjecture thus far is that this group might be more grateful and accommodating for what they have than previous generations did, as these are kids of the Great Recession. Technology will continue to be ubiquitous as it is today but the delineation of spaces for living, learning, working and playing will be vastly different -- so think *flexibility* in everything you plan.

“So when you’re putting together your stakeholder group for the next capital plan, include the expansive list of the usual suspects, but you may want to bring in that fifth grader for a little while, too, to remind the group who they are really planning for.”

## Critical takeaway

Who are you planning for in your long-term capital plan? Hint: It shouldn’t be the freshman millennial who is on your campus today. Generation Z is coming. Will you be ready? Similarly, in what ways could capital planning for new learning spaces integrate a new, more technology-savvy -- and technology-dependent -- generation of faculty? How will your capital planning efforts reflect the pedagogical wishes of the most sought-after academic faculty?

# IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING WITH WELL-DESIGNED STUDENT LIFE FACILITIES

---

***“What I have seen, and this has been a relatively fast path over the last ten years, is the rise of students’ expectations of instant access, a 24/7 mentality about services, and immediacy -- that there are immediate answers to their questions and that programs and quality-of-life amenities are in place and ready to respond immediately to their needs.***

***We are called upon in student affairs, classically, to work with the out-of-classroom experience. I think it is passe to say that there is a classroom experience and an out-of-classroom experience. There is a holistic experience. So that expectation of immediacy exists in the classroom, in the residential facility, in the recreational facility, in the student union, etc.”***

- George Brown, University of Alabama

This means, Brown continues, that today’s physical campus needs to be seamlessly connected with technology. “You can’t have gaps,” he warns. “It is a fundamental expectation of today’s students and parents that technology can be delivered to them anywhere, at any time.”

George Brown is the University of Alabama’s executive director of university recreation and the assistant to the vice president of student affairs for strategic health and crisis planning. He is also a leading thinker on how residential and recreational facilities can map to and improve the student experience.

Brown notes that this expectation of technological integration and ease of service is especially critical because students are becoming more savvy consumers, and parents and students are more frequently making college choice decisions together. “What differentiates

college choice for prospects for post-matriculation career and the quality of the student experience,” Brown contents, noting that some of the most-asked questions from prospects today include:

- Where will the student live?
- What services and quality-of-life amenities available?
- Ease of services? (Is there a “one stop” approach?)
- What is the availability of services across campus?

Lisa Ferreira, an associate architect at Goody Clancy, adds that she has seen the move toward a fully integrated student experience inspire some significant design changes in residential facilities on quite a few campuses in the last five years: “We have seen more faculty-in-residence units, more classrooms or other academic-support spaces integrated into residence halls.”



Sheehan Hall Residence and Dining Facility, Worcester State University (© Anton Grassl)



She elaborates: “For a long time, colleges and universities were building suites and apartments, because they had heard from students that that is what they wanted and what would attract them to live on campus, especially as upperclassmen. Student life professionals have felt the negative impact of the all-suite buildings in terms of how this design discourages the formation of community beyond the walls of the unit. As a result, in the last 2-5 years, universities have been developing projects with smaller personal space (i.e. within the unit), and instead the focus has been on the shared spaces such as lounges and studies.”

## BRINGING TOGETHER THE RIGHT PEOPLE

---

“It is critical for good minds to come together from different areas on campus,” Brown advocates. “The error of omission is not including enough people at the table. Decisions on changing/modernizing/renovating the student residential experience have to be holistic. You need a lot of input to plan this well.”

Brown recommends making sure that these voices are present early in the conversation:

- **The leadership of student affairs** -- the vice president, the student union director, student health, student recreation, the director of housing, the leads for academic support initiatives, the director of the first-year student experience director.
- **Students** -- “*You need to listen to students. We underestimate students’ ability to be introspective. Harness students’ incredible energy through surveys, focus groups, etc. Ask them what characterizes their student experience on campus. They will default to talking about parking and similar trouble points, but they’ll also talk about student groups and events, recreation, etc., and they will be honest. Draw on students who do work study, students who take part-time jobs in the dining facilities or student unions, students who are involved in intramural sports. Be intentional about gathering their input.*”
- **Faculty** -- “*This is not an us vs. them. We need early conversations with faculty because we want the residential experience and the learning experience to be interwoven.*”

