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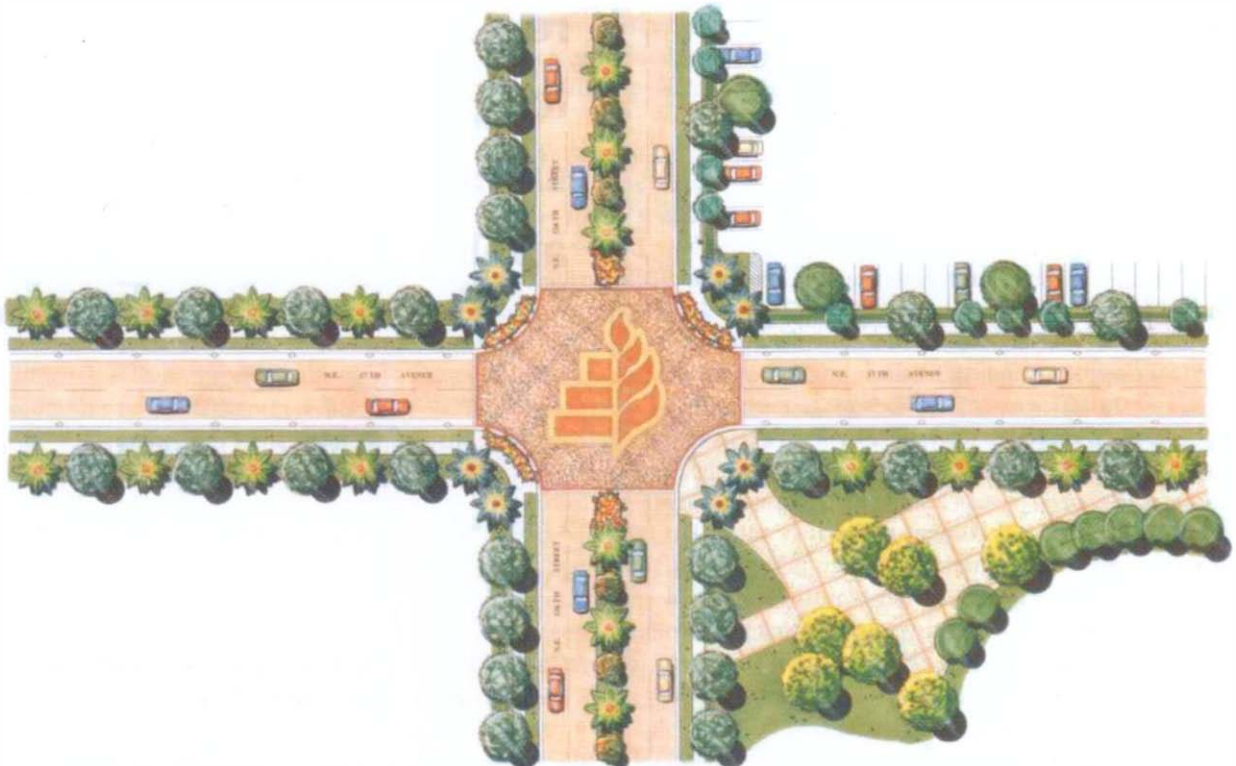
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A PRIMEDIA PUBLICATION

MEETING OF THE MINDS

Education institutions should form an alliance with community leaders to develop a master plan that satisfies all parties.

By William J. Gallo, AIA



The original 1992 Johnson & Wales University campus, North Miami, Fla., was the former North Miami Hospital site, including the hospital complex, which housed the original culinary program and 260 student residences in the hospital bed portion of the building. The original complex did not extend into the community. Today, the university exists in a number of buildings across a multi-block area and has about 2,000 students. However, growth continues, and the impact on the community had to be addressed.

In recent years, industry-oriented higher-education institutions have proliferated in urban areas. Many facilities have grown too quickly, simply constructing new buildings or redeveloping existing buildings to ac-

commodate increased student demand for education and training programs. As a result, these colleges and universities often have found themselves at odds with the vision of the local community. Schools can place a greater

burden on an infrastructure that was not designed to handle the additional traffic, water, sewer, electrical, pedestrian and lifestyle requirements of a young population.

