

GROWTH & THE CAMPUS

Preserving and Enhancing the Clemson Experience

“This whole area is beautiful. Every time I walk through it, it reminds me of how lucky I am to be here.”

Senior, MyCampus Survey (referring to the Amphitheater and central part of campus)

“Additionally, the dining hall staff at Schilletter are always friendly, and I must request that if anyone of authority reads my comments please give Mrs. Sam and Mrs. Arsonia a raise because they have always put a smile on my face.”

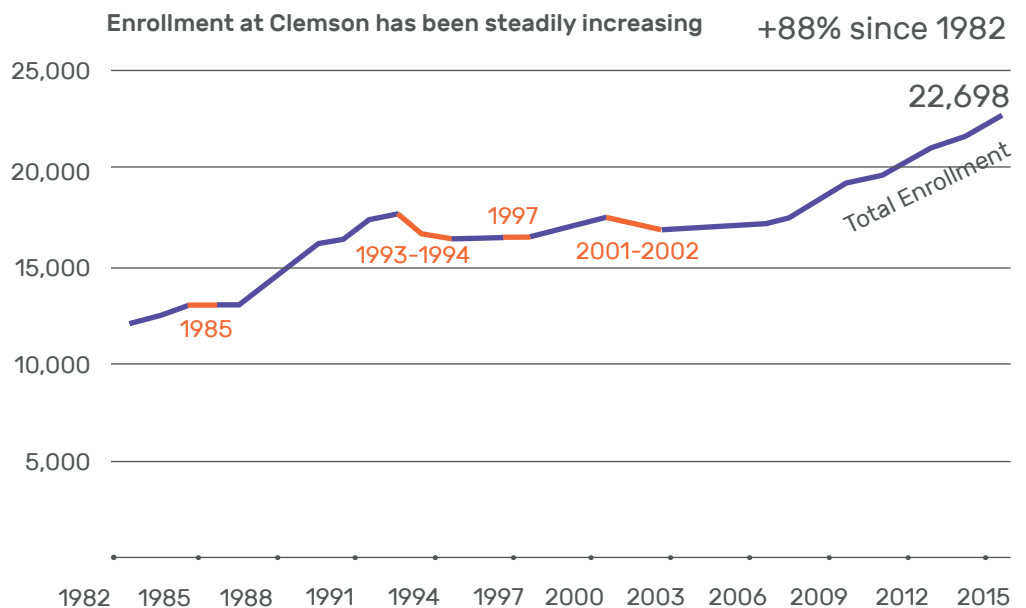
-Junior, MyCampus Comment

INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Enrollment Plan sets a course for 20% growth in undergraduate enrollment over the next 10 years. In addition, graduate student growth is expected to increase as well, based on the direction set by *ClemsonForward*.

Just as the Strategic Enrollment Plan provides an intentional course for the quantity of growth, the Framework Plan must be just as intentional and strategic about growth from a physical design perspective. The increases of about 4,000 undergraduate and 1,500 graduate students on campus results in needs for more spaces of all kinds—classrooms, housing, offices for new faculty, study areas, recreational spaces, dining, and beyond. At the heart of the Framework Plan is the question: How will we choose to grow?

TRENDS



Growth is not a new issue for Clemson; the university has been growing steadily since its early years and enrollment has nearly doubled in size since the early 1980s. What is different is that the main campus is reaching key thresholds regarding the use of its land. Land is limited within the established pedestrian core of the campus for accommodating additional space—as well as parking demand—in the same pattern as has been the case historically. Redevelopment and reuse of underutilized sites will be increasingly important; discussions about transportation demand management practices to limit the amount of new parking needed will also be essential.

Recent increases in enrollment have been absorbed largely in existing space, but limits are quickly being reached. The Framework Plan stakeholder interviews, space analysis, and MyCampus survey results all paint a common picture of space challenges. Classrooms, labs, and office spaces are at capacity; study space and recreation already are already falling short of demand; and the freshmen class has outpaced traditional beds on campus. Investments in academic space and housing that are underway will create much-needed swing space to allow renovations to occur, but additional space will be needed over the next 10 years to keep up with increasing demand.

