

16.0 LANDSCAPE DESIGN GUIDELINES ELEMENT

In campus planning, design professionals whose focus is the outdoors must be sensitive to transitions from building to open space, the need for common areas and the protection of special features. These design professionals must also be able to use plant and building materials and site furniture to enhance the use of the outdoors for study, relaxation, contemplation, socializing and entertainment.

The development of a Landscape Plan, shown in [Figures 16.1A-C](#) began to highlight the need for a detailed set of landscape guideline documents. The Landscape Plan was founded on the following general guiding principles.

- Blending new development sites with the character of the mature campus landscapes and other natural areas by retaining islands of natural vegetation in new development areas and creating new and similar vegetative buffers which soften building facades and site facilities.
- Integrating and articulating architectural and site design in conjunction with landscape architectural design in the planning process to ensure that attractive settings and ample open spaces are provided for new facilities.
- Seeking to develop new significant landscape features in association with campus expansion, including campus greens; attractive, creatively designed retention ponds; and pedestrian plazas which support the "Village Street" concept fundamental to the University's total Master Plan.
- Continuing the initial style and character of the original campus plantings with emphasis on transitioning and reflecting the natural formation of plantings.
- Maintaining a selective palette of indigenous and site-adaptive plant species that promote Xeriscape principles.
- Creating a sense of arrival at campus entrances and at the primary entrances to the Campus Core.

Typical Landscape Design Guidelines Element have six sections: a detailed description of the Landscape Plan; a listing of plant materials from which to select in developing a site-specific landscape design; a description of furnishings, lighting and graphics to be used in design; a description of acceptable landscape treatments at the edges of campus property; landscape treatments of required retention and other stormwater management elements; and other miscellaneous items not covered in the preceding topics but critical to complete a cohesive landscape design. Below are some highlights of these various guideline components.

LANDSCAPE TREATMENTS

A carefully conceived and executed planting concept of indigenous plant material will enhance and maintain the image of the UNF campus. Indigenous native plants will project a proper scale relationship between the individual, buildings and open spaces and will create an appropriate relationship to the existing environment. The following points should be considered when landscaping new UNF facilities:

- Maximum preservation of existing trees.
- Major tree re-establishment along primary streets within parking areas and along campus perimeters.
- Focal or interest plantings.

- Foundation planting for buildings.
- Reinforcement of pedestrian access ways.

It is important that the trees begin to establish a pattern or theme that will tie the campus together. This will prevent the appearance of a sparse and spotty placement of plant material. Major trees or general canopy-type trees produce shade and add a feeling of permanence to the campus. These trees may be used for mass, to define, accent or soften architectural elements and to further define circulation systems and the spatial quality of open space. Planting size for major trees should be a minimum 2-inch caliper and larger, where possible. One of the key roles of major trees should be to reinforce pedestrian walkway systems, roadways and open spaces. Screening of undesirable elements such as parking areas and service areas must also be considered.

SELECTION OF PLANT MATERIALS

The selection of plant materials should be predicated on the particular design function in the landscape. To the degree possible, landscape plans shall include the use on plant species that are indigenous to the natural plant communities of the North Florida area. In cases where non-invasive exotic plants are used to enhance the landscape, plantings should be limited to those non-invasive species that are able to resist periods of drought and which require little fertilization and use of pesticides. Xeriscape principles should be considered in plant selection to create a sustainable landscape that promotes water conservation through resource management and good planning.

SITE GRADING

Site grading must recognize existing drainage patterns while functionally solving drainage problems that may exist or result from ground plane alterations during construction. Likewise, site grading must be sympathetic to existing land forms while providing appropriate transition of architectural elements to grade.

Site grading must also provide for an uninterrupted flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic through the University. The plan must direct and provide adequate flow of surface runoff to catch basins while gracefully contouring the land to blend with existing conditions of the site.

Sensitive use of site grading can provide aesthetic qualities to the development, relieving rigid architectural lines, creating private spaces, screening objectionable views and adding interest to flat sites with little or no natural topographic interest. Drainage, therefore, becomes an integral part of the overall campus plan accomplishing basic needs while being visually attractive as well.

