



## *VI. Implementation and Planning Considerations*

## 6.1 Accessibility

### 6.1.1 Context

The concept of accessibility for persons with disabilities has been considerably broadened to include all types of barriers, including learning disabilities. The emphasis of this Plan is on the physical realm, and hence physical barriers will be addressed here.

UNB Saint John, with its relatively modern campus, compact layout and mostly flat terrain does not present the same challenges as UNB Fredericton, but falls short of providing an optimal environment for students with disabilities. For example, the elevator in the library is only available on demand; classroom layout is not conducive to manoeuvring a wheelchair. In general, buildings and pedestrian walkways were not expressly designed with visually impaired users in mind.

An additional benefit to fully accessible buildings is the accommodation of trolleys used to transport heavy equipment and samples.

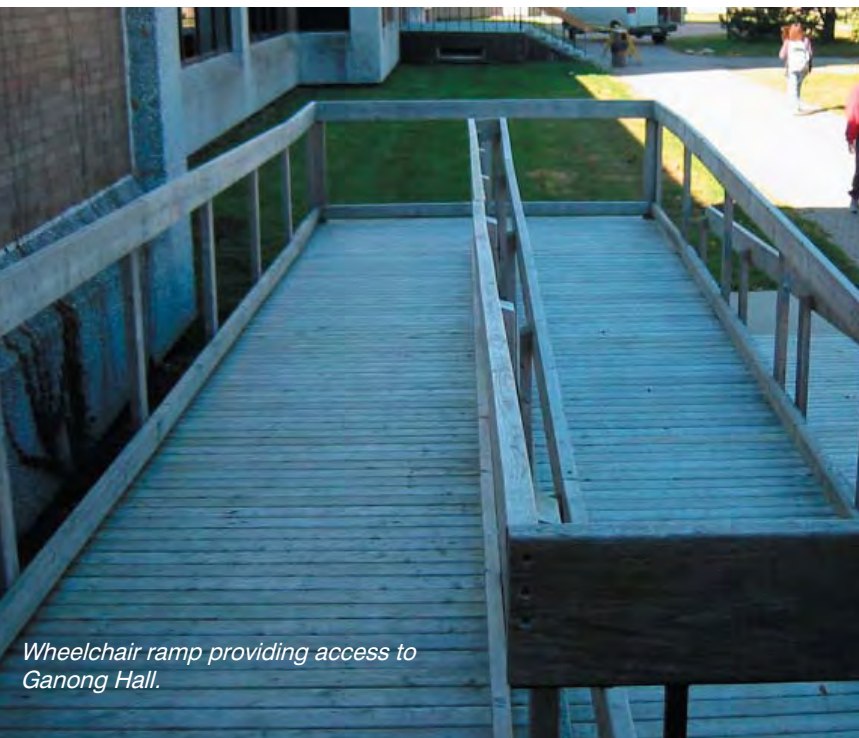
### 6.1.2 Embracing Barrier-Free Design

Barrier-free design should become a priority in every new construction and renovation project. There should be a screening mechanism as part of the decision-making process to ensure that all reasonable opportunities to improve accessibility are pursued before design is finalized.

The National Building Code should be supplemented with additional guidelines governing new construction and renovations. Internal standards should also contain provisions concerning circulation on campus, including parking spaces and curb cuts. Several Universities in Canada, including the University of Toronto, the University of Western Ontario, and McGill University have created guidelines unique to a campus and academic environment that are used in development review processes. The University of New Brunswick would benefit from similar guidelines, which could be developed for both the Fredericton and Saint John campuses.

Planning for barrier-free design will result in significant savings by ensuring that necessary accessibility features are embedded in an original design rather than as a retrofit. Integrating barrier-free design early in campus planning processes raises costs marginally, while retrofits tend to be complicated and costly.

All new construction and renovation should satisfy internal standards for accessibility, including elements such as ramps, door openers and elevators. An objective of UNBSJ should be to make extensive progress on physical improvements to make the campus accessible, so that future funding can be directed towards leading-edge technologies to assist students with a variety of disabilities in their day-to-day learning activities.



