

Consultant's Report

*College of Wooster
Master Campus Wayfinding Plan*

February 16, 2012

DRAFT

WOOSTER

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Executive Summary

As part of the College of Wooster's current strategic plans to further its standing as a distinguished independent liberal arts college with a reputation as a "great place to live, learn and work," Rodger Motiska Design was retained by Dober Lidsky Mathey to supplement their campus planning efforts with the creation of a master campus sign wayfinding system to reflect these initiatives and the school's vision embodied in its marketing efforts.

Rodger Motiska Design is working with a Wayfinding Task Force made up of representatives from the college's administration, marketing, admissions, landscape and public safety staff. The groups charge is to address the following points:

- Define Key Issues the College faces in campus wayfinding;
- Recommendations for improving wayfinding and signage consistent with College of Wooster Mission, Vision, and Strategic Framework;
- Critical actions for implementing the recommendations of the Wayfinding Task Force.

RMD is working in a series of distinct phases to address these issues per a proprietary process that we have developed in over thirty years of experience (see attached for details.) This project will be addressed in four design phases

1. Research & Analysis
2. Ideation
3. Design Development
4. Final Design

Between May and July of 2011 RMD conducted a series of in-depth interviews with staff from Admissions (with responsibility for student visits,) Enrollment and College Relations, Public Safety and Facilities Management to ascertain the wayfinding needs of these various constituencies. During this time frame RMD also conducted the Research & Analysis phase of the project which included Experience Audits through a series of navigation exercises from the perspective of a "first-time" visitor. Existing conditions were documented and a wayfinding analysis of the campus to define pathways and key navigation decision nodes.

The results of the Research & Analysis phases were documented and presented to the Wayfinding Task force in July 2011. The report documented the existing conditions, wayfinding analysis; which included our perspective on the key wayfinding issues and our recommendations regarding the development of a wayfinding sign system for the college based on our research and analysis.

Based on input received from the Wayfinding Task force RMD proceeded to the next phase in the design process, Ideation. A total of five different preliminary concept design directions were developed and presented to the members of the Wayfinding Task force in August of 2011. The group favored one of the design directions (concept “A”) and based on their feedback RMD developed two concept directions for the wayfinding sign system. The review of the concepts has provided us with a direction that will blend the best of these designs into a final design for the system.

The next steps in the design process are heavily dependent upon the decisions made regarding the overall campus planning effort. These steps will include the conclusion of the Ideation phase to produce a final design for the system, Design Development in which the design will be further refined based on engineering details and reviews of prototypes and/or mock-ups of key sign elements, and concluding with the Final Design phase in which design intent drawings will be prepared along with sign message schedules (denoting what information will be on each sign,) a sign location plan and material/fabrication/installation specifications. The documentation in the Final Design phase will be assembled into a Master Campus Sign Plan document that will serve as the guidelines for the implementation of the wayfinding sign system.

Many thanks to members of the task force and other College of Wooster staff (including Steve Gault and George Mathey) for their invaluable insights and kind assistance on this project.

Wayfinding Sign System Master Plan - Design Process



Plan Phases

Research & Analysis

The planning process starts with a wayfinding analysis from a user perspective through behavioral studies and Experience Mapping to assess approaches, circulation and way points and define key decision nodes.

- Tasks**
- Experience Mapping - onsite reviews and digital documentation of various wayfinding scenarios.
 - Define Pathways/Circulation Routes for vehicular and pedestrian traffic
 - Assess current way points and needs for additional way points
 - Define Transition Points: Define Wayfinding Zones
 - Visitor Surveys both in print and online data collection. Present findings in a summary report

Meetings

- On-site Experience Mapping - 2 Days
- Behavioral Studies - 2 Days
- Present findings and Community Meeting - 1 Day

Deliverables

- Wayfinding Design Audit detailing results of the Wayfinding Analysis, Experience Mapping, Behavioral Analysis, Visitor Research.

Timing

2 - 4 weeks

Ideation

The design team will conceptualize the system architecture and define the types of sign that are required to answer both functional and brand issues.

