LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am pleased to present the 2016 Master Plan for The University of Southern Mississippi’s Gulf Park campus. I am confident that this plan will contribute to the success of our students, faculty, and staff as we work to advance the teaching, research, and service goals of the University.

Our experiences are shaped by the environments in which we live, work, and grow. As such, facilities and campus planning processes play critical roles in the growth and development of our institution. Facility construction, design, and functionality contribute to our ability to thrive in the world around us, and appropriate facility development and utilization are key components in student recruitment and welfare, effective pedagogy and research, and workplace productivity.

The 2016 Master Plan is the first plan for the Gulf Park campus since 2012. While we have made much progress in the past four years, much work is still to be done. Creating a sustainable campus, fostering an inspirational environment, and developing facilities to support student success are all key principles of this new plan. The plan also prepares for future growth; supports greater integration of accessibility and sustainability principles; and incorporates our institutional focus on six key priorities:

1. Ensuring Student Success
2. Expanding Enrollment Strategies
3. Enhancing Academic Instruction
4. Fostering Greater Focus on Research
5. Bolstering Economic and Community Partnerships
6. Maximizing Human Potential

With the adoption of this plan, I am confident that we will move toward providing enhanced student resource space; laboratory and research facilities; study areas; instructional spaces; executive education opportunities; health and wellness services; state-of-the-art technology for offices and classrooms; beautiful outdoor spaces; and effective traffic flow patterns, both for pedestrian and vehicle safety.

I appreciate the hard work of the committee members who partnered with Sasaki Associates, Inc. to craft the new Master Plan for the Gulf Park campus and the willingness of our campus community to engage in the process through providing valuable feedback and input. I look forward to our future as we continue to align facilities with institutional goals and work to meet the needs of our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community.

Rodney D. Bennett
President
INTRODUCTION
The University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Park Campus, Existing Conditions
PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

“Education is an endeavor that is most sensitive to ambience; students respond all their lives to memories of the place that nourished their intellectual growth.”

– Thomas A. Gaines

The master plan for The University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Park Campus (Gulf Park) provides a guide for the growth and enhancement of the Gulf Park campus. The plan responds to the mission, vision and values of the University and is informed by the history and context of the region and the campus. This section provides an overview of the significant drivers for the planning process.

As the only public university on Mississippi’s Gulf Coast, the Gulf Park campus plays an important role in the region. The University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Park Campus is the only beachfront campus in the state. With more than 800 courses offered at the Gulf Park campus and other teaching and research sites on the Gulf Coast (more than 600 at Gulf Park alone), students have access to bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral programs in more than 50 distinct academic fields, including 25 master’s and six PhD programs. Flexible course scheduling with evening classes and online options further expand the accessibility of higher education.

The master plan for The University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Park Campus is driven by the aspirations and needs of the students, faculty and staff that come to campus each day. The proposed projects, frameworks and implementation strategies set forth in this plan are intended to enhance the campus experience for current and future members of the campus community. Creating a sustainable campus, an inspirational environment and facilities that support student success are all major tenets of the master plan.
UNIVERSITY VISION

The University of Southern Mississippi aspires to be a model student-centered public research university that prepares students to thrive in a global society by providing high quality programs and transformative experiences in a community distinguished by inclusiveness.

PLANNING VISION

The planning vision directly responds to the needs of the University in its role as the only comprehensive doctoral and research-driven university on Mississippi’s Gulf Coast. The plan

- Creates a strong sense of place for the campus, taking into consideration the unique coastal setting and the responsibility that comes with that special location.

- Provides for academic program growth in areas that will help the University’s mix of traditional and non-traditional students succeed on campus and after graduation.

- Encourages student success through the creation of student life facilities that support new and existing student service programs.
THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Gulf Coast region is still recovering and rebuilding following the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. On campus, significant damage to buildings and infrastructure necessitated the temporary relocation of University operations to other area facilities, but Gulf Park has recently completed rebuilding efforts. New and renovated buildings continue in the Spanish-style architecture for which the campus is known. The University now has the opportunity to look ahead to the future, planning for program growth and evolution as well as physical improvements to the campus. This plan enhances the University’s physical identity and programmatic aspirations and involves strategies for establishing a more resilient campus.
THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

A regional sustainability plan was completed for Mississippi’s Gulf Coast region in 2013. The economic development and workforce subcommittee identified several growth industries for the region: aerospace and defense; administrative and support; arts, entertainment and recreation; educational services; energy; health care and social assistance; marine science; metal fabrication; polymers; tourism; and warehouse and distribution (Regional Economic Development Assessment, p. 21).

Regional unemployment has been historically low, as the area economy is fairly diverse. However, Hurricane Katrina caused unemployment rates to rise, and as rebuilding efforts ultimately coincided with the national recession in 2007 and 2008, recovery was slow. By 2012, unemployment began to recede, with full recovery forecasted for 2018 (Regional Economic Development Assessment p. 7). As employers in the region rebuild, they will need to hire trained employees to fully recover. The University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Park Campus is well-positioned to nimbly respond to the employee training needs of the region. The master plan includes new facilities and expansions to existing facilities for programs that prepare students for employment in the region.

