

ARE YOUR FACILITIES DRIVING YOUR EDUCATIONAL MISSION?

Institutions of higher education across the country are competing with one another through upgrading residence halls, building new resident life facilities, enhancing athletic venues, and updating classroom and lab technologies, all in an effort to attract the best students and faculty to campus.

Such competitive building programs, in conjunction with the cost of maintaining your current facilities, contribute to ever increasing operational costs and play no small part in the need to raise tuition. A cycle that could negatively impact the very students you are trying to attract.

Davis Wince Ltd. always thinks about architecture and planning from a holistic perspective. We have extensive experience researching educational trends and then applying that operational knowledge to every corner of campus. We address facility related issues by first learning about your student population and gaining an understanding of your position in the marketplace. We consider all facilities from the perspective of original cost and maintenance requirements, paying close attention to long-term sustainability.

We firmly believe that facilities should never drive the academic mission.

Through our work and research in higher education, we have identified six core issues we know academic institutions face year-in and year-out. Davis Wince has a strong track record of addressing these issues from a planning and architectural standpoint, and we have sketched out how our expertise and holistic approach have helped schools overcome them.

We would welcome an opportunity to share our ideas about positioning your campus for long term success.

INCREASING COST OF EDUCATION

The cost of attending college is rising and outpacing inflation by a multiple of two, and some years as much as three. This increase is difficult for parents and prospective students to understand. Today the major concern seems to be healthcare, but even the rise in healthcare is outpaced by the rising cost of college.

Traditionally parents have depended on the increasing value of their homes to borrow money for their children's college education. However, at a time when home values are declining it becomes difficult for parents to justify that course of action.

To some extent increased financial aid offered by the colleges has eased parents' concerns about funding college expenses. However, in recent years, financial aid, particularly private sector aid, has come under more scrutiny.

This is truly a national and even global issue. Every year, 400,000 qualified American students choose not to attend college because it's too expensive, while nations such as China have seen dramatic increases of the number of students entering institutions of higher learning. The way in which the United States is negatively positioning itself as a future world leader is a national concern.

OUR APPROACH

Davis Wince believes that there is a lot that colleges can do to limit the need for raising tuition at the rate of two to three times inflation. It begins with clear strategic understanding of how your college wants to position itself in the market place and then follows up with identifying those facilities you need to accomplish that goal.

Most colleges own and maintain real estate that does not adequately serve their economic mission. Some facilities are old, inefficient, and costly to maintain. Some new facilities are being built with a lack of flexibility needed to adapt to changes in student culture, technology, and curriculum.

We encourage some colleges to adopt the concept of "No new net space." If new facilities are required, others should be demolished to reduce dreaded deferred maintenance costs.

Davis Wince believes that the academic mission should drive facilities, not vice versa. We would like to review with you whether this is the case at your college. If it isn't, we can help you get into a better balance.

SUSTAINABILITY/ENERGY CONSERVATION

A 2009 study by McGraw Hill Construction, “Trends Driving Change,” predicts that while green building across the U.S. will triple over the next five years, a majority of the nation’s colleges and universities have not yet embraced green design.

Former President Bill Clinton, in his August 2009 speech to the American College & University’s Presidents’ Climate Commitment, encouraged the 250 university presidents in attendance begin retrofitting old buildings to reduce energy consumption on campuses. He acknowledged that Arizona State, now in its fourth year of cutting carbon emissions and mitigating energy consumption, has enjoyed annual energy savings of over 20 percent, while at the same time attracting grants and business partnerships through innovative facility management.

With careful planning and design, it is even possible to build green buildings with virtually no increase in first-costs.

OUR APPROACH

Davis Wince Ltd. will work with you to develop, enhance and raise awareness of your campus’ sustainability culture. It might be through green design practices, sustainable materials selection, or retrofitting an existing facility. We will provide you with the information you need to make informed decisions about potential tax benefits, federal regulations, and reduction in your energy usage and carbon footprint.

In establishing your sustainability plan we will work with all stakeholders to strike a balance between your budget and first-time and long-term facility costs to give you the high quality academic environment you and your students demand. We will assess your facilities to assure that you are maximizing the use of your spaces and optimizing your energy usage.

We can calculate and identify the potential energy savings you may realize over the life of your building through energy-efficient design, use of materials, and systems selection.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

The Pew Grant Program in Course Redesign encourages colleges and universities to redesign their curriculum and instruction, integrating technology to create a richer, less costly learning experience. Redesign projects will focus on large-enrollment, introductory courses, which have the potential of impacting significant numbers of students and generating substantial cost savings.

A 2007 Report from the EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research stated 61% of students surveyed felt technology improved learning. A 2008 EDUCAUSE study reported that 89% have a presence on Facebook. Integrated technology like smart phones and wireless digital readers (Amazon.com's Kindle) are redefining students' expectations of how educational content should be accessed and delivered in the classroom. Today's student *expects* to access information where and when they want it. This also means access to other universities, professors and students.

MIT alone has reported that 56 million people have accessed their online course materials since they were first made available in 2002. Over 250 schools around the world have similar programs. According to a June 2007 *University Business* article more than 100 higher education institutions reported active involvement in creating virtual curriculum on Massive Multiplayer Online (MMO) platforms like *Second Life*.