- Tasks**
- Wayfinding Scripting - Looking at design needs based on the typical visitor scenarios.
 - Brainstorming, Mindmapping and visioning studies to explore design alternatives.
 - Wayfinding System Logic - Developing a system logic to refine system requirements; including issues related to safety and maintenance.
 - Define key sign elements
 - Define non-sign elements
 - Preliminary Site plan
 - Concept Design - Creating concepts for the dimensional and graphic styles for the sign system.

Meetings

- Character Studies Review
- Consultation meeting with Facilities personnel
- Initial Concepts Presentation

Deliverables

- Visual Character Study
- Initial Design Concepts

Timing

3 - 6 weeks

Design Development

During this process we will narrow down the design concepts to one design and develop design details to finalize the design, including fabrication details, material options, finishes and graphic formats.

- Tasks**
- Finalize system design
 - Draft system guidelines
 - Fabrication detailing
 - Reviews with Facilities personnel regarding materials, fabrication, installation and maintenance issues.
 - Materials, finishes and fabrication specifications. Develop preliminary budget estimates. Value engineering.
 - Sign Site Plan and Message Schedule for initial implementation.

Meetings

- Online reviews as required
- Review meeting with Facilities personnel
- Presentation of Final Design
- Prototype Installation

Deliverables

- Final Design drawings and specifications
- Sign Site plans
- Preliminary cost estimates
- Prototypes (Optional)

Timing

4 - 8 weeks

Final Design

A Master Wayfinding Sign Plan guidebook will be created that documents the sign types in elevation and plan views with specific guidelines for graphics, typography, sign messaging and sign placement will be created.

- Tasks**
- Finalize design of system
 - Create CADD drawings and specifications for bid documentation
 - Create Master Wayfinding Sign Plan guidebook.
 - Develop sign site plan for initial implementation
 - Develop sign and message schedule for initial sign implementation.
 - Final cost estimates.

Meetings

- Online design reviews as needed
- Presentation of Final Design and plans for initial implementation

Deliverables

- Final Design drawings
- Cost Estimates
- CADD drawings and specifications of design intent
- Master Wayfinding Sign Plan guidebook

Timing

4 - 6 weeks

Implementation

This phase involves the creation of bid documents and specifications. We can also provide Construction Management services to oversee the fabrication and installation of the sign system.

Tasks

- Preparations of Bid Documents and Specifications
- Construction Management
- Production of finished art

Meetings

- Online as needed

Deliverables

- Signage Bid Package
- Finished Art (Optional)

Timing

2 - 4 weeks

Research & Analysis

Wayfinding

What do we mean by the term *wayfinding*? To fully understand the design philosophy and process we use to arrive at an effective solution it is critical that we define what we mean by the term. We use the following to define what we mean by the term wayfinding:

Wayfinding is the art of using landmarks, signage, pathways and environmental cues to help first-time visitors navigate and experience a place without confusion.

When developing a campus wayfinding plan we work four primary elements:

1. Landmarks - easily identifiable reference points
2. Pathways - streets, sidewalks
3. Edges - boundaries such as walls and physical changes in the pathway
4. Zones - a large area with a distinct character

These elements help individuals navigate through the physical space and help to determine what type of directional signs are required and the “logic” of the system of signs to help individuals navigate their way around campus.

To help individuals navigate, we must consider four basic types of wayfinding information to incorporate into our system:

1. Orientation - *where am I?* in relation to my surroundings
2. Directional Information - what, where and how often
3. Destination Identification - answering “is this the place?”
4. Situation Identification - information to control behavior or to provide for the public’s safety

In making decisions about the design of the system and its individual elements it is also important to understand who the users will be and their potential needs may be. For this project we will be concerned with the following:

- Students/Staff
- Visitors - with an emphasis on prospective students
- Special Needs - handicapped and elderly
- Event Attendees
- Emergency Services

Wayfinding Goals

While each project we work on has specific goals related to their unique needs, there are two primary objectives that we feel are important to a campus wayfinding system. The first is to provide a positive visitor experience. This applies universally to all visitors and is especially critical to making a good impression on prospective students. The second primary objective is to enhance the school's brand by enhancing the campus *sense of place*, to reinforce the visual identity and differentiate the school in a meaningful way.