*Wheelchair ramp providing access to Ganong Hall.*

### 6.1.3 Towards Universal Accessibility on Campus

Please note that similar Strategic Directions were provided in the Fredericton Campus Plan. It would be advisable for the initiatives below to be undertaken at the University-wide level to minimize redundancy.

#### 1. Identify an advocate

Identify an advocate on the Board of Governors and/or among senior management who is specifically interested and knowledgeable in cross-disability issues. This individual will be responsible for keeping accessibility at the fore of campus planning across departments. The mandate for this role includes an obligation to actively consult with external community-based disability groups to allow for comprehensive cross-disability and/or technical input that extends beyond representation of a specific group of campus users.

#### 2. Establish a standing committee to monitor universal design issues

The role of this standing committee should be to provide focus and direction for universal design initiatives on campus. In addition, this committee should facilitate the preparation of a plan for retrofits (see point #4). Committee members should participate in the planning process for the construction of new buildings and major renovations to ensure that accessibility standards are built into the process.

The chair of the Universal Design Committee may be the Accessibility Advocate, or the Accessibility Coordinator. Committee membership should be broad, including student representatives and members of community-based disability organizations.

#### 3. Agree on standards and do not reinvent the wheel

The Universal Design Committee should assess the various accessibility standards above and beyond the Building Code to create standards that are specific to UNB, both in Fredericton and Saint John. Examples include the University of Toronto standards, the McGill University standards and the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standards. These standards should be updated, monitored and implemented through the work of the Universal Design Committee.

#### 4. Prepare and adopt a plan

The Universal Design Committee should spearhead the preparation of a long-term plan for retrofits, identifying priorities, timelines and budgets. In terms of scope, the plan should consider the outdoor campus environment, all facilities and buildings for students, campus visitors, faculty and staff, and the interiors of buildings. To be effective, the plan should be realistic and include a funding strategy. A portion of the on-going capital and maintenance budget should be reserved for universal design retrofits in addition to any new funds that might be obtained for such projects. Each year, the Committee will report on progress through a public report.

#### 5. Explore a student levy

In collaboration with student organizations, the possibility of a universal design levy should be explored. Such levies have been instituted at a variety of institutions in Canada following a student referendum, and the funds have been apportioned through a variety of mechanisms that include student representation. The University should convey its own commitment by matching the funds raised, while explaining that its funding formula just does not allow the University to undertake the necessary work without the contribution of students. It is also important to communicate the intent of the levy to the student population to prevent any type of resentment towards students with disabilities. Finally, improvements must be publicized to ensure that students see clear applications of their contributions.



## 6.2 A Sustainable Campus

### 6.2.1 Overview

Sustainability implies that all development should take place in an environmentally, socially and economically responsible fashion – over the long term, rather than the short term. A balance between the environmental, social and economic pillars of development is essential to the stewardship role of the University and the Saint John community.

It is necessary to take a close look at the impact of the University's decisions related to land development, building forms, and operational efficiencies. A reinforcing factor is the increasing sophistication of incoming students and the expectation that the University is a responsible steward of the environment and an important member of the Community. As has been evidenced on other campuses, students have strong opinions about the use of pesticides, the sourcing of food on campus, the origin of clothing sold in the bookstore and the preservation of the natural environment around the Campus. Another argument in favour of a sustainable campus approach is that it pays off in the long term. For example, ensuring the University's contribution to Saint John's prosperity helps maintain

population levels in the City, which helps sustain enrolment. Also, some environmental initiatives not only result in a healthier environment in the long term, but can have an effect on the bottom line within a relatively short term, such as the replacement of light bulbs with power-saving models or the upgrading of windows or HVAC systems.

Since this Plan focuses on the physical realm, this section will mostly address the environmental side of Sustainability, but it is understood that a balance is necessary among all three pillars. As it grows, UNB and UNBSJ in particular can become a leader in environmental planning and design.



