



Facilities Management

February 27, 2014

Dr. James Biardi
Chair, Faculty Committee on Sustainability
Associate Professor of Biology
Fairfield University
1073 North Benson Road
Fairfield, CT 06824

Re: Letter dated January 27, 2014
Faculty Committee on Sustainability

Dear Jim:

Thank you for your letter dated January 27th regarding the siting of the proposed addition to the existing School of Nursing building.

I would like to respond first to your third recommendation. As I stated at the January 15th Campus Sustainability Committee meeting, Facilities Management staff has continuous conversations with the Town of Fairfield officials on many projects, both real and imagined. Case in point, we have a master plan that shows a parking garage and a fine arts building that have no definitive timeline and may in fact never be built. The architects for the School of Nursing building renovation and the new addition to support nursing, health sciences, and future academic needs were engaged in the late fall of 2013, and the siting was reviewed with the subcommittee to the Campus Sustainability Committee on December 9th. It is a mischaracterization on your part to suggest that the plans have been developed and reviewed with the Town for over a year.

Your second point proposes that we try to justify the loss of twenty five parking spaces to the Town of Fairfield. While we cannot be sure that twenty five is the actual number until we complete a layout (I believe that number is low), it is the professional and considerable opinion of our land use attorney that proposing the elimination of parking as we seek approvals for our project would work against us in the approval process.

On January 21st, Curt Krushinsky, Tom Curran, and I met with Kraig Steffen. While no consensus was reached with Kraig, I believe he came away from the meeting with a better appreciation of the difficulties associated with eliminating parking. We continued by discussing the feasibility of replicating lost parking spaces by reconfiguring the eastern end of the current faculty/staff area east and south of the current trailers. We also discussed expanding the Quick Center lot (the one to the west of the Quick Center), a lot bordered by a naturalized area and the pond. I don't believe that the further expansion of the Quick Center lot is appropriate at this time.

Considerations of security and safety also impact decisions on parking. Restoring the parking spaces in areas east of the current trailers that had been parking spaces in the past as suggested by Kraig, would have cars backing out of those spaces into McInnis Road, a major route through campus. These spaces were eliminated out of concern for safety. Parallel spaces along Leeber Road and McCormick Road were eliminated for similar reasons. In fact, we had a student struck by a car on McCormick Road. The student was crossing between cars that had been parallel parked. Many conditions have changed on campus since the development of the VHB parking study six years ago.

At our meeting on January 15th, you requested that we consider siting the building more to the northwest, towards the Barone Campus Center. Tom Curran, Curt Krushinsky, and I reviewed this option with Kraig at our meeting on the 21st. In addition to the issues associated with parking noted above, it is the opinion of Tom, Curt, and me that the northwest location is not desirable from a long-term campus planning perspective. We have also had this conversation with our design team members who have worked on many campus facilities across the U.S. and they

have come to the same conclusion. Relocating the building to the northwest would block views to and from the existing science building, negatively impact the flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and limit opportunities for future campus development.

The design process starts with programming, driven by the needs of the Nursing and other academic programs in terms of number of classrooms, type/size of classrooms, and teaching labs. These functions are then organized into logical adjacencies. Exam rooms, for example, need a more private environment than a classroom. Accordingly, the exam rooms are co-located on the upper floor with the simulation labs and health assessment suites. These logical groupings on the upper floor then define the layout of the first floor. The building starts to take shape in terms of footprint and dimensions. Nursing's relatively small footprint lends itself to a single loaded corridor solution. While this design solution is efficient, it results in a building that is fairly long in relation to its width. At almost 200 feet in length, moving this building to the northwest would result in a significant loss in parking well beyond the twenty five spaces noted above. Attempting to shorten the length of the building to accommodate the existing high temperature lines and the fifty foot set back from the existing nursing building would compromise the dimensions of the interior spaces. Specifically, collaborative classrooms tend to be larger in terms of width than conventional classrooms and the collaborative classrooms are an essential component of the nursing program as well as the sciences and engineering.

Of the 214 acres that comprise our campus, approximately 30 acres are designated as protected conservation areas by the Town of Fairfield. There are also a number of other areas not so designated that have been left to develop into a natural environment. We care deeply about the preservation and maintenance of wooded and other undeveloped areas on campus. At the same time, we need to continue expanding and providing facilities to meet the diverse needs of a vibrant residential, comprehensive university – including facilities for academic programs, residential and student life, athletics and recreation and cultural programs. My recommendations to the senior administration need to reflect that balanced perspective.

The balanced perspective requires Facilities Management staff and our hired consultants to look at the long-term development of the campus and site buildings to best serve the current and future needs of the University in support of Fairfield University's mission. It would be inappropriate to compromise the location of such an important facility based on short-term considerations of a small stand of trees. As acknowledged in the planning of "green" buildings, trees and other wood products such as bamboo and cork are renewable resources. I believe that the efforts of both of our committees would be more productively spent in planning and planting trees that will serve the future university community. I would be happy to discuss this further at your convenience.

Thank you for your continued consideration.

Sincerely yours,



David W. Frassinelli
Associate Vice President for Facilities

Cc: Mark C. Reed
Paul Fitzgerald
Mary Frances Malone
Lynn Babington
Robin Crabtree
L. Kraig Steffen
Brian Walker