Wayfinding Experience Audit

We conducted "experience audits" through a series of navigation exercises that simulate the major pathways that visitors take to arrive at the campus and their end destinations on the campus.

Our navigation exercises were conducted based on the directions given on website for visitors coming from four major directions within the state; Cleveland, Akron, Canton, and Columbus. The focus was on directing visitors first to the Gault Admissions Center; then to other primary destinations on campus.

In the audit we looked at things from a visitor's perspective in relation to:

1. Off-campus - the approaches to the main campus from main arterial roadways
2. Gateways/Entrances - what is the sense of arrival?
3. On-campus - how easy is it to navigate by vehicle and on foot
4. Building Identification
5. Visitor Parking - how easy is it to find and information required for visitor parking

Our audit findings found that the primary concerns were on the vehicular approaches to campus and due to the small size of the campus there is little need for wayfinding signs other than initial orientation from primary arrival locations. It is difficult to find visitor parking; while campus parking maps available online show visitor parking areas, there are often only a few spaces available to visitors within those lots and they can be difficult to find. Also, the signs posted for visitor parking denote that a "visitor parking pass" is required, there is no information on where the Security office is located and finding the office is not easy for a first-time visitor.

Wayfinding Analysis

Results of Research & Analysis

Wayfinding in the traditional sense is not a major issue for a campus wide sign system as the College of Wooster is primarily a pedestrian oriented campus with few vehicular approaches to primary destinations. The small size of the campus with the majority of its academic buildings located at the core of the campus makes it fairly easy to navigate, by both vehicle or as a pedestrian. A few well-placed directional signs will aid first-time visitors and a couple of centrally located permanent campus map and printed maps will provide the necessary components to the college's wayfinding needs.

The greater need from a wayfinding perspective is helping first-time visitors navigate their way to the campus from the arterial roadways from major highways leading to the campus.

The larger challenge for a campus wide sign system is to help better distinguish the campus from the city of Wooster and create a more succinct "sense of place." It is critical that the sign system be used as a tool to better define the visual brand that is the College of Wooster. The system needs to compliment the visual marketing tools such as logo, color schemes and visual icons that represent the university.

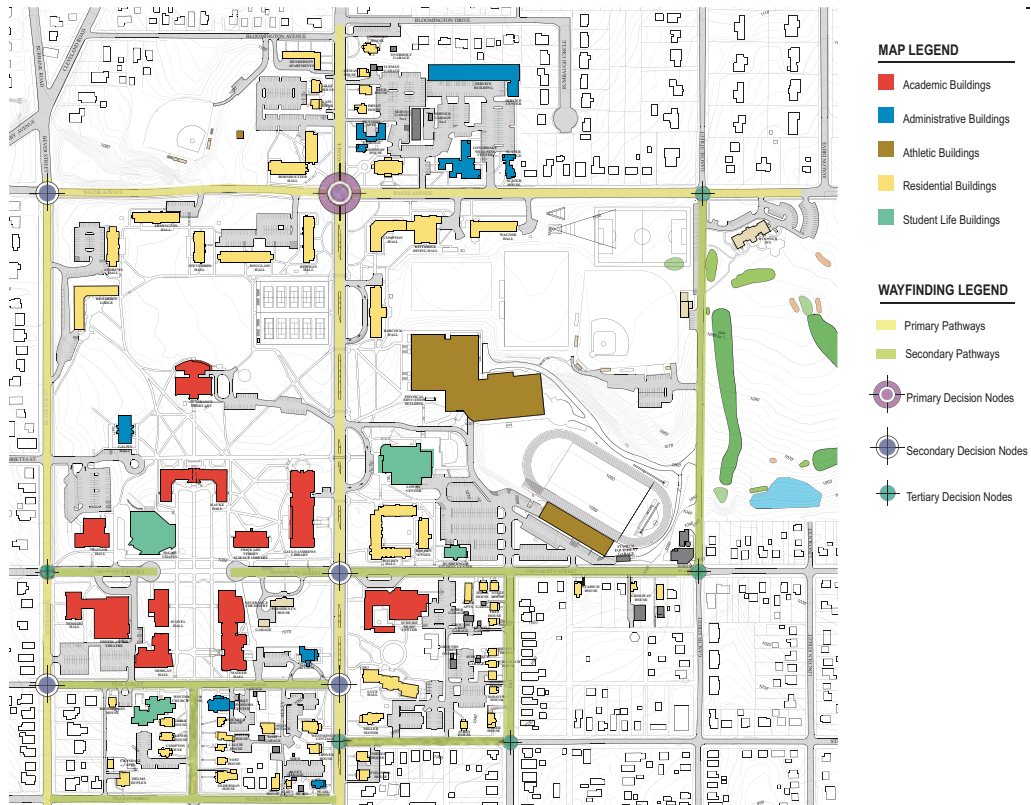
We also strongly advocate looking at how signage can enhance the visitor experience. This often means looking beyond what may be considered the scope of sign design. It is imperative that a well designed sign system works hand in hand with landscaping, streetscape elements and the architectural vernacular.