The Port of Gulfport is undergoing revitalization efforts to become a designated strategic port and one of the country’s top-tier diversified ports.

Photo credit: Maritime Reporter
Target Industries

- Aerospace and Defense
- Data and Call Centers
- Metal Fabrication
- Polymers
- Warehouse and Distribution
CAMPUS GROWTH

The University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Park Campus has seen a steady growth in enrollment since becoming a four-year institution in 2002. Historically serving non-traditional part-time students who are older and have some work experience (and perhaps full-time jobs), the campus has recently seen an increase in the matriculation of traditional students pursuing degrees full-time. As this trend is expected to continue, strategic investment in facilities will be required in order to meet the diverse needs of traditional and nontraditional students alike.

Some enrollment growth is driven by regional economic trends. Many high paying jobs in regional industries are increasingly requiring education beyond high school. This has encouraged more residents to pursue an education on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Other growth has come from outside of the region, as highly-rated specialized programs in marine science and clinical psychology are attracting students from across the country. International students have also bolstered recent enrollment growth, as students from India and China seek American educations. The master plan is designed to accommodate enrollment of 5,000 traditional and nontraditional, domestic, and international students, addressing the needs of each group.
IDENTITY AND FLEXIBILITY

The University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Park Campus exemplifies the character of the region, with gracious Southern live oak trees framing views of the Gulf of Mexico from many vantage points. This setting, coupled with a uniform Spanish architectural style replete with stucco buildings and red tile roofs, gives the campus a cohesive identity. The unified sense of place and strong character are important in attracting prospective students and faculty members to campus, creating an academic atmosphere for the campus community and welcoming people of the region to participate in seminars and executive education programs.

The campus master plan establishes guidelines for future development that enhance the beauty of the natural surroundings, are connected by logical circulation flows, and support a vibrant social fabric. The key to this is creating frameworks for campus systems, including landscape, mobility and development, that are rooted in the contextual natural and social nuances of the University campus. Collectively, the frameworks ensure that adjustments can be made as need and funding arises and that new projects contribute to a cohesive and sustainable campus that enhances the experience of University students, faculty and staff.

The Friendship Oak tree is over 500 years old. It has withstood countless hurricanes and storms and is viewed daily by tourists.
GOALS + OBJECTIVES

The plan is based on the following goals and objectives, identified in conjunction with the University community:

**DELIVER STATE-OF-THE-ART LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

Correct facility deficiencies limiting operational effectiveness

Address future academic initiatives and provide requisite capacity in outstanding facilities that meet the unique requirements of a diverse student body and contribute to student success

**PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE AESTHETICS OF THE EXISTING CAMPUS**

Utilize a cohesive palette of materials for buildings and outdoor environments that are appropriate for the climate and region

Protect and enhance unique natural features that shape the campus character
PROMOTE A SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT CAMPUS

Use landscape amenities to provide protection during weather events as well as shade for the campus

Build new facilities outside of flood plains and using flood- and wind-resistant building techniques and materials

Develop on disturbed land before developing undisturbed land

PROVIDE COST-EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS TO ENSURE LONG-TERM VALUE

Maximize the intrinsic value of existing land and facility resources

Obtain requisite funding from university, state, federal and private sources over the next 10 years to implement identified development plans.
PLANNING VISION

A diverse array of building projects and landscape improvements are designed to contribute to an integrated vision for the campus. In this section, these individual projects are described in the context of the plan goals and objectives: promote a sustainable and resilient campus; deliver state-of-the-art learning environments; and preserve and protect the aesthetics of the existing campus. Individually and collectively, the projects are designed to meet the fourth goal: provide cost-effective solutions to ensure long-term value.

This chapter addresses:

- Sustainability and resilience
- Learning environments
- Aesthetics of the campus
Preserve flood plain

Wooded areas

Protect the bayou

Bioswales

East-west orientation

Elevated structure

Preserve flood plain
A sustainable and resilient approach to campus growth and development ensures that limited natural and economic resources are conserved. This approach includes protecting campus facilities from flood damage, which can have associated health and economic costs, reducing the economic and environmental costs associated with constructing and operating campus facilities, and preserving undeveloped land, which protects habitats and reduces the costs associated with expanding campus infrastructure. The campus also serves as an example for the community, promoting sustainability and resilience beyond the campus border.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
Retaining water from rainfall on campus using bioswales reduces the environmental impact of the campus. Similarly, tree canopies capture and absorb stormwater before it hits paved surfaces and becomes runoff. Implementing these strategic stormwater management tactics in impervious paved parking areas reduces stormwater runoff and the risk of pollution. Both of these strategies also help reduce the risk of flood debris polluting the surrounding water bodies during storm events.

STORM-RESISTANT CONSTRUCTION
Advantageous building sites outside of the flood plain in the north half of campus help to ensure facilities are not damaged during most storm events. Storm-resistant materials and construction strategies are recommended to further reduce the risk of damage. Strategies include elevating buildings a few feet above ground, using water-resistant materials that are less likely to be damaged by water, and elevating equipment such as HVAC systems and other costly equipment.

