To: The Board of Trustees

From: Joyce Jacobsen, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date: February 12, 2018

Subject: Facilities Planning in a Wider Context

At the Fall Trustees Meeting, Michael briefed you on our current facilities planning. Since that meeting, we have held two forums and met with the WSA so as to bring the community up to date on facilities planning. Academic Affairs and Facilities Staff have also done more research on various aspects of our plans and modified parts of them in response to helpful input from multiple constituencies. This memo is to update you on what has happened since last fall, as well as to frame the facilities planning process in the wider context of curricular innovation at Wesleyan as currently envisioned by the President and by Academic Affairs.

Overall Strategy

Up to this point and continuing forward, the Administration’s general principles regarding facilities renovations and new building proposals have included the following priorities, on top of the Sasaki planning principles:

- Emphasizing the importance of the undergraduate mission
- Promoting increased collaboration between units on campus
- Promoting architectural and curricular coherence
- Considering how staffing changes interact with facilities changes
- Expanding access to our collections, be they in music, archaeology, fossils, geology, rare books, digitized objects, or the visual arts
- Thinking creatively about the use of space in order to economize resources, including having reasonable backfill plans for use of freed-up space when facilities are renovated or created

I would like to emphasize the second point. There are three rather distinct faculty groups on campus, both in terms of general location and in terms of administrative control (i.e., the three academic divisions). Very few faculty hold joint appointments across these divisions, although many others do hold affiliate status across units and often across divisions.

There are a number of forces that tend to pull the campus community apart. These include competition for scarce resources (financial, space, faculty lines, etc.); geographical and
intellectual insularity of units, driven in part by the need to maintain sufficient staffing and other resources to maintain their own programs; professional requirements stemming from faculty and staff disciplinary affiliations; and the cognitive and time limitations that we all face.

Meanwhile the Administration endeavors to create and support structures to enable bringing/knitting the campus community together. These mechanisms include support of units that most faculty and staff utilize, including the libraries, information technology systems, co-curricular programs, and centers. The Administration thus assumes responsibility for support and assessment of general education, as well as for encouragement of a culture of translation and cooperation between campus units.

In particular, Academic Affairs has been building out a competencies framework and centers supporting students’ development of multiple competencies. Over the past four years:

- The Quantitative Analysis Center, located in the recently renovated Allbritton Center, has gone from one full-time staff member to two full-time staff, two professors of the practice, and one administrative assistant
- The Fries Center for Global Studies was created in a fully renovated space with a complete staff restructuring and mission expansion beyond supporting study abroad
- The Shapiro Writing Center has moved into a fully-renovated new location and is in the process of hiring three professors of the practice to support academic writing, creative writing, and English as a Second Language training
- The Center for Pedagogical Innovation was created in a fully renovated space with a completely new staff; we are hiring a professor of the practice in education studies and have also applied for grant funding to hire a professor of the practice in oral communications

The current set of facilities plans continue in this vein of envisioning change at an institutional, integrative level, while also respecting the needs of the different divisions on campus for specific support. Below I provide some updates on facilities planning, and will show some recent visual updates at the Cabinet and Trustee briefing session on Friday March 2.

**Arts plan updates**

We have updated plans regarding the Center for Film Studies that continue our goals of expanding production, screening, and study areas in this heavily utilized building while also responding to community concerns regarding the streetscape.

We have updated the plans regarding the moving of our works-on-paper collection to the Microforms room in Olin library, developed in conjunction with the Davison Art Center staff and in discussion with faculty, library leadership and other interested parties. Our goals continue to be to improve the storage for and access to the Collection.

We have started the planning process for the current DAC area backfill, with a faculty and staff task force charged with coordinating input from various constituencies and developing a plan for a Digital Design Commons that will support all the art units on campus, thus celebrating the synergies among the arts (#WesCreative), as well as supporting the new IDEAS minor.

We continue to explore additional options for exhibition space on campus, particularly space
that can be both flexible and supportive of multiple forms of art. In particular, we want to support vibrant exhibitions of contemporary art and art making at the Zilkha art gallery. We aim at improving art exhibition conditions in the south gallery and making the main galleries the main venue for installation work. We hope both to make the CFA even more of a space for congregation on campus, and also want to have more Public Art on campus, of both a temporary and a permanent nature, starting with a commissioned sundial that will be installed on the south side of Van Vleck Observatory this spring. We are also exploring how the Library might support additional exhibition space, and planning to revive work on the Library master plan that had started several years ago once our new Head Librarian is hired and in place.

PAC updates

We have completed the initial phases of consultation with the PAC faculty and staff through both survey methodology and a series of meetings with each unit in the building. We have also completed the first phase of our classroom utilization study, which indicates that we will be able to cover the construction phase without use of temporary classrooms, even as our study also has underscored the need for new, flexible classroom spaces in the renovated PAC. Our goals for the PAC renovation continue to be: facilitating improved faculty-student and student-student interaction; encouraging modern teaching techniques for this heavily-used central facility; supporting the research needs, both collaborative and individual, for the faculty; and promoting continued integration, both social and intellectual, for the faculty, staff, and students using the building. It will be both productive and fun to come daily to work at the PAC.

Science updates

A team from both Academic Affairs and Finance & Administration made several field trips to nearby commercial and university laboratory buildings to understand better how modern laboratories can be constructed for maximum flexibility and collaboration (including sharing of common resources like expensive equipment); we were inspired by these new structures.

Conclusion

Even further integration can occur over the next ten to twelve years between facilities, staffing, and utilization of our rich materials collections. In particular, one can envision a set of even more integrated sets of buildings and projects following on the facilities plans to date:

- A dynamic constellation of spaces in film and the visual arts will foster creative expression and build community both within the Arts and across the campus as a whole
- A Digital Design Commons will enhance shared purpose and mutual understanding among Arts departments and the CFA and bridge across divisions by supporting the IDEAS minor
- A Social Science Commons can eventually link Allbritton, Judd and PAC even more mindfully, with Judd as a natural next renovation stage after the sciences building is completed
- A Science Commons will consist of the new Science building in conjunction with a renovation of Shanklin and parts of Exley, including the Science Library
- The Library will be the hub for accessing all of our campus collections, including managing an integrated catalog/database so that all can search a single catalog to locate all of our digital and nondigital holdings, including all of our materials collections. It will also support student and faculty research through upgraded facilities and ever-improved use of technology.