The current sign system, while consistent, is not visually appealing. In our opinion there are too many signs; they may help define the campus edges, but do so poorly. The recent streetscaping done at Beall should be considered an asset, even in light of the current traffic problems noted. It helps distinguish the campus from the city and creates a true "sense of arrival" on the campus. Additional enhancements to the perimeter of campus will further help distinguish the campus from the city.

The current signs lack consistency in typography and standards for information to be displayed. There needs to be a greater variety in types of signs and placement that will help navigation and create less visual chaos. Visitor parking needs to be better defined and the whole first time campus visit needs to be improved from directional signs, visitor information and parking. This also includes routing to events, athletic venues and identification of parking for visitors.

Campus Wayfinding Analysis

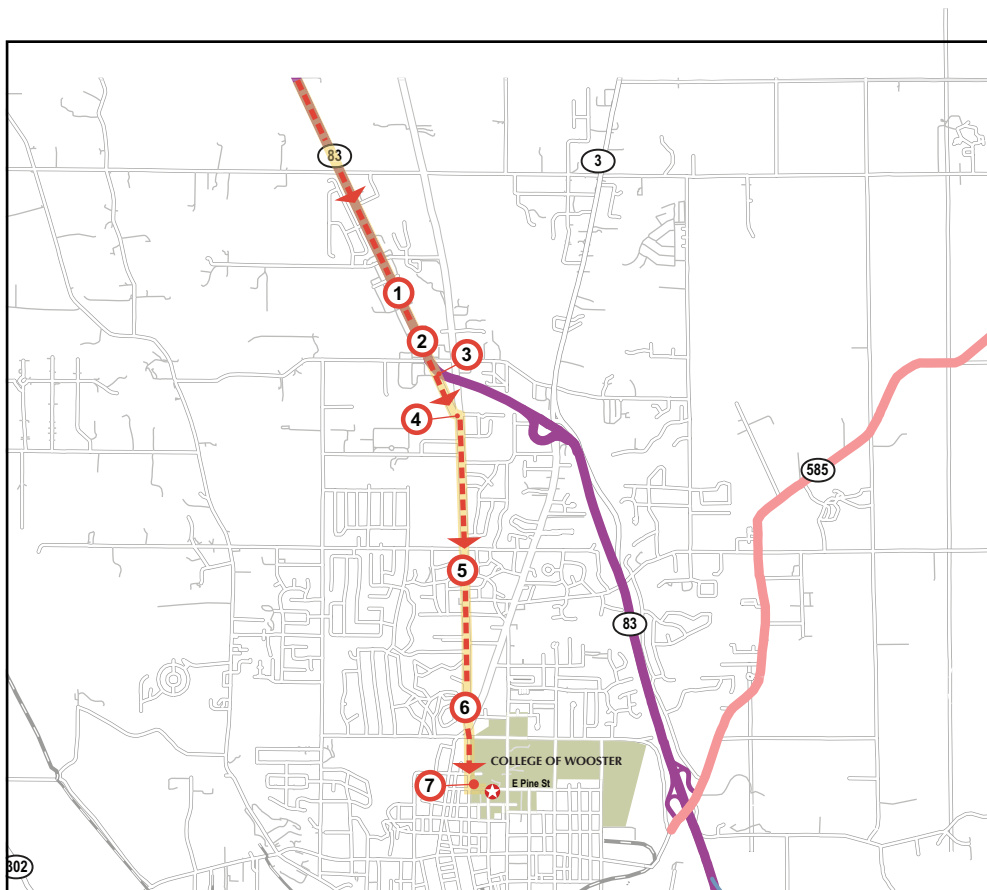
1. There are three primary roads critical to navigating the campus:
 - Beall Avenue
 - Bever Street
 - E. Wayne Avenue
2. In addition to these primary roadways, five additional secondary streets form the perimeter of the campus:
 - Pearl Street
 - Stibbs Street
 - Spink Street
 - University Street
 - Gasche Street (plans are under consideration to close off this street.)
3. University Street bisects the main campus, but is not a through street.
4. Pedestrian navigation is not a problem due to the small size of the campus and its layout.
5. Vehicular navigation primarily occurs at the perimeter of campus creating a primary decision Node at the intersection of Beall Avenue and E. Wayne Avenue.
6. Secondary decision nodes occur at:
 - Beall Ave and Pine St.
 - Beall Ave and University St.
 - Bever St. and Pine St.
 - Bever St. and E. Wayne Ave