In the event that a new building is elevated so high as to allow people to stand beneath it, the area beneath the building can be occupiable space, such as a landscaped plaza for outdoor gathering and study environments.

SOLAR ORIENTATION
Passive and active solar strategies can improve energy efficiency and human comfort. By orienting buildings along an east-west axis across campus (along the Academic Promenade), buildings can best take advantage of passive solar heating in the winter when the sun is lower in the sky and enters into building windows, and reject the heat in the summer when the sun is higher in the sky and reflects off of the roof. This helps reduce the operating costs of the facilities, as less energy is required to keep the buildings comfortable for occupants. Employing this strategy at Gulf Park also enables buildings to be oriented towards the Gulf, taking advantage of the views.

LAND PRESERVATION
The northeast edge of campus, east of Beach Park Place, is a uniquely undeveloped parcel in the suburban fabric of Long Beach. Protecting undisturbed land from development ensures that natural systems such as the Bear Point Bayou remain intact and have adequate area to ebb and flow during storm events.
LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Learning occurs in a range of formal and informal campus environments with traditional instructional spaces such as classrooms, lecture halls, and laboratories serving as the academic core for any University. Student success on campus, measured by retention and graduation rates, academic performance, and reported well-being, is heightened when there is a strong, comprehensive student life program. Extracurricular spaces give students access to supportive resources, help students build relationships with peers and mentors, and encourage a holistic approach to positive lifestyle choices. These spaces are particularly important for campuses with a high percentage of commuter students; they raise awareness of available resources, provide space for community building, and other functions traditionally held by residence halls. The proposed projects listed here respond to existing facility deficiencies and address future academic initiatives by providing future capacity:

STUDENT RESOURCE CENTER

A new Student Resource Center (SRC) provides a major contribution to the Gulf Park campus. Staff offices serve as a central location where students access resources such as tutoring, career development, and advising. Non-scheduled classrooms provide dedicated space for employer lunch-and-learns, skills lessons, and small lectures. Student organization office spaces encourage broader participation in campus life and enhance campus leadership opportunities and offerings. The SRC also provides commuter students with a place to sit and study between classes, get something to eat or drink, and interact with other students, faculty and staff. Providing commuter students with a space to spend time on campus helps them create a support network that enhances their academic experience, builds a rich and robust campus community, and enables them to spend time focusing on their studies.

SCIENCE BUILDING EXPANSION

A planned expansion to the Science Building provides space needed today for science faculty offices, laboratories, and classrooms. The expansion also allows the College of Science and Technology to grow, a boon given that the projected economic growth areas in the region are concentrated in science and technology. Additionally, renovations to the campus greenhouse make it a viable place for instruction and hands-on learning opportunities, furthering program offerings in this growing field.

EXECUTIVE EDUCATION CENTER

A new Executive Education Center with sweeping views of the Gulf of Mexico provides space to enhance and expand academic program offerings and provide a revenue stream for Gulf Park. Currently, conferences and programs are limited in size based on the capacity of rooms in Hardy Hall. Events in Hardy Hall are also disruptive to the normal administrative and student-life functions of the building. The elevated Executive Education Center has two stories. On the ground level, a landscaped patio serves as a gathering area, entrance way, and, when necessary, a space for floodwater to flow with minimal damage to the building. On the elevated first floor, up to 500 people can be seated at tables in a room equipped with presentation technology, a catering kitchen, and storage. The second story of the building has conference rooms and classrooms. This building allows executive education and distance-learning graduate programs to have periodic on-campus sessions, enabling nontraditional students to benefit from the networking opportunities and relationships that are an important part of the educational experience. The space also serves as a conference venue, heightening the relationship between the city and the University and providing a source of income for the University.
LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS (CONT.)

FUTURE ACADEMIC GROWTH

When needed, future academic space needs will be accommodated in several ways. The Barber Building will be replaced with a larger academic building that efficiently utilizes the site area and serves as a beacon and gateway from the historic campus core to the academic core at the north ends of campus. This new building is appropriate for a large academic program or entire college or division.

Additional large-scale academic growth can be accommodated on present-day surface parking lots that frame the campus, or on acquired parcels along Beach Park Place. Any redeveloped surface parking will be replaced at the periphery of campus.

Smaller programmatic needs are accommodated in single-family homes on Beach Park Place that today house the Fitness Center, Health Center, and the School of Social Work. They enable smaller programs to have dedicated space. These smaller buildings are also useful as administrative offices.

WELLNESS CENTER

In response to potential enrollment increases, a new Wellness Center provides indoor fitness facilities, comprehensive health and counseling services, and instructional space for health and fitness education. The new center accommodates enrollment growth, as existing facilities are already at or exceeding capacity. The new center replaces distributed facilities. The Wellness Center is located to take advantage of existing adjacent outdoor tennis and basketball courts and a proposed mile-long fitness trail through campus. The central location of the facility also enables it to serve students, faculty, and staff at the Institute for Disability Studies located in the nearby Technology Learning Center.