***“When it comes down to the tough decisions, you need a smaller group. But to make informed and effective decisions, you need to first talk to the right people, and a lot of them, during the information-gathering stage.”***

- George Brown, University of Alabama

---

## WHAT TO DO WITH AGING HOUSING STOCK AND A FINITE CAPITAL BUDGET

---

According to Lisa Ferreira at Goody Clancy: “The first priority would be to develop a housing master plan, where an institution would assess where it stands in terms of unit types, their sizes and distribution, the ratio of shared space to private space, and of course the condition of the buildings’ systems. This would also be the opportunity to establish long range goals for ‘where you want to be.’ With a clear and comprehensive programmatic vision, it becomes much simpler to prioritize expenditures and possibly identify opportunities for fundraising. A master plan could address issues such as swing space and could identify small interventions that could have a positive impact on residential life.”

For more about developing a housing master plan, check out [this Academic Impressions article](#) in which we interviewed David Jones, previous assistant vice president for student affairs at the University of Alabama and currently the associate vice president for student affairs and enrollment management at Minnesota State University Mankato.

# WHEN THE MODERN RECREATIONAL FACILITY IS MUCH MORE THAN JUST A GYM

When it comes to improving the student experience, your recreational facilities are often an untapped resource, as well -- though it may seem odd to say so. Typically, recreational facilities are seen as having a positive impact on recruitment, but Erik Kocher of Hastings+Chivetta Architects, Inc., suggests that the most significant impact may be tied to retention, not just recruitment. After all, Kocher points out, as more facilities come on line, the effect on college choice is diminished. “But while the cost and extravagance of campus recreation centers has been negatively portrayed by the media as a factor in the increased cost of education, administrators are finding regular student use of recreation facilities increases retention level and overall GPA.”

With this in mind, we asked Kocher to comment on the trends that, to his mind, have largely characterized the shift in design of campus recreational facilities over the past decade. He drew attention to three shifts in particular:

- 1. Weights and fitness areas**, Kocher notes, “continue to grow relative to all other activities found in recreation facilities. The increase in equipment size has contributed to some of this growth, but the majority stems from the expanding popularity of functional training. Additional area is required for the various training zone activities including TRX (Training Resistive Exercise), plyometrics, sled training, medicine ball work outs, and incline training.
- 2. Increased inclusion of social spaces** in recreation facilities. “Social ‘hang out’ space, quiet lounges and cafes are regularly included in new centers. Combined ‘hybrid’ recreation and campus centers are becoming more popular as a complete onestop student social hub for the campus.”
- 3. Inclusion of wellness centers, student counseling services and health services.** The new recreational facility design, Kocher emphasizes, offers opportunities “to approach student wellness from several different service opportunities and recognizes the strong mental and physical health connection among these amenities.”

As you consider designing recreation centers intentionally for an impact on student persistence and academic success, Kocher advises getting students themselves involved early in the design process: “Because most new student recreation centers are supported by student fees (not tuition), student campus leaders should always be involved with planning new recreation facilities. Unfortunately, this is often not the case for several reasons. Student classes and extracurricular activities compete with the planning meetings and student leaders can graduate long before projects are seen through to completion. Additionally, some institutions limit student involvement as a matter of choice. However, greater student involvement in planning recreation facilities usually leads to more creative and interesting centers.”



**Hastings+Chivetta**  
ARCHITECTURE • PLANNING • ENGINEERING

**BUILDING CLIENTS, NOT JUST PROJECTS**

[hastingschivetta.com](http://hastingschivetta.com) ■ [@hc\\_architects](https://twitter.com/hc_architects) ■ 314-863-5717

# IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING WITH WELL-DESIGNED ACADEMIC FACILITIES

---

We see growing awareness at institutions that housing and recreational facilities can serve as learning spaces and as important factors in student success. But what about the academic facilities themselves -- classrooms, the academic library, traditional learning spaces? How can these facilities be used *more effectively* to improve student learning?

To investigate this question, we turned to experts Ken Smith, Virginia Tech's vice provost for resource management and institutional effectiveness, and Nancy Allen, dean of the main library at the University of Denver.