Experience Audits

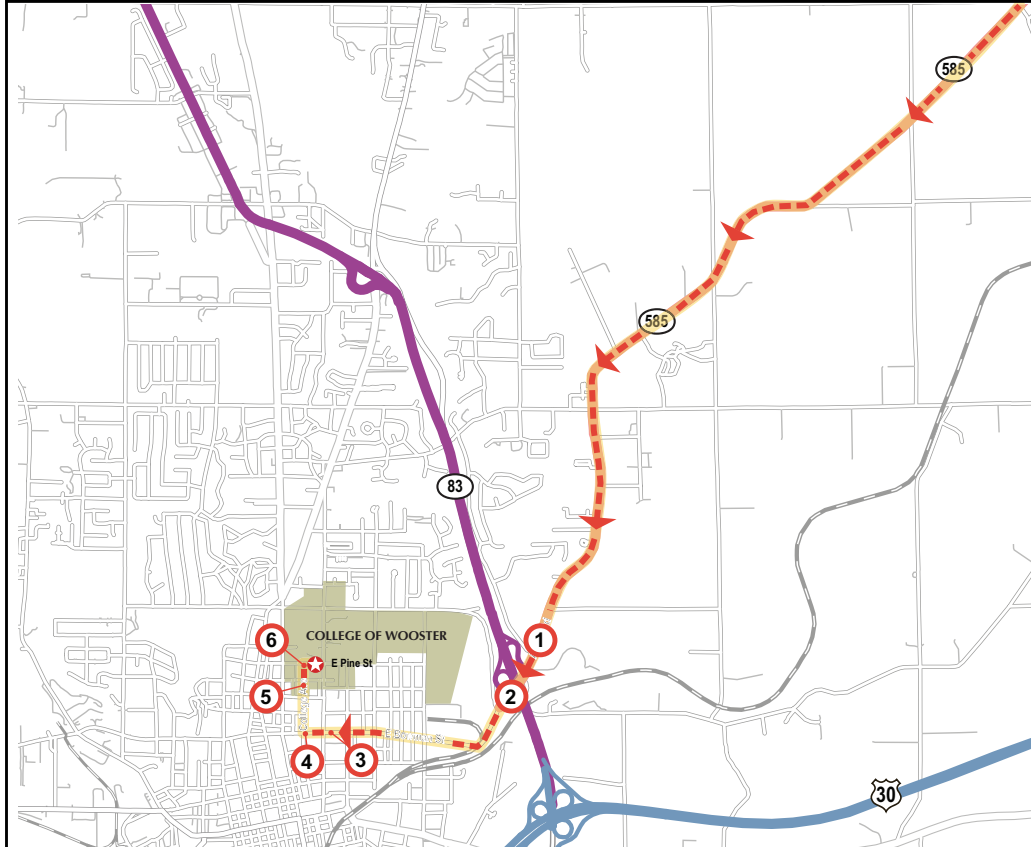
Off-campus Approach From Cleveland

1. There are no signs placed far enough back to allow driver to get into the correct lane.
2. DOT sign at the intersection of Rte 83 (Burbank Rd) and Milltown Rd.
3. DOT sign is placed at intersection sits too far back to be seen in time if a driver is in the wrong lane.
4. There are trailblazer signs on the route beginning at the intersection of Burbank and Friendsville Rd.
5. Sign at intersection is placed on opposite side of road and to the left, easy for a driver to miss (did not see first two times the pathway was negotiated)
6. Trailblazer sign graphics are not easily seen; graphics are not easily distinguished.
 - DOT directional sign at intersection of Burbank and Cleveland Rd is not far enough back to give driver warning if they are in the wrong lane.