HOUSING

Though Southern Miss Gulf Park has not traditionally had a residential life component on campus, demand for on-campus or near-campus housing is growing as students matriculate from outside the region. A pilot international student recruitment program demonstrated the need for housing provided or recommended by the University, as searching for housing proved to be a large burden for that group. Incorporating residential life into the campus benefits not only the students who reside there, but also the larger population who benefit from engaging with a more diverse student body. Student housing can also help ease the transition into adulthood for students originating within the region, and students who live on campus or adjacent to campus receive, on average, better grades and have higher participation in campus life. Between semesters, housing can also facilitate participation in low residency graduate and executive education programs, enabling distance learners to spend some time on campus during their education at Southern Miss.
AESTHETICS OF THE CAMPUS

Landscape improvement projects enhance the collegiate feeling of the campus. This is often an intangible quality, but it plays an important role in attracting faculty and students, and is necessary for University growth and success. Additionally, campus landscapes are pivotal components of the environment and encourage the collaboration that is so important in contemporary academic pedagogy.

Key to the success of these efforts is the creation of a unified design strategy for the campus, including building elements and landscape materials that are appropriate for the climate and region. Specific material palettes will be selected at the next phase of work, however they should complement existing contributing buildings and landscapes.

**SHARED PLAZAS**

Shaded plazas produce cost-effective places for students to study, create a cohesive campus landscape element, and serve as symbols of academia in highly-visible places along the pedestrian promenades. These areas could also be utilized for extracurricular lectures or other formal learning sessions, taking advantage of the warm climate.

The west facade of Elizabeth Hall is well-suited for a shaded plaza. Expanding the existing entryway creates a highly visible outdoor gathering space in the existing campus core, conveniently located to the offices and classrooms in Elizabeth Hall and adjacent Lloyd Hall.

In between the Science Building and the future academic building to the east, a shaded plaza provides a gathering space on the western side of campus. Located adjacent to the life sciences facilities (Science Building, Technology Learning Center, and Nursing Building), it provides a gathering space for students, faculty, and staff with shared interests.

The former Administration Building Plaza was preserved as a remnant of the facility lost during Hurricane Katrina and serves as a central gathering space on campus, made hospitable by shade structures reminiscent of the building’s original facade. Not tied to a specific academic program, it is ideal for campus-wide events.

**QUADRANGLES**

Campus quadrangles serve as places for community activities, individual studying, formal extracurricular events, and informal gathering. The quintessential campus landscape shapes the campus identity and supports a holistic student experience.

The Academic Quad is a vibrant hub at the center of campus academic buildings. Part of the public realm, it is distinctly part of the American collegiate landscape. It enables members of the campus community and visitors to seamlessly join the bustle of the campus and gives passers-by a glimpse of campus life from Beach Park Place.

Replacing parking at the center of campus with the Coastal Quad creates a unique place for campus events, with the Gulf serving as a stunning backdrop. It also serves to sustain activity in the historic campus core, as other academic programs shift north.

**PROMENADES**

The Academic Promenade provides a physical and visual connection between the Nursing Building on the far west of campus to the School of Social Work building across Beach Park Place.

The Coastal Promenade connects the historic heart of campus with the new academic core, and provides much-needed clarity to the pedestrian network, with a dramatic view south to the coast.
PLANNED PROJECTS

Student Resource Center
Physical Plant Complex
University Police Department
Science Building expansion
Executive Education Center
Academic quadrangle
Academic promenade
Coastal quadrangle
Coastal promenade
Student housing
Wellness Center
City transit stop
Fitness trail
Future academic buildings
The master plan provides a comprehensive guide for incremental changes to the Gulf Park campus. To provide flexibility to accommodate emerging needs, the plan is structured around three physical frameworks: landscape, mobility, and development. Collectively, these frameworks protect and enhance the campus landscape, create a campus-wide mobility system, and site new buildings to take advantage of programmatic adjacencies and visual connections to the water and landscape. Programmatic changes to specific buildings or landscapes are easily accommodated as the needs of the University evolve.

The following introduces the frameworks. They are subsequently described in more detail.

The landscape framework responds to the hydrological, ecological, and atmospheric systems on campus. It enhances natural habitats and promotes ecological function and creates open space amenities that are comfortable places where people can enjoy a variety of activities. The landscape framework also begins to inform the character of spaces at the intersection of the landscape framework and the mobility framework, including recommendations for human comfort along mobility networks.
MOBILITY

The mobility framework establishes pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicular networks. These forms of movement work as a system, enabling people to use multiple modes of transportation to get to and around campus. The pedestrian network connects to bicycle, transit, and vehicular networks at strategic points, prioritizing pedestrian safety and enabling drivers to park their cars and easily walk around campus. The mobility framework complements the landscape framework, respecting the boundaries of habitats and ecological systems.

DEVELOPMENT

The campus development framework includes existing buildings and future development sites, identified for their appropriate size and position in relationship to other buildings. It also responds to the landscape framework and the mobility framework. The development framework complements the landscape framework by providing a structure for formal open spaces, and the mobility framework connects buildings to other areas of campus. The development framework also begins to suggest the capacity of the existing campus, with some flexibility for new building heights and exact building footprints.
HYDROLOGY

Hydrology is the defining landscape component for the Gulf Coast region. The regional economy relies heavily on the Port of Gulfport, marine science, fishing, and waterfront tourism. Water bodies also play an important role in ecological function and natural habitat. Water is part of daily life on the Gulf Coast, and its natural beauty is celebrated with waterfront views from campus whenever possible.