It is no wonder that, according to a Sept 13, 2009 article in *The Washington Post*, "undergraduate education is on the verge of a radical reordering." As more universities make their course catalogs, research and entire curriculum available virtually, it will certainly impact the education process, with a resulting impact on campus facilities.

OUR APPROACH

Davis Wince, Ltd. understands that technology has a dramatic impact higher education. And the fast, unpredictable nature of technological development means campuses will all be affected differently. We will work with your senior administration and technology group to assess how the changes in technology are affecting you today, and how they are likely to affect you in the future.

Controlling facility costs must become a mandate for senior administrators. We believe that technological *flexibility* in the design of both new and renovated spaces is an essential consideration toward achieving that control. Forward thinking is essential to plan not only for today, but – maybe more importantly – for tomorrow.

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY

The tragic Virginia Tech shootings only reinforce the importance of keeping students safe, healthy and secure. The complex issue of maintaining a safe, secure campus includes fire safety, emergency response, health emergencies, and hazardous material storage, not to mention information technology security. Safety and security affect every individual and department on campus and requires coordinating complex on campus reporting systems and technologies with off-campus support.

This fall all colleges and universities will have to prepare for the H1N1 flu. Dr Beth Bell, Associate Director for Science at the Center for Disease Control, reports that “conditions on college campuses promote easy transmission of the flu H1N1.”

According to a 2008 NACUBO paper two-thirds of institutions have increased their budget for emergency protocol plans. While preparing people is the most important element of campus safety, the facilities in which your students work and live are a critical and complex part of the equation.

OUR APPROACH

Davis Wince, Ltd. will, with their consultants, evaluate your facilities from the viewpoint of both personal safety, and electronic security.

Many existing buildings that we see on campuses present unsafe conditions for students, faculty, administrators, and maintenance staff. In most cases, these unsafe conditions can be resolved in a timely and economic way.

Personal safety is an issue with respect to how individuals circulate from building to building during both day and night. The campus' proximity to the surrounding community must be considered in any plan for providing a safe environment for student, staff, visitors, faculty, and others.

Security is a more complex issue because it involves individual privacy. The degree of security you choose to implement must be balanced between prevention and the rights of the facility's occupants. We will help you develop that balance.

TRADITIONAL vs NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS

Institutions of higher learning each define “non-traditional” students differently. Age, delayed studies, and part-time status are common qualifiers. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has defined the non-traditional student more broadly. Essentially, adult students who are financially independent and/or experience delays in their educational career may be considered non-traditional.

In a recent Eduventures survey, nearly 12 percent of parents polled were considering transferring their children from private institutions to less expensive public schools. And seven percent of polled parents asked their children to take some classes at community colleges to save money. Exacerbating the situation, a Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education study predicts a year-over-year decrease in high school graduation numbers through 2015.

Private institutions are at once facing higher traditional student attrition, and a shrinking pool of traditional student prospects.

In the wake of record job loss throughout 2009, the Council of Graduate Schools has reported a dramatic, sustained increase in non-traditional enrollment. These students are arriving to campus in the form of adults seeking a more competitive skill set, or a vocational change altogether. They find themselves learning in the same facilities designed to serve traditional students half their age, and with very different needs.

For-profit schools like the University of Phoenix and Strayer University have demonstrated the growth potential that Continuing Studies and Graduate Programs represent, particularly to the non-traditional student. Private four year schools must now balance attracting outstanding high school prospects from a shrinking pool with expanding their defined value to non-traditional students.

OUR APPROACH

Davis Wince, Ltd. assists institutions of higher learning evaluate their existing facilities with respect to educating the non-traditional student. In some cases, many of the institution’s facilities are already quite capable of serving the non-traditional student – it is simply a matter of scheduling.

However, some institutions will need new or renovated facilities to offer the programs and resources which non-traditional student demand. Developing these facilities becomes a question of cost/benefit analysis, and that question should be answered prior to any decision to move forward. Davis Wince, Ltd. can help with that analysis.

FUNDING HIGHER EDUCATION

Obviously this issue is tied directly to the rising cost of a college education. However, this issue specifically deals with how to come up with the money to finance the academic mission.

In the past, private colleges had little competition as they reached out to corporations, foundations, and their own alumni in obtaining gifts for their endowment. Today, all of those entities are bombarded with requests for donations, thus reducing the college's opportunity of obtaining significant gifts.

More than ever, institutions must be able to identify in clear and specific terms what significant donations mean to the school, the local community, and potentially the world as a whole. We understand that gifts often represent a significant portion of the funding for new and renovated facilities, and without them institutional advancement may slow.

OUR APPROACH

Davis Wince will work with the college's development group to help prospective donors understand how their gift could provide needed facilities to further promote the college's academic mission.

We believe that there is still a strong desire to be a part of the higher education community, particularly among alumni whose success has been directly tied to the education and experiences they received while in college.

The challenge is to create the right connection between the giver and the purpose for the gift. We can help you do that with respect to needed facilities.