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**WKU begins drafting new campus facilities plan**

By AARON MUDD [amudd@bgdailynews.com](mailto:amudd@bgdailynews.com)

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Construction continues on the WKU First Year Village Student Residence Halls on Monday scheduled to open in Fall 2021. (Grace Ramey/photo@bgdailynews.com)

Grace Ramey

Western Kentucky University is gearing up this month for development of a new campus master plan that will help shape the next decade of construction, land use, transportation, sustainability efforts and a whole lot more on the Hill.

“We’re getting ready to have our first series of what I would call work groups (and) visioning sessions,” said Bryan Russell, WKU’s chief facilities officer, who’s helping coordinate the effort.

WKU’s previous master plan, which was launched in 2010, gave rise to a slew of construction and renovation projects that helped modernize the campus. A transformed student union, a new on-campus parking structure and a rebuilt science complex were just a few of the plan’s hallmarks. Overall, Russell said, the university sought to create a strong sense of place on the Hill.

However, Russell anticipates that WKU’s next 10-year master plan will take on a different focus.

“It’s a master plan with student success as our focus,” Russell said.

In a campuswide message last week, WKU President Timothy Caboni described the development of a new plan as a key element of the university’s 10-year strategic plan, Climbing to Greater Heights.

“Together, we will explore how we create spaces that facilitate engagement with each other, with our students, and with our communities,” Caboni wrote in a Feb. 11 message. “This planning effort signifies an important moment in our institutional history, where we pause and take the opportunity to rethink how our physical plant shapes interactions across all of our campuses.”



In coming weeks and months, he said, stakeholders from across campus and throughout the community will come together to create plans for land use, active learning spaces outside classrooms, transportation, sustainability and other areas. The effort to gather feedback will include a universitywide survey, workshops, interviews and walk-and-talk sessions around campus, he said.

In an interview Monday, Russell said the first leg of the campus “listening tour” will play out over a two-day period Feb. 26-27. During that time, workshops will be held with a group of several campus representatives, Russell said.

“That’s so that we can start to ... listen to faculty, staff, students” and community members, he said.

WKU is working with Gensler, a design and architecture firm, during the development process, which will play out over the spring and summer, Russell said.

Campus leaders also want to hold an open forum for stakeholders on campus at some point, he said. The campus will offer updates to faculty, students and staff as the process plays out, he said.

In his message, Caboni invited the campus community to share ideas and thoughts and to visit [wku.edu/pdc/master\\_plan/index.php](http://wku.edu/pdc/master_plan/index.php) for more information and opportunities to get involved.

“Once developed, the WKU Master Plan will envision future construction projects that are thoughtful and student-focused, while also advancing our strategic institutional goals. I appreciate your willingness to engage and share your voice as we make sure our campus remains an unmatched point of pride for decades to come,” he wrote.

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