Water can also pose a risk to nearby development, causing mild to severe flood damage during storm events. Flood plains and stream buffers are respected in the framework to reduce the risk of loss or damage and protect natural habitats.

HYDROLOGY FRAMEWORK

- **Bayou**
- **Flood Zone “A”**
- **Flood Zone “V”**
GULF OF MEXICO

Set against the Gulf of Mexico, many places on campus enjoy views of the Gulf, which peers through the iconic Southern live oak trees along the South Lawn of the campus. While beautiful, the proximity to the water can be a hazard to the campus, as much of the southern portion lies within the flood plain. Buildings in this area are at risk of being damaged or destroyed during major storm events, as has happened several times in the campus’s history.

In order to showcase the ocean views and take advantage of the connection to the coast, buildings and interior spaces are oriented toward the Gulf. However, to minimize risk of flood damage, the flood plain is largely devoid of new development. In the case of new development within the flood plain, proposed buildings are elevated. The plan delicately balances the amenities offered and the risks associated with the coastal location.

BEAR POINT BAYOU

Bear Point Bayou contributes to the idyllic campus setting, flowing south across campus before releasing into the Gulf. In addition to the experiential benefits of the bayou, its natural habitat provides opportunities for learning and research. Students and faculty have recently begun testing water quality in partnership with the Audubon Society and the Nature Conservancy, with the aim of protecting the wildlife and restoring the water ecosystem.

In order to protect this natural resource, new campus development is sited away from Bear Point Bayou and its banks. This will help preserve fragile habitats, protect against stream bank erosion, and reduce the likelihood that stormwater runoff from buildings contaminates the bayou and the Gulf. Shielding the area from development also protects any potential new buildings; the bayou is in a flood plain, making development at risk during storm events.
CLIMATE

Defined by temperature, vegetation, and habitat, the campus climate informs the landscape framework in several ways. Mississippi’s warm temperatures provide an opportunity to extend campus life outdoors, with consideration for human comfort on the hottest days. Iconic and unique vegetation such as the Southern live oak trees contribute to the character of the campus, giving it a strong identity.

TEMPERATURE

During the fall and spring semesters, average outdoor daily temperatures are often within comfortable ranges. Proposed patios adjacent to academic buildings and landscaped quadrangles contribute to the campus character and expand study and socializing space at lower cost than construction of indoor space. Shade structures, trellises, and umbrellas extend the amount of time outdoor seating areas can be used.

Trees planted along pedestrian pathways and near bus stops help prevent people from overheating on the hottest days. They also provide a visual guide for pedestrians, cyclists, and transportation riders. This can encourage people to use these modes of transportation, reducing dependency on personal automobiles.
Trees are planted along pedestrian pathways to provide shade and improve human comfort, as well as increase visual appeal and connections across campus. Southern live oaks are kept away from pathways to minimize obstructions to pedestrians from low-hanging branches.

**VEGETATION + HABITAT**

Iconic Southern live oak trees shade the campus south of Bear Point Bayou and are a defining element of the campus character. The long branches of the trees extend downwards and can touch the ground before climbing up again, creating a wide canopy and relatively low center of gravity. The expansive root systems also grow deep and wide. These features are crucial to their survival during high winds and flooding during hurricanes. Live oaks can also serve as a buffer and provide protection for buildings and structures during storm events.

Most of the live oak trees are located at the southern edge of campus and dot the landscape between Hardy Hall, Lloyd Hall, and Gulf Coast Library. Their canopies provide dappled shade, though low-hanging branches across pathways can be obstacles for pedestrians. They are well-suited to provide shade and storm protection at the southern edge of campus and should be protected from removal. Their branching pattern necessitates that other native tree species be planted along pathways to provide shade necessary for comfort.
CAMPUS LANDSCAPES

The master plan defines several iconic open spaces. Individually, these campus landscapes provide specific amenities for the campus community. Collectively, they create a sense of place, providing memorable connections between buildings, pathways, and natural features.

SOUTH LAWN

Shaded by a continuous canopy of characteristic live oak trees, a natural park setting serves as the tranquil front door to the University. This environment provides a relaxing space for learning and socializing and connects and protects important ecosystems. Removing vestigial vehicular circulation on Friendship Oak Circle will extend and enhance the character of this serene and functional landscape to Bear Point Bayou, another natural landscape corridor which extends across campus and the wooded northeast corner. Over time, property acquisition on Highway 90 east of Beach Park Place will extend the South Lawn and serve as a gracious entrance to the proposed Executive Education Center.

The park-like setting at the front door of the campus presents an identifying gateway for visitors and welcomes members of the campus community into the academic setting each day.
LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK

Informal landscape

Formal landscape
ACADEMIC QUAD

The traditional “campus quad” serves as a community activity node and organizes the north campus buildings: the Business and Health Building, the Fleming Education Center, and the proposed Student Resource Center. The scale and expanse of a traditional college quad heightens the gravitas of the surrounding academic buildings and provides Gulf Park with the traditional college landscape befitting of the institution. The academic quad provides space for organized and impromptu gatherings and events, important components of a holistic academic experience critical for student success. Due to the warm climate of the Gulf Coast, the quad will be an active landscape for much of the academic year, particularly if the area is part of the campus-wide shade strategy, including trees, trellises, umbrellas and portcullises.

