

## VIII. PHYSICAL RESOURCES

### DESCRIPTION

Western New England College has occupied its present location at 1215 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, Massachusetts, since 1956. WNEC has grown from its initial size of 34 acres to the present size of 67 buildings (including houses and apartment units) on 140 acres. In addition, the College has approximately 75 acres of undeveloped land for future growth and expansion. There are 12 major buildings devoted to academic and administrative needs, 39 buildings (including apartment buildings, townhouse buildings, and residence halls) used for student housing, 2 buildings for sports and recreation, and 14 houses that have been converted to administrative, office, and service use.

In 1979, the College implemented a Facilities Master Plan designed to meet the needs of the College through the end of the 20th century. This plan, although periodically modified to reflect changing needs and priorities, was basically implemented in its entirety, including construction of the Healthful Living Center sports, recreation, and health facility in 1994.

In 2000, the College completed another Facilities Master Plan in conjunction with a professional facilities master-planning firm. The College appointed a Facilities Planning Committee, with campuswide representation, to work closely with the campus-planning consultant. The committee met regularly for a period of ten months in lengthy meetings to identify, discuss, and gain consensus on all elements of the planning process. The committee periodically presented recommendations to the Senior Staff, who acted as a steering committee to establish policy and priorities. The major priorities of this plan include the design and construction of a seven-building townhouse-style residential community for juniors and seniors (completed fall 2001); the design and construction of a new Admissions/Welcome Center to house the undergraduate admissions office, the adult and continuing education office, and the College main switchboard (commenced in 2001, scheduled completion in 2002); the design and construction of a new 60,000-square-foot academic building to house the Schools of Engineering and Business as well as laboratories, classrooms, and faculty offices; the construction of a 50,000-square-foot addition to the School of Law; the construction of a 20,000-square-foot addition to the Campus Center; the construction of a 3,600-square-foot addition to D'Amour Library; the construction of three additional perimeter commuter and resident student parking lots; the construction of five additional athletic fields for varsity and intramural sports; the possible construction of additional undergraduate housing; the remodeling of the old Rivers Gym into a performing arts center; and the construction of an interior campus loop road system to improve efficiency and enhance traffic flow.

Space allocation, space planning, and equipment planning functions are generally completed by committee, including the appropriate administrative, purchasing, facilities, and academic personnel. The College has recently purchased space-planning software, which will allow in-house personnel to design or modify existing, new, or renovated space, including the virtual placement of furniture.

All campus buildings are inspected annually by the College's insurance carrier. Reports are prepared and necessary corrective action and recommended actions are included. The Facilities Management Department is then charged with the ongoing task of immediately implementing any necessary corrective action and of fully evaluating and implementing recommended action as appropriate.

The College's policies and practices on building maintenance reserves and schedules ensure that resources are available for long-term needs. The maintenance and housekeeping programs are designed to prevent the deterioration of the facilities and make them as useful as possible for their intended purposes. The staff receives on-the-job training as needed. Student workers are utilized to round out the existing staff and are assigned to work with more experienced full-time co-workers.

No buildings are leased to serve the on-campus program; however, laboratory and administrative space was leased to the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences until late in 2000. The off-campus program leases classroom and office space from local schools and businesses at various sites throughout the state. In each of these lease arrangements, the College is not responsible for any maintenance or upkeep of the leased properties. There are no formal contractual arrangements with other institutions of higher education for the use of their facilities.

The Facilities Management Department Staff consists of 99 employees, broken down into the following specific categories: Administrative, Buildings and Grounds, Housekeeping, Telecommunications, and HVAC.

Improvements to campus security include the addition of five security cameras to the Gateway Village complex as well as three additional cameras on or around the LaRiviere Center. Emergency telephone locations have been increased campuswide to a total of 18. A card access system has been added to all buildings, allowing for additional security. A uniformed bike patrol has also been established to better cover the interior campus areas, not easily accessed by vehicle. The Public Safety Department conforms rigidly to the Clery Act (Right to Know) and provides a detailed annual report, as required by law, to the Department of Education every October. This report includes a detailed summary of the previous year's criminal statistics pertaining to the College campus.

The Public Safety Department has implemented several public awareness programs, which are designed to increase both student and faculty/staff awareness of potential dangers facing individuals on a college campus. Public Safety Awareness Week is held each year, with daily programs conducted, each focusing on a different aspect of personal safety and security. E-mails, safety tips flyers, and displays are also used to reinforce the importance of personal safety. In addition, Safety Awareness Programs are conducted for students in each residence hall at the beginning of each school year, focusing on wise and unwise safety/security-related practices.

Two pedestrian crossings have been established on the main road to the campus. Signage and flashing lights have been added to allow students to cross with safety in mind. The City of Springfield has recently approved the installation of a new traffic light at the intersection of Park Lane (Gateway Apartments main entrance) and Wilbraham Road.

The consulting firm, GZA Associates, has been hired to help the College achieve and maintain EPA and OSHA compliance. An Environmental Compliance Committee comprised of Deans, department heads, and Vice Presidents has been formed to control and monitor the compliance program. The College has joined and become an active participant in the New England Region One Regulatory Compliance Consortium, comprised of New England college and university officials and Region One EPA officials. Bi-monthly meetings are held to jointly work toward the ultimate goal of full compliance by all regional members.