## REDESIGNING INSTRUCTIONAL SPACE

---

Smith points to two qualities that define the modern instructional classroom:

- **Ability to support multiple learning activities** within the same class period, with minimal disruption. "In today's classroom, faculty don't necessarily stand and lecture while students receive information passively," Smith notes. "The same session may include lecture, group work, and individual work. You need a classroom that can support all three modes of learning with minimal disruption when transitioning between them."
- **Seamless integration of technology.** "Technology should no longer be a feature of the room but a tool that is available in the room to faculty and students. At Virginia Tech, we worked hard to make technology-integrated classrooms similar enough to other classrooms that there isn't much of a learning curve required in the use of the new space."

As historical buildings on campus weren't built with these two qualities in mind, there are a number of implications for revitalizing existing -- and likely outdated -- instructional spaces on campus. Smith recommends approaching this modernization in a two-step process:

1. Add high-quality instructional space, affording you additional capacity.
2. Use that expanded capacity to manage a renovation cycle on older spaces.

The key is to realize that when you improve an older classroom, you almost inevitably lose capacity. "You put in more flexible furnishings and technology integration," Smith notes, "and you start thinking about sightlines in the room in a different way, you lose some capacity. You make a 50-seat room into a higher-quality 40-seat room or a 35-seat room. This creates issues for the registrar. So you need more efficient scheduling and you need to start by adding capacity with some more modern spaces so that you have room for a renovation cycle."

You lose some capacity, but the gain is significant. Guessing what pedagogy will be like ten, fifteen, or twenty years from now is a tricky matter, so anywhere that you renovate a space, try to build in flexibility for the future. This ensures that it won't be an expensive prospect to add or replace technology or to reconfigure that space ten years from now.

***"We're not trying to guess what the future is going to be and build that now; we're trying to build flexible interiors in our academic buildings so that people in the future can make those informed decisions."***

- Ken Smith, Virginia Tech

# DEVELOPING A MORE COLLABORATIVE DESIGN PROCESS

---

What's especially effective about Smith's process is the extent to which it is open and collaborative. He emphasizes the need to gather early input into design from a wide range of faculty and students, and offers advice on how to seek that input:

## SEEKING DESIGN INPUT FROM FACULTY

You can collect faculty input through:

- One-on-one conversations with faculty and department heads
- Faculty surveys
- Focus groups

***“We worked to identify faculty who are innovating pedagogically, faculty who are on the cutting edge, as well as ‘day-to-day’ faculty. We wanted input from both.”***

- Ken Smith, Virginia Tech

Smith also notes that the faculty know the spaces they are teaching in now, so one of the key questions you will want to ask them is: What works and doesn't work in the spaces you're using? Smith suggests sending a clear message with the questions you ask and the way that you ask them: “What works, we want to magnify. What doesn't work, we want to mitigate or reduce. When you present the question that way, it's very effective. Faculty know what rooms frustrate them.”

## SEEKING DESIGN INPUT FROM STUDENTS

Smith also advocates getting more students into classroom design or into desired improvements to existing spaces. He has done this by adding two questions to the course evaluation survey (one inviting students to rate the impact of the learning environment on their learning, and the other inviting open-ended comments on how the learning environment could be made better) and by having more face-to-face interactions with students early on, by being proactive in Q&A events, student government events, and forums where students and those involved in the capital planning process can ask each other questions.

“When you take this approach,” Smith notes, “you can quickly identify the spaces that students are rating low, and then review the open-ended comments. See what can be easily solved and what may be more complex. You can cross-reference this with your space utilization data. So, for example, here is a space that is used by a lot of students and isn’t working well. We need to prioritize that space for renovation; in that way, the most students will be impacted even by small changes. This helps prioritize the limited dollars available for renovation.”

## THINKING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

---

***“Learning spaces aren’t just the classrooms anymore. A lot of learning happens in informal spaces, the spaces where students meet. As you introduce more group learning and group problem-solving into the pedagogy, there are more learning activities happening outside the classroom.”***

- Ken Smith, Virginia Tech

Smith also recommends integrating informal learning spaces (table space, lounge space) not only into your academic facilities but also into student residence halls, academic libraries, dining facilities, and student life facilities: “intentionally create space that supports students gathering to learn and problem-solve together.”