COASTAL QUAD

The Coastal Quad, flanked by the Gulf Coast Library to the north and Elizabeth Hall and Lloyd Hall to the east, is a gathering space for studying and socializing. The Coastal Quad extends the library environment outside, presenting scholars with inspiring views of the water. The Coastal Quad also serves as a formally landscaped event space, convenient to the administrative offices in Hardy Hall to the west.

The FEC parking lot is sited in the middle of several classroom buildings but offers no place for students, faculty, and staff to interact as they pass each other. It is replaced by the Academic Quad in the plan.

A landscaped quad provides a comfortable and beautiful place for students to gather between classes.
OUTDOOR LEARNING PLAZAS

Outdoor plazas shaded by trellises or umbrellas and furnished with movable tables and chairs give people a comfortable place to study, hold meetings, or even conduct lessons. Designed with similar aesthetic qualities, outdoor plazas can be constructed adjacent to existing buildings, new buildings, or as standalone features, and give the campus a cohesive design element.

PROMENADES

As significant pedestrian connections with wide pathways, special attention to landscape detail, rotating art installations, and occasional seating, promenades serve as the intersection of the landscape framework and the mobility framework. The **Academic Promenade** is the major east-west campus axis, connecting the Nursing Building in the west to the east side of Beach Park Place. Running adjacent to the Academic Quad, the Academic Promenade will serve as a vibrant social space on campus where students, faculty, and staff can enjoy spontaneous conversations as they move from place to place. The **Coastal Promenade** serves as the major north-south axis on campus. It connects the academic buildings at the north edge of campus to the historic core, welcoming pedestrians with a view of the Gulf of Mexico.

The parking on Friendship Oak Circle dominates the campus core landscape, provides inefficient parking, and is an unsafe pedestrian environment. It is replaced by the Coastal Quad in the plan.

The Coastal Quad is a space for formal and informal socializing, with stunning views of the Gulf of Mexico.
MOBILITY FRAMEWORK

PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

The proposed pedestrian paths serve as the primary campus circulation framework. At a minimum, each new pathway begins and ends at a campus destination such as a building, landscaped outdoor area, or parking lot and is universally accessible to all people. This encourages a pedestrian-oriented campus and creates an environment where students, faculty, and staff can meet and interact outside of traditional formal instruction environments. In addition to the landscaped promenades, which form the spines of the pedestrian network, major and minor pathways connect pedestrians across campus.

MAJOR PATHWAYS

Major pathways link major campus destinations and feed into the promenades. As wide pathways, they predominantly serve to convey people from one place to the next and are lined with shade trees for comfort and may be lined with additional plantings near building entrances.

MINOR PATHWAYS

Minor pathways link buildings, secondary campus destinations, or provide connections between major pathways; they may not have distinctive landscaping beyond shade trees for comfort. The proposed pedestrian network provides clarity for pedestrians, as changes in building sites are accompanied by modifications to minor pathways.

Existing pathways terminate at vacant building sites, turn abruptly, and are obstructed by low-hanging branches.

Promenades create a universally-designed social corridor across campus, add definition to landscaped spaces, and provide shade and comfort for pedestrians. (University of Texas at Austin (c) Sasaki)
PLANNED PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

- Promenade
- Major pedestrian pathway
- Minor pedestrian pathway
- Interior circulation connections
BICYCLE NETWORK

Cycling is becoming an increasingly popular mode of transportation and form of exercise nationwide. Though bicycles are not presently a popular form of transportation to or around campus, bicycle infrastructure is included in the campus mobility framework in anticipation of an increase in the number of campus bicyclists. The bicycle circulation network is shared with the vehicular circulation network, with proposed lane markings at campus gateways to heighten driver awareness to the presence of bicycles. The only off-campus bike path near the University runs parallel to Highway 90, so bicycle parking is provided at campus buildings that are proximate to Highway 90. Additional bicycle parking will be accommodated adjacent to vehicular parking, convenient to the circulation network and to minimize conflicts with pedestrians.

**PLANNED BICYCLE NETWORK**

- Campus shared bike lane
- Campus bike parking
- City bike path
- City shared bike lane
TRANSIT NETWORK

The master plan reconceives Southern Miss Gulf Park as a pedestrian-friendly campus with a reduction in auto-centric spaces. To facilitate these efforts, and to improve access to campus by members of the surrounding community, Coast Transit Authority (CTA) bus stops are proposed.

Further study and coordination with the CTA is needed to determine specific sites for these stops; however, bus stops should, at a minimum, have shade structures and be located along the pedestrian circulation network.
VEHICULAR NETWORK

Modifications to the campus vehicular network are proposed to improve the experience for drivers and non-drivers alike. Improvements to existing campus gateways (at Second and Third Streets and north Beach Park Place drive near the railroad tracks), including landscaping and signage such as was installed at Beach Park Place in April 2016, are proposed to welcome visitors and provide directions.