## **APPRAISAL**

The strengths of the institution with respect to physical facilities are the campus' abundant acreage that affords protection and room for expansion; a well-devised Master Plan that is being carried out; modern buildings and ever-improving technologies that are adequate for the academic programs and student services; and sound financial management practices that protect the appearance and life of the physical facilities.

Based on research conducted as part of the Facilities Master Plan, the present number of classrooms and laboratories on campus is more than adequate, but tightly scheduled from mid-morning to mid-afternoon.

There are no major shortcomings in either buildings or equipment available on the College campus. Facilities are adequate for effective and efficient educational and extracurricular programs. The Facilities Planning process did identify future building and program projects.

Parking, which was previously thought by students to be inadequate, has been thoroughly researched as part of the Facilities Master Planning process, and the findings indicate that there are more than adequate parking spaces to handle the traffic load. Surplus spaces range anywhere from 100 to 150 at any point in time. The only negative aspect to the current parking system and inventory is the location of some of the parking lots. With the rapid expansion and growth of the College, many parking areas, which were once located on the perimeter, are now located in the central area of the campus.

Available workspace is good or adequate in all of the student services areas on campus except in the Writing and Reading Center, where there is a shortage of private consultation space and staff office space. Storage space is somewhat limited for each of the Student Services areas, and Student Disability Services could make use of some additional space for a private waiting area. Many of these space concerns have been addressed as part of the recently completed Facilities Master Planning process.

Accessibility, including general handicapped accessibility, is considered good in most areas surveyed. Wheelchair access to the Counseling Center, Diversity Programs/Services, and Career & Human Resources, all located in the campus center, exists, but is somewhat inconvenient for lone wheelchair users. With the new expansion wing that will be added to the campus center (in the near future) as part of the Master Plan, these access difficulties will be fully addressed. Where this inconvenience exists on other areas of the campus, the College has begun a program of installing automatic door openers, which can be activated by a wheelchair user without assistance.

Occasional complaints are received about minor housekeeping items such as stained carpets, public area trash can odors, and wet floors during periods of rain or snow. Hot or cold HVAC calls are also occasionally received, but are dealt with promptly and effectively. The majority of service calls received are from the residence halls. Overall, the Housekeeping, HVAC, and Buildings and Grounds departments provide excellent service to the College community as a whole. There is no deferred maintenance, and as a result, there is no backlog of maintenance items or projects that should have already been completed. With summer programs/conferences consistently on the increase, coordination of the logistics of normal maintenance is sometimes difficult. Through careful planning and thorough communication with all involved, operations are expected to be efficient.

Of the 99 employees of the Facilities Management Department, 10 are supervisory personnel, which provides for an adequate supervisor-employee ratio. Staff turnover is less than several years ago, which provides for a much more experienced, reliable, and stable department.

The College continues to improve campus security. As part of the installation of a traffic light at the intersection of Park Lane, a new campus main entrance will be created opposite Park Lane, and an electronically controlled pedestrian crossing will be constructed. This site improvement will greatly enhance both pedestrian and vehicular traffic safety along the main artery through the College campus.

There has been and continues to be excellent institutional financial support for the ongoing facilities operating and maintenance functions. In addition to an adequate annual operating budget, the College annually sets aside approximately \$1.5 million in funds for capital improvements/projects, to insure that the College does not require deferred maintenance. The College has no maintenance backlog, and is committed to making sure that there is none in the near and distant future.

The College continues to pursue sound energy management, utility purchasing, and heating and lighting programs, as evidenced by the cutting-edge geothermal heating/cooling system installed in the new Evergreen Village Townhouse complex. This system is energy efficient, environmentally sound, and will drastically reduce the utility consumption for a significant portion of our Residence Life Community.

Although classroom and laboratory availability is quite good, some of the classrooms on campus have not had technology upgrades. The Office of Information Technology is in the process of upgrading the technology in all classrooms on the main campus. In the interim, the College has a wide variety of mobile technology equipment, which can be moved from room to room and building to building as needed.

Occasional complaints are received about the lighting levels in two of the tiered classrooms in the LaRiviere Center, and frequent complaints are received from those areas on campus that are not air-conditioned. Major progress on the latter complaint will be made in the near future when air-conditioning will be installed in Herman Hall.

Some progress has been made in areas of Environmental Regulatory Compliance since the program's inception in 1999. A uniform and restricted product-purchasing plan is in place, and some staff training has commenced.

### **PROJECTION**

With the planned facility expansions and new construction specified in the Master Plan, additional staff should be added to Buildings and Grounds, Housekeeping, and HVAC to properly and effectively handle the additional facilities workload.

Parking issues have been addressed in the long-range Facilities Master Plan, which provides for the relocation of interior parking lots to the perimeter areas of the campus.

The College is working to improve handicapped accessibility to a few of the older buildings on campus. Until these areas are appropriately modified, classes are moved when necessary to rooms that are fully handicapped accessible.

There is lack of natural lighting in a few classrooms that are located in basement areas. Efforts continue to find better alternative lighting.

There is a lack of Internet capabilities in a few classrooms on campus. Good progress continues to be made in bringing Internet service to all areas of the campus.

At the present time, Western New England College is not yet 100 percent EPA and OSHA compliant. The College plans to budget funds to employ a Compliance/Safety Officer for the 2002-2003 year. Once a plan is adopted, staff training should begin, particularly for standard labeling, handling, and storage of chemicals.