Three steps to consider:

- Audit your existing facilities, looking for examples of “dormant” space that you could transform into spaces that facilitate collaborative learning.
- Plan for learning spaces in a variety of locations, remembering that students gather and learn at all hours.
- Ensure that all of your facilities -- not just classrooms -- have flexibility for integrating technology. You might not be able to predict what the institution may find it useful to add into a learning space outside the classroom ten years from now.

## REVITALIZING THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY

---

Given both technological advances that enable easy access to digital content, changes in the way that people interact with scholarly communications and collections, and a shift toward thinking of the library as learning space rather than a storage and retrieval space, academic libraries especially are evolving rapidly. We reached out to Nancy Allen, the dean of the University of Denver’s main library, to talk about key considerations. DU recently completed a ten-year planning process and updated its longstanding Penrose Library to the Anderson Academic Commons.

***“Recent library building projects demonstrate how we can shift from libraries optimized for storage of paper to libraries optimized for student and faculty learning experiences. We are optimizing now as providers of learning spaces. We have to figure out how to reconsider space, information services, and partnerships with key academic support services to provide for learning experiences in the library. The academic library has the opportunity to be more than the library ever used to be.”***

- Nancy Allen, University of Denver

---

## FEATURES OF THE NEW ANDERSON ACADEMIC COMMONS

---

- Provides a very selected collection of paper materials, chosen based on use data and with the goal of helping faculty succeed in research and helping students see success in assignments
- A new fast-turnaround delivery system for access to stored collections
- Increased ease of access to digital collections
- More space allocated to seating and learning spaces, with workspaces for individual students and for learning communities
- Co-located IT services, equipment, staffing, space, and software -- “a gathering together of the resources needed for students to succeed”
- Academic support services, offered across multiple service providers but co-located and organized to support the student’s journey from inquiry (where students are supported by a research center) to expression (where students are supported by a writing center that reports to the provost’s office); “because students move through that process every time they write a research paper, the library becomes a key site for inter-office collaboration to support that process”
- Space and programming for additional “learning moments,” such as a data analysis and visualization center to support faculty research; a space allocated specifically for events that draws hundreds of students weekly to the library facility; and an active exhibits and display program, featuring not just special and archival collections but information and videos about the history of the university

Asked about early steps to take in ensuring that a library is designed and planned to fully meet the needs of the campus -- and asked about what steps institutions too often overlook, Nancy Allen emphasized collaboration and offered a number of examples and critical considerations. “We’ve demonstrated at DU that collaborative planning yields rewards for libraries (increased traffic, increased learning),” she notes. “It is well worth the investment of time and effort.”

The key first step, Allen states, is relationship development. “Find out who the key stakeholders in library space and programming really are, and engage those unit leaders in thinking about how we can use library space together to deliver better programs to students and faculty”:

- “Work with the writing program not just to allocate square feet to think about how library and writing center staff should work together, and how library and writing programs can be woven together into a fluid experience that works for students in writing-intensive courses”
- “Engage in joint planning with technology services: how can we coordinate referrals across information services, creating a queue of software support requests that we might each ask of the other and coordinating ticket referrals”

***“Do program planning and develop mutual dependencies and interdependencies prior to space planning. How do we leverage each other’s strengths to do what we do better? That is the best possible result of collaborative planning. This takes time, and it takes listening. Listen until you understand what others need to help students succeed. Then build a place where that can happen, approaching space planning knowing very clearly what you need.”***

- Nancy Allen, University of Denver

In a world where libraries become sites intentionally designed to support all stages of the student learning process, the key prerequisite for successful capital planning is going to be the partnership-building, silo-breaking, and information-gathering that will ensure that the design truly responds to the learning needs of the library’s users.



## CONFERENCE

### **ACADEMIC LIBRARY PLANNING AND REVITALIZATION INSTITUTE**

---

March 9 - 11, 2015 :: Philadelphia, PA

Learn how you can apply the latest trends and research in revitalizing your campus library to better meet your students' needs.

<http://www.academicimpressions.com/conference/academic-library-planning-and-revitalization-institute-march-2015>



# FUNDING FACILITIES AND FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CURRENT MARKET

---

In recent years, more institutions have looked for innovative, outside-the-box methods of funding their investments in the physical campus -- including an array of models for public-private partnerships, mixed-use facilities, and (in a few cases) fundraising for renewal and maintenance.