OPEN SPACES

There are three basic open space/recreation systems currently incorporated into the UNF campus:

- Passive Open Space--Natural areas, fields, lakes and jurisdictional wetlands.
- Pedestrian Open Space--Pedestrian plazas, campus greens and linear linkages.
- Active Recreation Open Space--Track, baseball, softball, basketball, volleyball, swimming pool, tennis, racquetball and multipurpose fields.

Passive open space is any open space not utilized for pedestrian circulation purposes or active recreation purposes. These spaces include wooded natural areas, agrarian fields and pastures and any planned lakes within the Campus Master Plan. They may also include spaces created as a result of meeting St. Johns River Water Management District stormwater management permitting requirements. Existing natural wooded areas should be preserved and new wooded areas planned as natural buffers for internal landscaping and the campus edge. Lakes that are planned within the Campus Master Plan can serve passive activities which provide a setting for general relaxation. Lakes provide a major aesthetic site feature as well as stormwater retention. Lakes must appear as natural as possible, retaining existing vegetation along the shoreline when feasible and supplementing landscape materials when necessary.

Pedestrian open space, existing and planned, for the UNF campus consists of pedestrian plazas, campus greens and linear open spaces. Pedestrian plazas, which are primarily identified by surrounding structures may offer comfortable seating areas, provide general orientation, impel movement toward entrances and serve as a foreground or setting for buildings. Campus greens afford the academic community the place and opportunity for much needed, larger scale, social interaction and extra curricular activities that help balance activities at the University. Linear open spaces on the UNF campus consist of pedestrian ways along streets and pedestrian paths within the campus.

Major roads with associated paving, drainage, swales, pathways and landscape buffer zones can also be considered open space. The design function of these open space elements is to provide linkages within the development as well as visual enjoyment when traveling to and from activity areas.

Any space utilized for structured or unstructured recreation or athletic activity will be classified as active recreation open space. Included within this category are baseball/softball, basketball, volleyball, racquetball, track fields, tennis courts, swimming pool and multipurpose fields. This category further includes all intercollegiate athletic facilities.

Almost every American university campus includes a central commons or primary gathering place. Just as the traditional village or small town had its common green or town square, so each campus community needs a common, semiformal place for relaxation and social interaction. Common areas may function as nodes of the "Village Street" to interconnect facilities in a secure, pleasant manner that encourages positive social interaction.

The overall planning of a major campus plaza should articulate the edges as much as possible and provide many anchors (trees, colonnades, planters and so on). The main plaza must also provide the greatest variety of seating locations since it is likely to draw the greatest variety of people. Food service should be available on a main plaza with outdoor seating (where climate permits) within view of the plaza.

The campus environment still remains one of the few urban spaces where pedestrians predominate. The majority of people favor more safe spaces and greenery rather than the unplanned encroachment of more buildings, roads and parking areas. As in the city, pedestrian/vehicular conflict can be a major problem. Unlike the city, most campuses were originally planned as pedestrian environments which were gradually encroached upon by roads and parking areas. Future planned campus expansion and densification should be balanced with quality open spaces. The following are important characteristics to consider in the design of new "favorite spaces" on campus.

- Retention of unique or particularly attractive natural features.
- Planning for a variety of natural spaces, from large, open lawns or meadows to secluded, lakeside spaces or very natural areas.
- Sensitive located seating and bench/table arrangements to enhance areas for study, eating and conversation.
- A concise, integrated system of well lit and patrolled "night safety paths" linking main campus entries and nighttime activity centers to ensure personal safety for all users.
- Consideration for noise in the outdoors.

16.0 LANDSCAPE DESIGN GUIDELINES ELEMENT

GOAL 1 **The University of North Florida (UNF) shall undertake the planning, design and implementation of landscape projects which represent the highest standards of excellence in landscape design.**

Objective 1.1 **UNF shall develop a Landscape Plan and approve and adopt a set of Landscape Design Guidelines which set standards for the planning, design and construction/implementation of plant materials, hardscape, furnishings, lighting and graphics, campus edge landscape treatments, landscaping treatment of stormwater retention areas and other design elements important to creating a unified landscape treatment for UNF properties.**

Policy 1.1.1 UNF shall approve, adopt and establish as policy a set of Landscape Design Guidelines. The guidelines shall provide a detailed description of the components of the Landscape Plan to include treatment of vehicular circulation routes, pedestrian circulation routes, bicycle facilities, public transportation facilities, emergency access facilities, planted areas, site furnishings, lighting location and type, trash collection facilities, maintenance and utility facilities and campus edges.