*Looking towards the stadium. UNBSJ is surrounded by a rich natural landscape.*



### 6.2.2 Developing an Approach

A first step to campus sustainability can be the adoption of an overarching environmental vision and the formation of an environmental committee. Other types of entities can be adopted — such as a working group or a department — to ensure that environmental responsibility becomes a priority on the University’s policy agenda. Regardless of the approach, all activities that pertain to environmental planning should evolve at a high level, generating direct linkages to the core functions of the University and external agencies, such as the Municipal and Provincial governments. To be successful, sustainability initiatives must take operational, fiscal and political imperatives into account, and the mechanism to do so must involve a diversity of players with jurisdiction over a broad range of areas. They also need to involve the University’s staff, faculty and students. Many organizations have been extremely successful in their quest for sustainability through a bottom-up approach, letting the campus community design its own solutions, making each person responsible for their successful implementation.

The University should consider creating an **Environmental Plan** to guide the overall approach to environmental planning on campus. The Environmental Plan will provide direction to University decision-makers at many levels.

Over time, sustainability should become an integrated approach and part of the job description and mission of each staff member. From the first conversation with each service provider or supplier, from stationary to architectural services, one will know that UNBSJ has an eye on sustainability.

### 6.2.3 Partnerships for Sustainable Development

The University should consider exploring linkages with other institutions and levels of government. A precedent is the agreement with the Atlantic Health Sciences Corporation to share a central heating plant, thus resulting in financial and environmental savings. A number of federal initiatives in the areas of energy efficiency exist that can be tapped into by institutions as Canada is aiming to reach the objectives of the Kyoto Accord. An example is the Energy Innovators Initiative which makes available funding for energy efficiency retrofits. Other partnerships are possible with the City of Saint John, for example in the area of transportation demand management, which aims at encouraging alternative modes of transportation and tele-commuting.



Green Roof in Toronto

## 6.3 A Framework for Partnerships

As is the case on campuses across North America, the opportunity exists on the UNBSJ campus to establish partnerships with government agencies, public institutions and private sector firms. Four broad types of external involvement exist:

- **Provision of a Service**  
This is the most common instance of a non-academic use on campus and includes food services, convenience stores and the bookstore (although in this instance, the University provides the service to itself). These uses are intimately woven into the operation of the University.
- **Institutional Research Partnerships**  
University researchers work in tandem with other researchers. For instance, the National Research Council operates numerous research stations in campuses across Canada, including UNB Fredericton. These uses have strong connections to the University but depend on external entities for funding.
- **Allied Research and Operations**  
In this instance, the research or business is operated without continuous university involvement, although punctual, ad-hoc relationships are possible – e.g. for a specific project. Examples include private start-ups establishing a presence on campus to do research or commercialize a product. These uses are only marginally related to the University. The rationale for their presence on university land is the creation of a cluster of related activities providing opportunities for members of various organizations to come together for projects or to tap each other's expertise.

- **Complementary Leasehold Uses**

A range of activities should be encouraged on those University's lands that are not considered core to UNBSJ's teaching and research requirements for the foreseeable future. Many institutions across North America lease land to a range of public and private sector entities for purposes including research, community cultural and recreational uses, commercial and residential uses. Recently, life-lease retirement communities have become an attractive form of development on university lands that addresses an important societal need, supports the university's life-long learning agenda, and provides a source of revenue for the university.

This is a particularly important strategy for UNBSJ as it provides an additional means to address the objective of creating a 'whole community' through a range of uses and a critical mass that cannot be adequately provided through the university's operations alone.

In order to control the true benefit of partnerships on campus, UNBSJ should adopt a set of criteria and guidelines to assist in the selection of private and public-sector partners. The following criteria can be used as a base to develop such a policy.

**New development should:**

- Not contradict UNBSJ's mission, but respect its spirit and assist in its fulfilment;
- Be reviewed to ensure they are compatible with ethical and operational standards adopted by the University.
- Where private sector uses and research are conducted on campus - not conflict or appear to conflict with the University's ability to protect and promote academic freedom.
- Complement and support academic uses;
- Assist the University to attract the best and brightest students, staff and faculty;
- Take place on leased land (UNBSJ's land is a core asset and should not be sold);
- Satisfy UNBSJ's emerging sustainability policy;
- Provide a useful service to the University community in priority, then to the community at large;
- Be established after a thorough community consultation process;
- Follow UNBSJ's campus design guidelines: new development must complement the image of the campus and foster walking, cycling and transit as modes of transportation and create a pedestrian friendly environment;
- Be well connected to the rest of the campus through a network of streets, trails and paths;
- Meet or exceed UNBSJ's design standards and contribute to the creation of an outstanding campus environment.