We asked Steven Parfeniuk, vice president of finance and administration at the Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, to offer his insights on public/private partnerships and what institutional leaders need to rethink in order to achieve their capital planning goals. We also invited Kambiz Khalili, assistant vice chancellor for student affairs and executive director of housing and dining services for the University of Colorado at Boulder, to share his lessons learned from CU-Boulder's innovative approach to leveraging rate increases to avoid the bond market or having to rely entirely on private developers.

Whether you turn to a public-private partnership or develop an innovative plan to leverage rate increases, the key is intentional and pro-active planning for investment in the physical campus.

# PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

---

We asked Steven Parfeniuk three questions, and the ensuing conversation was illuminating:

## WHAT DO INSTITUTIONS NEED TO RETHINK BEFORE SEEKING OUT A PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP?

“Let’s start in the right place,” Parfeniuk suggests, “let’s define *partnership*.”

Parfeniuk stresses that a partnership between entities is one -- *has to be one* -- in which both entities collaborate for mutual benefit.

“My partner had to provide something of value to me, and they get something of value to them. This is important: I don’t need to get the highest value, because they won’t get what they need out of the deal, if I do. At Sheridan, our goal was to build while putting in as little initial investment as possible. The partner took on the capital cost, and that cost me revenue on that building for 25 years.

“But if I built the building myself, I’d have a mortgage that would cost me \$3 million per year just to service the debt on that building. I would have operated a residence for 25 years, bringing in about \$3 million each year, with \$0 balance each year.

“Now the private partner has an asset. They’re going to depreciate: \$1.5 million a year to service the debt. They have the same income: \$3 million for 25 years. But they can write off \$1.5 million a year on the building, and with \$3 million in income, they now have a new \$1.5 million to put together toward projects.

“This is a win for them, a win for us.

“Could I have pushed them into a corner, to get a slice of that income, maybe \$100,000 a year? Sure. But you know what? My objective was not to generate income. My objective was to build a residence with as little investment as possible. So I found a partnership where we *both* benefited.”

---

## “MUTUAL BENEFIT”

---

“It’s really important to understand what mutual benefit means. It doesn’t mean you both get 100% of the benefit of an activity. You’re both going to get less than 100%, because you have two entities who each have different motives for this agreement. The partner has the goal of making as much profit as possible. They are not in the business of offering institutions residences to save the institutions money; they are in the business of offering institutions residences to make money.

“So you can’t be out to grind them on the money. They want to make money; you want to save costs. So be clear on that before you enter in.”

- Steven Parfeniuk, Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning

## WHAT KEY QUESTIONS MUST INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS ANSWER TO ENSURE THAT A P3 IS THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR THEM?

Parfeniuk suggests that prior to sending out an RFP, institutions need to ask four critical questions internally:

- **What do we most want to accomplish?**

Be clear on what you’re prepared to do and what you’re prepared to give up.

- **Do we want to get “in bed” with the partner for a long time?**

“This is a long-term relationship,” Parfeniuk cautions. “I am guaranteeing that this residence is going to be full for the next 25 years. Am I prepared to enter into these terms? If you make a commitment, you need to follow through.” Or consider a 40-year agreement: “If every one of our CFOs lasts 10 years, that’s five VPs who are going to need to live with this deal.”

- **How long is the agreement? Are we going to renegotiate at intervals?**

■ **Are we willing to enter into an agreement where we will not have the asset that we would otherwise have if we had not entered into that agreement?**

In a mutually beneficial partnership, the institution is going to need to give things up. Is your institution ready for that decision?

■ **Are we prepared to pay more in debt service?**

Parfeniuk stresses that it is important not to ignore this question. If the institution isn't prepared to spend millions of dollars of capital on the facility, a P3 can be an attractive option; however, the private partner is not going to be able to borrow at 2% interest. He's going to need to borrow at 6%. This is important because eventually, in the P3 deal, there will be a date after which the institution will be paying the debt service on an annual basis.

