2015-16 Physical Plant Overview

The 2015-16 fiscal year included a range of activities: planning, projects, and operations, with integration of sustainability into all areas.

Planning

The Campus Framework Plan, a Space Utilization Study of academic and administrative space and a Library Study were completed in spring 2016. Additional internal studies are underway to comprehensively assess the condition of approximately 750,000 square feet of academic and administrative buildings and campus utility infrastructure. These studies will guide campus development and inform renewal plans for capital and operating projects.

Major Capital Projects

Schematic design for the new athletics complex is expected to be completed during fall 2016. Preliminary Design was approved in April 2016 for the approximately 343,000 square foot building to be located immediately west of the Biomass Facility, and with easy pedestrian access from the central campus and the residence halls. The design team is led by Hopkins Architects from London.

A conceptual design study for a center for arts and innovation is underway by William Rawn and Associates. The center is anticipated to feature performance, instruction, and practice space for music, theater, dance, cinema studies, and multi-disciplinary innovation activities. The design study will be reviewed with the board at the October meeting.

The Baseball/Softball Complex was completed for the start of the spring 2016 season. This state-of-the-art complex makes Colby the first NESCAC college to feature synthetic turf fields for both sports, enabling their use much earlier in the season. The complex includes multiple batting tunnels for practice, artificial turf, and stadium lighting enable evening games and practices, and an extended playing season. The facility is also being used regularly by community-based teams and programs.

The Athletic Fields Relocation project has begun for two competition fields and one practice field. The artificial turf competition field will support field hockey, lacrosse, and soccer programs, as well as other varsity and recreational uses. The field will have sports lighting, a permanent game management area, and fixed seating for 300 spectators. The natural turf competition soccer field will have similar site amenities including game management and spectator seating. The third field will feature natural turf and serve as a practice field initially and expand to a full size rugby field in a later construction phase. The fields will be completed for the start of the fall 2017 season.

Perspective image looking south towards the campus, of the relocated athletics fields

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Aerial view of new Baseball and Softball Complex
The second phase of the observatory project is complete. A new building with a 15-foot diameter dome houses the new 28” PlaneWave telescope with software enabling computer automation of the observatory dome. Colby is the only school in the Northeast to have a telescope of this size and power.

The Dining Services Upgrades project that began during the summer of 2016 will improve several dining venues. In Cotter Union, the Spa and Caporale Lounge will feature better space layouts and seating, presentation, and service and the catering preparation area will also serve as a teaching kitchen. Renovations in Dana include the Dana servery and a new allergen-free room. A new mobile catering kitchen will expand event support. The upgrades are due to be completed by November 2016.

Construction for the Grossman Renovation and Addition began in the summer of 2016. The project will create a highly visible, welcoming location for the Center for Discovery, Global Impact, and Postgraduate Achievement, reflecting its strategic importance for the College. The renovated building will include counseling space, interview rooms, an online workstation area and staff offices. A two-story addition will include an expanded resource library and reception area on the ground floor, with flexible meeting rooms on the upper level. The meetings rooms and outdoor terrace to the south of the addition will create new interior and exterior gathering areas for the campus. The site and landscape are designed to integrate the building into the campus, and the project is targeting LEED Gold certification.

Energy Infrastructure
The Large Scale Solar Photovoltaic Power Purchasing Agreement has two phases: (1) extending the campus micro grid to the Washington Street storage building site; and (2) the solar facility construction. Upgrades of the College’s electrical micro grid are complete and the underground conduit has been installed from the senior apartments to the storage building site. During the following months, the electrical line will be extended through the conduit and connections terminated at both the apartments and storage building, to complete this phase in fall 2016. For the second phase, NRG, the solar facility developer has completed an additional study with Central Maine Power to determine an appropriate utility interconnection. With construction starting in spring 2017, the second phase is expected to be completed in fall 2017.

Operations and Services Highlights
The update of building sustainability standards to LEED v4 included new projects as well as maintenance and renovations. The addition of SITES (a site and landscape sustainability standard) to all relevant projects engages site utilities, infrastructure, and grounds operations. Changes in capital project processes have allowed better operations integration into project development and design.

The Integrated Pest Management policy was revised with student and academic staff participation to eliminate the use of neonicotinoids and to increase the use of natural management practices. The grounds team created native perennial gardens at Eustis and at the Alfond Senior Apartments, and began a natural turf management pilot.
in the Roberts Row and Dana lawns to restore soil health and reduce the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

Student engagement included more outreach to Campus Life and the Community Advisors. The annual Johnson Day where students work to help with the grounds and other campus maintenance, as well as the first SGA hosted lunch and student open house to showcase the diverse areas of work in our department. Facilities also participated actively in the redesign of the student orientation process, including greater awareness of the campus outdoor environment and sustainability related activities.

Other Activities

• A joint Human Resources-Physical Plant Safety Committee was formed to review and recommend improvements to occupational safety in the department. We had a safe year with no lost time injuries.
• The central heating plant and biomass facility continue to provide reliable thermal energy with no interruptions in the past year.
• More than 35,000 work orders were processed for a range of services to support events, maintenance, and other help requests. Event support for students, faculty, and staff by the grounds, custodial services, and shops crews comprised nearly half of the total volume of work.
• A milder winter helped with keeping roads and pathways cleared and also with piloting native plantings on campus.
• Physical Plant ended the year with operational expenditures on budget.