Schools can mitigate these con-

flicts with planning that considers the institution's vision for its future growth and its relationship to the community. Educational institutions can establish alliances with community and business leaders to create a unified and generally accepted master plan. Without such an approach to master planning, an educational institution will face rampant negative speculation regarding property values, residents' lifestyles, and rumors about growth, construction and community degradation.

Administrators, architects and developers of urban-centered, higher-education institutions should follow these steps when developing and carrying out a master plan.

Reach a consensus

Determining the visionary role of an institution and how it relates to the surrounding community is a critical first step. Institutions may decide to view themselves as "seamless" within the fabric of an urban context, or they may wish to be separate and distinct, using the concept of planned "portals" for arrival and access.

For instance, a medical research educational facility seeking maximum privacy and security might not want full community integration and may opt for a design plan that incorporates physical barriers to separate it from the surrounding area. In contrast, Johnson & Wales University, North Miami, Fla., offers a variety of programs in hospitality, culinary arts and tourism, so open access is an important part of its teaching philosophy and "real-world" student experiences. Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, Fla., of-

fers services to the public through its psychology, legal and health-sciences programs; therefore, it is essential to create easy access to the buildings that house these services while maintaining controlled access to the remainder of the campus.

Under a framework developed and guided by a consultant, who also can provide raw data on growth, land use, population and other trends in the

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surrounding area, the institution's decisionmakers should reach an internal consensus.

Starting the vision

The next step is to begin the vision process, a "first blush" schematic showing what the master plan might look like if it were carried out fully. These artist renderings serve as a catalyst for people to share opinions and compel the university to carefully consider projected growth and absorption rates before moving forward with its plan.

The planning consultant should conduct a thorough analysis of the area's existing conditions, evaluating

location, setting and history of the area; land use and zoning; existing facilities both on and off campus and their architectural theme; traffic volume and flow; parking; public transportation; landscaping; signage; lighting; and electrical and water systems. This process is especially critical for universities in urban centers where antiquated systems might already be overloaded or incapable of handling an influx of people and increased demands.

After this analysis, school officials should look at how a vision plan would affect current campus conditions. This will help determine its potential impact and provide an opportunity for the institution to rethink issues such as growth and absorption rates and physical expansion. The vision process typically undergoes several cycles of review and revision until a more definitive master plan begins to emerge.

On the board

Simultaneous to the vision process, the consultant should help establish and coordinate an advisory board composed of representatives from the university administration and staff, and from agencies such as the city staff and city planner, homeowner and civic associations, and other interested groups. With the goal of establishing relationships and creating an atmosphere of inclusive decisionmaking, the consultant should lead a series of meetings to review the vision process and emerging master plan. Inevitably, the discussion of issues will result in revisions of the plans, which really are "works in progress."

This approach is working well for

MASTER PLANNING ■



The vision plan for Johnson & Wales University illustrates how the projected full growth of 4,000 students by 2015 will be integrated into the community. Features include a central university commons, pedestrian corridors, rearranged traffic patterns and integrated design standards across all buildings. The community will weave through the campus, and be invited to use all campus facilities and cultural programs.

Johnson & Wales University as it pursues a 73-acre master plan. "One of the most important and lasting outcomes of this process is that it opens the dialogue on important issues between the university, the host community and its residents, with the goal of creating a master plan that is embraced

conditions review, schools learn that there are no current ordinances in the city code to accommodate the establishment of the master plan. The consultant and jurisdictional agency representatives may need to amend the city's growth plans and city charter to accommodate higher-education

regular re-evaluation ensures that plans are still on target to facilitate the planned growth of the university and the surrounding area. The ultimate goal of this process is to achieve harmony between established communities and large-scale, developing institutions so that each has a positive effect on the other. Institutions of higher education, if planned well, can offer enriched environments and cultural opportunities, and can have an overall beneficial economic effect on their surrounding communities. Solid master planning should lead to positive results for all involved. ■

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by all interested parties," says Loreen Chant, vice president of Johnson & Wales University's Florida campus. "An added benefit—everyone has really gotten enthusiastic about seeing the vision become reality."

Establish standards

Many times during advisory board meetings or as part of the existing

facilities' planned land use, while satisfying the community infrastructure. For instance, consultants worked with city staff to draft a master plan ordinance for the city of North Miami.

By following this process, and through continual communication and consensus with the established advisory board, the university's vision plan becomes a plausible master plan. Then, as the plan is phased in,

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