One strategy that has worked for the Sheridan Institute is managing *all* buildings through one organization -- so that the student experience in the P3 building would be identical to the student experience in the other campus residences, with identical auxiliary services and amenities. "We specified *up front* what had to be available; for all intents and purposes, we gave the partner a design to replicate."

Parfeniuk notes that planning for a P3 is also an excellent time to take a step back and ensure that your facilities are designed in a way that is most conducive to student success: "Talk with your students before you embark. What are they enjoying about the existing residence, and how can you make it better? They are your clients; how do you make the residential experience better for them? Make sure you know *that* before settling on a design with the partner."

***"Most CFOs out there aren't happy with most P3s. They don't ask the three questions that you are asking me. They end up tied to an organization for a long time, aren't seeing the results they want, and they aren't sure why."***

- Steven Parfeniuk, Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning

## HOW CAN AN INSTITUTION BEST ENSURE THAT REGULATORY AND CULTURAL MEASURES ARE COHESIVE BETWEEN P3 AND TRADITIONAL RESIDENCE HALLS?



---

## FROM THE RATING AGENCY'S PERSPECTIVE

---

For a primer on a rating agency will evaluate the credit impact that any given public-private (P3) project will have on the affiliated university, we interviewed Karen Kedem, the vice president, senior analyst, and co-manager of Moody's US Higher Education and Not-for-Profit Team. Kedem spoke with Academic Impressions recently about how Moody's analyzes the credit risks associated with these transactions, as well as how institutions can work more effectively with the agency as they prepare to enter into a public-private partnership.

You can read the interview with Kedem [here](#).

In a follow-up interview, Dennis Gephardt and Edie Behr, two other Moody's representatives, confirmed that when they work with an institution's leadership team, what they most want to see is:

- A capital plan that is closely aligned with the strategic plan
- A multi-pronged funding plan
- Clarity around dependencies and triggers for advancing to a given phase in the capital plan (e.g., when the institution has X amount of cash in hand, the institution will start work on Y)

## BEYOND THE BOND MARKET: LEVERAGING RATE INCREASES

---

What if a public-private partnership isn't the best option for your campus? Kambiz Khalili, assistant vice chancellor for student affairs and executive director of housing and dining services for the University of Colorado at Boulder, took a different route to funding a series of renovations to student housing (along with some new construction). Khalili's example demonstrates the benefits of proactive, five-year capital planning and the importance of thinking creatively and critically about all of your options.

In a nutshell, CU-Boulder takes one residence facility offline at a time and completes the renovation within one year. To fund the facilities improvements, the institution raises the room and board rate for all housing facilities by 4 percent each year, and reopens the renovated and improved facility at a premium rate (an added 5 percent). The renovation also focuses on improving operational efficiencies to lower the costs of operations and maintenance going forward.

What makes Khalili's approach possible is very calculated and intentional planning. Khalili recommends:

- Develop a long-term strategy (such as a campus master plan or housing master plan) and then develop a five-year financial pro forma aligned with that master plan. "Plan for what you need to generate, what all your expenses are -- not only debt payments but life-cycle costing -- and plan for how this will impact your room and board increases. You need a pro forma in hand in order to see what is possible."
- Know up front what your limiting parameters are. For example, CU-Boulder made the commitment to keep the yearly room and board rate increase low. Knowing your constraints, think creatively about how to work within them.
- Be ready to adjust quickly -- do scenario planning, identifying clear triggers to drive specific decisions around facilities investment. For example, how much of a drop of enrollment will trigger the decision to close a residence hall for one year? How much of an enrollment increase will trigger the decision to rent a facility from the city or to pursue some other strategy? Plan for contingencies proactively rather than reactively.

CU-Boulder has 6,400 undergraduate beds, which helps the institution spread the cost of renovating one facility while still keeping the rate increase low. Not all institutions have that volume. But the practical takeaways worth noting from CU-Boulder's success are the up-front scenario planning and development of a pro forma to guide those decisions you can make.



## CONFERENCE

### DESIGNING STEM FACILITIES TO MEET 21ST CENTURY NEEDS

---

February 23 - 25, 2015 :: Orlando, FL

After attending this conference, you will be able to incorporate modern STEM pedagogical considerations into your institution's facility design.

<http://www.academicimpressions.com/conference/designing-stem-facilities-meet-21st-century-needs-february-2015>