To help reduce confusion, the superfluous roundabout in front of the former Administration Building is removed, and the road spur and parallel parking at Friendship Oak Circle is replaced with a landscaped green to provide a scenic view for visitors, reduce vehicle-pedestrian conflicts at the heart of campus, and minimize circling by drivers looking for parking. Vehicular-pedestrian conflicts are also mitigated by the installation of raised, paved traffic tables at on-campus intersections.

Relocating parking from the campus core to lots on the periphery further supports these objectives. Efficiently designed parking lots located on Chimney’s Pass and Beach Park Place provide additional parking spaces in convenient and easily-navigated locations within walking distance of campus buildings.
PLANNED VEHICULAR NETWORK

- Blue: Campus vehicular route
- Orange: Traffic table
- Gray: Campus parking (779)
- Cyan: City street
NORTH CAMPUS (ACADEMIC QUAD)

The new Business and Health Building, proposed Student Resource Center, and existing Fleming Education Center surround the proposed Academic Quad, lined with shaded promenades with seating areas. Today, North Campus is a heavily trafficked parking lot framed by the heavily-utilized Fleming Education Center and temporary building structures. Construction is underway for the new Business and Health Building, presenting an opportunity to create a significant campus landscape for Gulf Park by reconfiguring the parking lots in the North Campus zone. Organizing academic and student life buildings around a quad will infuse the area with vitality and enhance the collegiate feel of the Campus.

In the long-term, the tennis courts could be relocated to create an additional development site. Though somewhat constrained by important east-west pedestrian connections, the site could be used for academic uses or student housing provided the ground floor preserves pedestrian passage, such as in the Fleming Education Center (see inset image).
Extending the Academic Promenade to the western edge of campus enhances and strengthens the physical connection between the isolated Science and Nursing buildings and the rest of campus. Further activity is concentrated on West Campus with the addition of a proposed holistic Wellness Center. Adjacent to the Wellness Center, an outdoor plaza is proposed for fitness classes and wellness demonstrations, visible from the Academic Promenade. A future academic building shares an additional outdoor plaza with the Science Building expansion, showcasing the collaborative learning environment at Southern Miss Gulf Park.

An adjacent but off-campus site could be redeveloped for student housing, further increasing pedestrian activity in the West Campus area as residents routinely traverse between their residence hall or apartment and the core campus. These proposed interventions enable West Campus to become meaningfully integrated with the rest of campus and provide several sites for growth.
EAST CAMPUS

East Campus, northeast of Beach Park Place and Highway 90, is characterized by densely wooded wetland areas at the northern edge, low-density residential uses at the western edge, undeveloped land at the eastern edge, and partially-wooded areas in the flood plain to the south. The land along Highway 90 is a prime location for a community-facing building such as the Executive Education Center. Its location is visible to the larger community and the site enjoys views of the Gulf, though any building in the flood plain must be elevated above base flood elevation to reduce risk of flooding. The land and homes along Beach Park Place may be acquired over time and used for dedicated academic buildings, the University Police Department, or redeveloped as new buildings or parking. The eastern edge of the property is screened from view by the development along Beach Park Place but is still easily accessed by several driveways, making it the ideal location for back-of-house uses such as Physical Plant facilities and Shipping and Receiving. The northern edge of East Campus is best left in its natural state in order to preserve rare undeveloped land, protect the bayou, and prevent flooding due to the wetlands in that zone.
The traditional heart of Gulf Park, South Campus will always be an integral part of campus life. The expansive open space in front of the Gulf Coast Library is redesigned as the Coastal Quad, taking advantage of the central location and views of the water to create an outdoor event space, which transitions to a park-like environment in front of Lloyd Hall. The Coastal Promenade serves as the major north-south pedestrian axis and provides a social thoroughfare. Improvements to the landscape in this part of campus significantly enhance the campus identity. A thoughtful, varied, and striking landscape will leave a strong impression on visitors and improve the experience of students, faculty, and staff who work and learn in Hardy Hall, Lloyd Hall, and Elizabeth Hall. No additional buildings are planned for this part of campus, due to the high risk of damage during storm events.
The proposed phasing plan responds to the current and anticipated needs of the University but can be modified if different needs emerge over time. The phasing strategy aims to:

1. Resolve current and imminent needs first
2. Ensure continuity of operations (including parking)
3. Ensure early-phase projects will not require land acquisition
4. Ensure early-phase projects will not depend on completion of later-phase projects to successfully contribute to the campus
## PHASE I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>ESTIMATED SIZE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Resource Center</td>
<td>36,800 GSF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Building Expansion</td>
<td>17,700 GSF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Plant and Shipping and Receiving</td>
<td>14,500 GSF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Police Department</td>
<td>11,400 GSF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal Quad and Promenade</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bear Point Drive (North) Removal</td>
<td>267 LF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chimney’s Pass Parking Lots</td>
<td>208 spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Plant, Shipping and Receiving, and UPD Removal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### KEY

