

Woods Committee Report to the Faculty Senate
April 8, 2015

Highlights for 2014-15

The university has agreed to a conservation easement to cover a portion of part of the campus woods

We are challenging the university to better integrate the campus woods with the campus identity during the master planning process.

The committee is planning a call for proposals to fund projects that promote stewardship or facilitate integration of the campus woods with the campus identity.

Details

Conservation easement. The university has committed to creating a conservation easement for a portion of the campus woods. An easement—in conjunction with a conservation management plan—grew out of problems that arose during the salt barn project. The felling of trees across from the Wright State Physicians building may have impacted the habitat of the federally-endangered Indiana bat, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requested the university mitigate these potential impacts. The details remain, but both the university and Fish and Wildlife agreed on a framework that included both a conservation easement and a conservation plan for the campus woods. The salt barn will be relocated from the woods, to the soccer field between Mini U and Kauffman Road.

Campus woods – campus identity. Wright State is unique among universities in having a high quality natural area on campus. Other schools with on-campus natural areas include: Berry College, the University of the South (Sewanee), and Duke University. Each has branded their natural areas in ways that make them integral to their schools. Swenee's home page features their natural area with the headline: "Our Home, THE DOMAIN. Welcome to your 13,000 acre backyard and living laboratory." On their home page, Berry College touts "Explore 27,000 acres of opportunity." On their About Us webpage, they state "Berry has the world's largest contiguous college campus, spanning more than 27,000 acres of woodlands, meadows and streams." The next sentence mentions the number of buildings on campus and other amenities.

Few regional universities like Wright State have natural areas contiguous with campus. A peer institution—Western Washington University—has a small compact campus but they highlight the small natural areas they do have.

Our committee envisions using the master planning process to better integrate our woods with the campus in terms of both improving the trail infrastructure—

adding signage and named trails—and working with marketing and communications on a broader strategy to communicate about the woods with the broader campus community.

Call for proposals. To aid us in promoting stewardship and integrating the campus woods with the campus identity, we will have a call for proposals in September 2015. We will be funding projects on the order of \$3000 – \$10,000.

Respectfully submitted by Tom Rooney, Committee Chair