CONSIDERATIONS

Through conversations and feedback, it is clear that growth needs to be accommodated in a way that will preserve the special sense of community and campus character at Clemson—in short: “Keeping Clemson ‘Clemson.’ ” Historically, the Clemson campus has played a key role in cultivating the sense of family. The Clemson campus has provided a shared, memorable setting for generations of students, faculty, and staff. Open spaces like Bowman draw together students and provide a common gathering space.

Looking at student paths in the MyCampus survey results reveals an interesting example of how campus structure promotes interactions. Regardless of year or major, the Library Bridge is a common route. The frequency of its use is a result of campus structure—the distribution of academic and student life spaces combined with the pattern of walkways on campus. The concentration of students along common paths ensures students see familiar faces; in addition, the picturesque setting above the reflecting pond contributes to the walk. Here, the combination of interaction and enjoying the campus create memories that build the Clemson experience.

The Library Bridge offers lessons for the Framework Plan: continue to promote walkability, organize space and paths to facilitate interaction, and ensure that major paths are punctuated by the beautiful open spaces of the campus. These lessons are very consistent with feedback received throughout the process so far, emphasizing the importance of walkability and preserving the signature open spaces and quality of the campus. In addition, emphasis in the feedback received has focused on the importance of promoting interactions between students—especially students of diverse backgrounds, majors, and interests.

OPPORTUNITIES

Thoughtful growth has the potential to further the Clemson experience. Feedback from the Campus Planning Task Force and others has included many key points that are relevant to preserving and enhancing the Clemson experience:

- Protect the iconic open spaces of the Clemson campus such as Bowman Field, Carillon Garden, Amphitheater, Reflecting Pond, and President’s Park, and enhance the scenic qualities of the campus, including its tree canopy
- Connect the campus; in particular, provide safe pedestrian connections across Walter T. Cox Blvd (Hwy 93)
- Focus academic uses in the central core of campus to ensure that a compact and walkable environment is maintained; renovation and new construction will be needed to meet academic and research needs
- Provide appropriate classrooms to promote active learning and desired teaching models, continuing the high quality of teaching and engaged faculty that are key parts of the Clemson experience.
- Increase the presence and visibility of research on the main campus
- Increase study space and recreational opportunities to meet growing demand—Clemson students are known for their emphasis on academics and active lifestyles
- Provide sufficient housing to allow the same percentage of students to live on campus who do today; focus on providing traditional beds for freshmen
- Strengthen connections to Lake Hartwell, the Snow Family Outdoor Fitness and Wellness Center, and the Experimental Forest

CONSTRAINTS

The largest constraint to growth is parking demand. With limited land on the main campus, continuing to increase the parking supply will require parking garages and/or finding new space for surface lots. Transportation demand management (TDM) will be key to limiting parking demand, and further promoting a walkable, bikable campus.

The Way Forward

How will Clemson grow? The resounding answer has been to continue to protect what makes Clemson special, while looking ahead to opportunities to further enhance interactions, build community, promote engaged learning, and add to the landscape framework that makes campus such a special place.

Direction for Growth - What we’ve heard:

- **Preserve the iconic landscapes, views, and structures of the Clemson campus**, and look for opportunities to enhance and expand these special spaces— especially in connection with new traditions

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- **Support a compact, walkable campus:** As Clemson grows, increased density will be a priority—preserving iconic open spaces while maintaining the walkable core. New development should respect historic spaces and view corridors, while looking for opportunities to define significant new open spaces where appropriate. **To do this, growth will need to be accommodated through the reuse of underutilized sites and renovation opportunities.**
 - **Campus land is valuable; locate the right uses in the right places:**
 - » Central campus core: Focus on academic uses and signature open spaces
 - » Adjacent zones: Mixed-use, student life neighborhoods anchored by distributed centers for campus life. Locate traditional housing in closest proximity to the academic core; apartment housing can be slightly further away.
 - » Next tier: Parking, athletics, and additional open space.
 - **Organize housing and student life spaces in “neighborhoods,”** complimented with distributed study and social space throughout campus. This promotes a sense of community through compact, mixed use districts. The Framework Plan should focus residential growth in existing residential districts, complimented with access to dining, social space, and other student life spaces.