- **Existing buildings**
- **Proposed buildings**
## PHASE II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>ESTIMATED SIZE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Education Center</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellness Center</td>
<td>48,200 GSF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Housing</td>
<td>Bedcount TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Quad and Promenade</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardy Hall Parking Lot Expansion</td>
<td>26 spaces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northwest Parking Lot</td>
<td>94 spaces</td>
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</table>

### KEY

- **Existing buildings**
- **Earlier phase buildings**
- **Proposed buildings**
**PHASE III**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>ESTIMATED SIZE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Future Academic Building</td>
<td>27,800 GSF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barber Building Removal</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY**

- **Existing buildings**
- **Earlier phase buildings**
- **Proposed buildings**
LAND ACQUISITION

PARCELS TO ACQUIRE

HIGH PRIORITY
High priority acquisition parcels are parcels where development is proposed as part of the master plan.

1. 500 E Second Street
2. 134 Beach Park Place
3. 804 Beach Boulevard
4. 129 Beach Park Place
5. 139 Beach Park Place
6. 141 Beach Park Place

LOW PRIORITY
Low priority acquisition parcels are parcels where no development is proposed, but acquisition would consolidate University land holdings.

7. 125 Beach Park Place
8. 149 Beach Park Place
9. 147 Beach Park Place
10. 109 Beach Park Place
11. 101 Beach Park Place
Proposed Land Acquisition
SPACE UTILIZATION

A high-level space utilization analysis was conducted for campus learning environments to determine if there are any imminent classroom or laboratory space needs. Based on national guidelines, the target weekly utilization for classrooms was set at 40 hours, and the target weekly utilization for laboratories was set at 25 hours. Lower targets for laboratory utilization account for set-up time. The current weekly utilization for Gulf Park is shown at the right. Many existing learning environments are underutilized based on conventional space guideline recommendations. It may be possible to accommodate enrollment growth in existing learning environments by employing different course and lab scheduling strategies, though Gulf Park has many nontraditional students who require evening classes, limiting this possibility.

In addition to weekly utilization, classroom occupancy serves as an indicator of space needs and surpluses, as well as suggest appropriate room sizes for future buildings based on course offerings and desired enrollment. Based on national guidelines, target occupancy is between 65 and 100 percent of seats filled during each course with the same target weekly room utilization hours as discussed above. Highly specialized rooms often show low weekly utilization but high occupancy, which is appropriate. Based on analysis of the Gulf Park course schedule and room inventory, more standard classrooms should reach target utilization and occupancy. Many rooms can accommodate more class hours each week, and many classes can accommodate more students, or could be held in smaller rooms. If maintaining small class sizes is desirable, then future academic buildings should have smaller classrooms than presently found on campus.
TARGET WEEKLY UTILIZATION AND OCCUPANCY FOR CLASSROOMS

Circle size corresponds to the number of seats in each classroom.

Fleming Education Center  Lloyd Hall  Nursing Building  Science Building

Target utilization and occupancy

Weekly Room Hours

Occupancy Rate

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50

Fleming Education Center  Lloyd Hall  Nursing Building  Science Building

FEC 104  FEC 210  FEC 108  FEC 208  FEC 106  FEC 105  FEC 303  FEC 307  FEC 301  FEC 101

LH 303  LH 302  LH 304  LH 104  LH 102  LH 101  LH 103  LH 104  LH 106  LH 105

NB 116  LH 230  SB 102  FEC 209  FEC 207  FEC 206  FEC 201  FEC 202  FEC 203  FEC 204

Circle size corresponds to the number of seats in each classroom.
SUMMARY OF MEETINGS

PHASE I

SEPTEMBER 22, 2015
Campus tours
Senior leadership meeting
Steering Committee stakeholder interviews

NOVEMBER 11, 2015
Steering Committee WebEx presentation

PHASE II

DECEMBER 4, 2015
Campus tours
Senior leadership meeting
Steering Committee presentation

FEBRUARY 12, 2016
Steering Committee WebEx presentation
Senior leadership WebEx presentation

PHASE III

APRIL 26, 2016
Senior leadership meeting
Steering Committee presentation
Executive Cabinet Presentation

SEPTEMBER 9, 2016
Final report delivery
SENIOR LEADERSHIP

Steven G. Miller
Vice President for the Gulf Park Campus

Casey M. Maugh Funderburk
Vice Provost for the Gulf Park Campus

Christopher Crenshaw
Associate Vice President for Facilities Planning and Management

SASAKI TEAM

Phillip Bruso, Space Analyst

Julia Carlton, Project Manager/Planner

Gregory Havens, Principal in Charge

Nicholas Steinkraus, Landscape Designer

STEERING COMMITTEE

Patsy Anderson
Kim Beard
Devin Bellman
Jensa Besse
Patrick Bonck
Aaron Broussard
Jona Burton
Benjamin Dedwylder
Rene Drumm

David Hale
Bill Hessell
Edward McCormack
Michael Mong
Deanne Nuwer
Jenny Tate
Michael Taylor
Jennifer Walker
Marco Wolf
REFERENCES

Plan for Opportunity Regional Economic Development Assessment, March 2013
University of Southern Mississippi Fall 2015 Course Schedule
University of Southern Mississippi Room List