In the case of services to the University community, priority should be given to campus organizations to provide the desired service or to participate in its provision, for example in the establishment of a daycare or convenience store. In addition, care should be exercised to locate services in a conspicuous and accessible location. For example, new cafés, cafeterias and convenience stores should be located on the ground floors of buildings. Ideally, they should be designed to appeal to members of the campus community as well as visitors, thus helping to create the image of a vibrant campus with a full range of services. Please note that additional information with respect guidelines and approval procedures for development partnerships can be found in the University of New Brunswick's Land Management Strategy.



## 6.4 A Plan Review Process

As the official campus plan for the University of New Brunswick Saint John, this Campus Plan should be the regulatory document that guides land use decisions related to the Saint John cluster of campus lands. As such, it should be adopted by the Board of Governors as a policy document designed to facilitate change and growth management on the UNBSJ campus lands over the coming decades. The Campus Plan is presented as a long-term vision and direction for campus development. Adherence to this vision will ensure that a sustainable, compact, vibrant campus develops with respect for dynamic and meaningful open spaces. At the same time, while this plan presents a vision, it must continue to respond to evolving realities, and possibly, changing priorities.

A biennial **Plan Review** is an effective way to ensure that the intent and vision of the Campus Plan are maintained over the long-term, and yet integrated with development realities. As a mechanism to conduct the Plan Review, the office of the Vice-President (Saint John), or equivalent, should issue a Report Card every other year that evaluates on-going development activity on campus in accordance with a predetermined series of indicators. As an outcome of this Report Card, elaborations or amendments may be proposed to the Campus Plan so that it remains a relevant regulatory document. This approach will be especially valuable over the next ten years as the Campus continues to experience significant growth pressures on already heavily solicited facilities. Also, realities of fundraising and government funding are sure to result in unanticipated outcomes, requiring adjustments to forecasts and outstanding needs.



University of Vermont, Burlington VT



## 6.5 Staging

The build-out of the Campus Plan should be determined by two key factors: the need and demand for more floor space, and the availability of funding to support the building program.

It remains difficult, if not impossible, to assign a time line to the phasing of new buildings on campus. And yet, as the concept plan suggests, it is clear that certain priorities should be met in the sequencing of new development in order to respond to the intent of the Plan.

For example:

- Even in the absence of an on-going building program, improvements to the landscape and outdoor spaces in general can begin to be implemented immediately.
- Improvements can be made to existing indoor communal spaces immediately.
- Policies around scheduling and the management of space resources, as well as a storage policy, can be explored immediately.
- A logical progression should be pursued with respect to the removal of parking from the core campus. In the meantime, parking areas should be established at the periphery, but only as the need for the replacement of lost spaces or additional spaces can be demonstrated and parking demand management measures implemented.

The Campus Plan has implications in terms of the overall vitality of the campus in the future, as well as short-term operational and financial implications that need to be evaluated and integrated into a larger Implementation Plan. Derived from the framework for development as presented in this plan, the Implementation Plan will operationalize the policies and guidelines presented in this plan.



*A potential site for a new building by Oland Hall and KC Irving Halk.*

## 6.6 Concluding Remarks

This Campus Plan was prepared at a very exciting time for UNBSJ. The University's Saint John Campus has experienced significant growth since its inception forty years ago. In the past few years, this growth has accelerated and has the potential to continue in the coming decade. However, the campus infrastructure has not kept pace with this growth. Faced with a pressing need to expand and improve UNBSJ's facilities, a unique opportunity exists to transform the Campus environment so that it will inspire and embody excellence.

Key to this challenge will be to take advantage of the as yet untapped resource of the site's breathtaking views and natural elements. The Campus Plan as proposed in this document provides a compelling vision of what the campus could become in the future, a Beacon of Knowledge that constitutes a prime example of design and academic excellence throughout the Province.

It will be crucial to maintain momentum and ensure that aside from large initiatives such as the University Commons, an implementation plan be prepared and adopted. Each year, a set of improvements selected for their visual and functional impact should be identified and implemented, as a way to demonstrate the University's commitment to its vision for a beautiful, functional and sustainable campus.





