

## **STANDARD EIGHT**

### **PHYSICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

#### **Overview**

The college owns approximately 480 acres of land in the town of Norton, Massachusetts, which is located 35 miles south of Boston and 15 miles northeast of Providence, Rhode Island. The campus provides a picturesque setting for engaging students in the intellectual and social life of the college and consists of more than 25 major buildings—including 17 student residence halls, two dining halls, Knapton and Meneely Halls (classroom and faculty office buildings), Cole Memorial Chapel, Science Center, Kollett Hall, Watson Fine Arts Center, Mars Arts and Humanities, Madeleine Clark Wallace '34 Library, Haas Athletic Center, Balfour-Hood Student Center, Old Town Hall Bookstore, Marshall Center for Intercultural Learning and the Presidents' House. In 2002 the expansion and renovation of the arts facilities was completed at a cost of approximately \$20 million, and in the same year a new residence hall with 100 beds was completed at a cost of approximately \$7 million. The current replacement value of the physical plant (including all buildings and mechanical infrastructure) is estimated to be in excess of \$200 million. Total gross square footage of all buildings exceeds 1 million.

#### **Description**

##### **Campus Master Plan**

The college's campus master plan has been updated within the past five years in consultation with William Rawn Associates, and it calls for the expansion and modernization of science facilities as a major and immediate institutional priority. This \$50 million project, under the supervision of a project management and consulting firm, has progressed through the construction drawings phase. Actual construction is dependent on a solid financing plan, both for short-term construction costs and long-term operating costs. Other major projects in the campus master plan include a new residence hall, a new wastewater treatment plant, and an outdoor recreation center (consisting of turf field surrounded by a track). Preliminary schematic plans have been developed for these projects, which currently are not progressing beyond the planning stage without further review and analysis. New parking lots consisting of approximately 270 spaces were constructed in 2008 in order to eliminate parking at the site designated for the expansion of science facilities. At this site the necessary relocation and replacement of underground utility systems have been completed.

##### **Facilities Maintenance**

Facilities maintenance is funded in accordance with a board-authorized resolution in which annual maintenance funding is to equal 1.8 percent of plant replacement value. Over the past five years (FY05 – FY09) annual budget allocations for maintenance averaged approximately \$3 million, though in the current economic climate this funding has been temporarily reduced to approximately \$1 million for FY10. In recent years maintenance projects have included major upgrades to the campus information network and electrical infrastructure, installation of more efficient lighting systems, the repaving of central walkways, renovation of the historic Presidents' House, and upgrades to the old wastewater treatment plant. Equipment replacement (scientific instruments, computers, residence hall furniture, vehicles, etc.) is largely dependent on one-time funds being approved each year and has been uneven and insufficient in recent years.

##### **Investment in Technological Resources**

Technological resources are increasingly important to the effective operation of educational programs and the broad range of services across campus. The SCT Banner system continues to be maintained and periodically upgraded to serve the needs of the college for an online integrated system serving finance, student services, advancement, etc. Classroom facilities have been provided with audiovisual and computer projection systems; there are 29 "smart" classrooms out of 39 (74 percent) and an additional 19 spaces fitted with such technology. In 2008 the entire campus became wireless as a result of support from a generous donor. Faculty use the Blackboard learning management system in support of instruction and are in the

process of migrating to Moodle an open-source new instructional support software system. The college's website has undergone extensive development as a result of establishing an Office of Web Strategy dedicated to improving the appearance and capability of the college's website and web-based services.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

Environmental sustainability is supported and advanced across campus in various ways, including a student residence established as an environmental theme house, student-sponsored panels and programs, an energy conservation project completed for four major buildings in consultation with Siemens Corporation, LEED certification planned for the science center project, a campus-wide recycling program, and the student-initiated and -run apple orchard project behind the Presidents' House. In the fall of 2008 the Sustainability Steering Committee was constituted to provide oversight through the Office of the President, by coordinating the existing student-initiated Sustainability Committee, a campus community committee of faculty, staff and students created in 2006, with the new Green Initiatives Committee formed and funded by the Student Government Association.

### **Campus Safety and Accessibility**

Campus security and accessibility continue to receive important college support. All student residence halls are fully equipped with sprinklers and undergo regular inspection by the Town of Norton Fire Department. Building alarm systems, parking lot video surveillance cameras, and emergency telephones on campus are regularly tested and periodically upgraded. In fiscal year 2008 an emergency notification system was installed, thereby enabling the college on short notice to distribute urgent messages to the campus community via telephone, email and text messages. In the summer of 2009 major system upgrades were carried out that provide services of card access; other upgrades support and monitor alarm systems across campus.

The college's Physical Plant Department (consisting of 73 full-time employees) and Public Safety Department (consisting of 11 full-time police officers, and 7 staff members including the director and assistant director) have positive working relationships with local officials. All building and occupancy codes are routinely incorporated into capital projects. The older buildings on campus are not fully accessible to the handicapped, but the college carefully monitors the needs of the handicapped to ensure these needs are met.

Emergency response plans and mock drills have better prepared the college to respond to emergencies. In August of 2003 a mock incident on campus involving a chemical spill at the Science Center was conducted with local fire and police departments, a local hospital and state agencies working with campus officials. In 2006 and 2007 divisions across campus developed emergency response flu pandemic plans. In April 2006 a regional emergency preparedness drill and workshop on flu pandemic was conducted on campus with approximately 200 participants representing police and fire departments, hospitals, and state agencies. Finally, internally the college maintains a critical incident team and is represented on the regional emergency planning committee.

### **Appraisal and Projection**

As the college addresses the immediate issues of diminishing resources and cost containment, primary consideration continues to focus on the need for solid financing plans for modernizing and expanding the college's science facilities. In addition, it is important that the college's physical and technological resources be maintained and enhanced in support of critical institutional priorities. There is an increasing need for a comprehensive, prioritized, multi-year set of plans for investing in and financing the maintenance and enhancement of the college's facilities and technologies, with such plans being integrated and consistent with strategic goals and priorities. Among the strategic planning milestones for FY10 is the development of such a comprehensive and prioritized list. The Trustee Facilities Subcommittee will continue to provide oversight on major facilities issues and plans and serve as a liaison to the Trustee Finance and Facilities Committee and the Board of Trustees. The President's Council, in consultation with others on campus, will play a

leadership role in clarifying facilities and technology needs and establishing priorities and corresponding sources of funding. The substantial lowering of funds for facilities maintenance in fiscal year 2010 provides only temporary budget relief and must be increased to levels necessary to support current and evolving program needs. The construction of a modern and safe science facility remains an urgent priority as efforts focus on establishing a solid financing plan. Reducing campus overcrowding in the student residence halls is anticipated by expanding somewhat our existing bed capacity without constructing a residence hall and by utilizing our resident facilities as efficiently as possible. The outdoor recreation center remains dependent on gift support. The eventual replacement of the wastewater treatment plant requires further comprehensive analysis of the option to build a new, shared facility constructed to serve the college along with the surrounding towns of Norton, Mansfield and Foxboro.

The value of Wheaton's campus arises from its unique combination of historic Georgian-style buildings studded with a growing number of modern facilities. What's more, the college's buildings are set in an attractive landscape containing an arboretum-quality collection of plantings. This environment, which represents an enormous asset, also presents challenges in maintaining older buildings, incorporating new technology and integrating environmental sustainability measures into the structures. The college anticipates that these will be recurring issues during the next decade.