Policy 1.1.2 UNF shall establish as policy standards for the selection of plant materials which emphasize the use on plant species (grasses, shrubs, trees, etc.) that are indigenous to the natural plant communities of the North Florida area and the avoidance of invasive exotic plants, and which promote the use of Xeriscape principles.

Policy 1.1.3 UNF shall establish as policy standards for the selection of furnishings, lighting and graphics.

Policy 1.1.4 UNF shall establish as policy standards for the treatment of campus edges and required retention and other stormwater management elements.

Policy 1.1.5 UNF shall establish as policy standards for miscellaneous design elements such as open spaces and irrigation.

Policy 1.1.6 To enhance the quality of the experience in the outdoors, gasoline-powered or other noise producing landscaping maintenance devices such as leaf blowers, lawn mowers, trimmers and garbage/refuse collection trucks shall be limited to off-peak hours and other times where the general outdoor atmosphere is not compromised. When maintenance of facilities is necessary during peak use hours or in areas where people have gathered to read, study or socialize, maintenance personnel shall strive to minimize disturbance.

Policy 1.1.7 It is the intent of UNF to remove all non-native plants (whether grasses, shrubs or trees) which are identified in the Exotic Pest Plant Council's "Florida's Most Invasive Species List" from the campus grounds. As these species are located on campus, UNF shall coordinate with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and other appropriate governmental entities to ensure the proper removal and disposal of these exotic species.

Policy 1.1.8 Fire dependent plant communities in campus natural areas (such as sandhill, upland pine, and pine flatwoods), shall be prescribed burned at appropriate intervals.

Objective 1.2 **UNF shall establish review procedures for the landscaping plans and designs proposed for installation on University property.**

Policy 1.2.1 Landscape plans shall be included in the design packages submitted for review and approval by the Design Review Committee. The committee membership shall include at least one registered professional landscape architect who will be responsible for reviewing and, where appropriate, summarizing committee comments.

Policy 1.2.2 For landscape plans prepared independent of architectural/ facility plans, the designer shall be required to submit plans at the 30 percent (Conceptual Design), 60 percent (Design Development) and 90 percent (Final Design) stages.

Policy 1.2.3 The requirement for submittal of plans for review to the University shall not relieve the designer of securing the necessary design approvals from appropriate city, state and federal agencies.

Objective 1.3 **UNF shall establish priorities for the funding of landscape improvements, including improvements to remediate existing deficiencies and funding of facilities to improve accessibility for disabled persons.**

Policy 1.3.1 UNF shall fund the remediation of existing landscaping deficiencies in accordance with the following priorities:

1. Redesign/reconstruction of accessways most commonly used by disabled/handicapped persons to meet the requirements established in the Landscape Design Guidelines and applicable Florida Americans with Disabilities Accessibility Implementation Act and Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines measures, particularly as they relate to ramp slopes and curb cuts.
2. Establishment of a perimeter vegetative buffer along UNF Drive and Alumni Way with emphasis on existing open areas along unscreened parking areas and the recreation complex.
3. Introduction of landscape medians in existing expansive parking areas.
4. Additional screening for the Physical Plant and trash facilities.

Policy 1.3.2 UNF shall fund the planning, design and construction of landscaping in compliance with its Landscape Design Guidelines, adopted as part of this plan, as part of the total estimate of costs for implementation of any new or expanded facility on University property.

Policy 1.3.3 UNF shall require that the site and landscaping design for any new, renovated, rehabilitated or expanded facility include accommodation of disabled/handicapped persons as required by the Florida Americans with Disabilities Accessibility Implementation Act and Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines. This requirement shall extend to the open areas, green spaces and accessing walkways impacted by the new/redesigned facility.