7. Trailblazer sign is placed to far away to be easily seen from intersection.



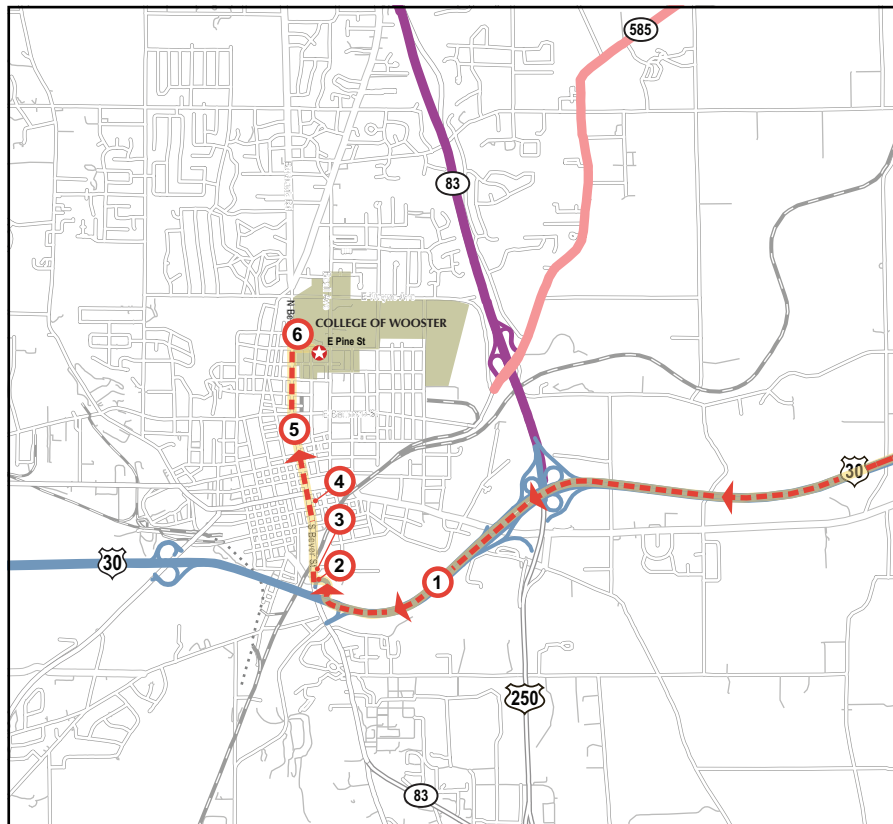
Off-campus Approach From Akron

1. Approaching Wooster there are no trailblazers to provide confidence that you are on the correct route.
2. There is a trailblazer at E. Wayne Ave, but it is confusing as directions to Admissions directs visitors to stay on Bowman St., rather than turning onto E. Wayne Ave as the sign indicates
3. Having additional trailblazers to provide confidence that you are on the correct route and to continue straight ahead would be helpful.
4. A directional trailblazer sign at intersection of College and Bowman would be helpful.
5. May also help to have a directional trailblazer at the intersection of College and Pine.



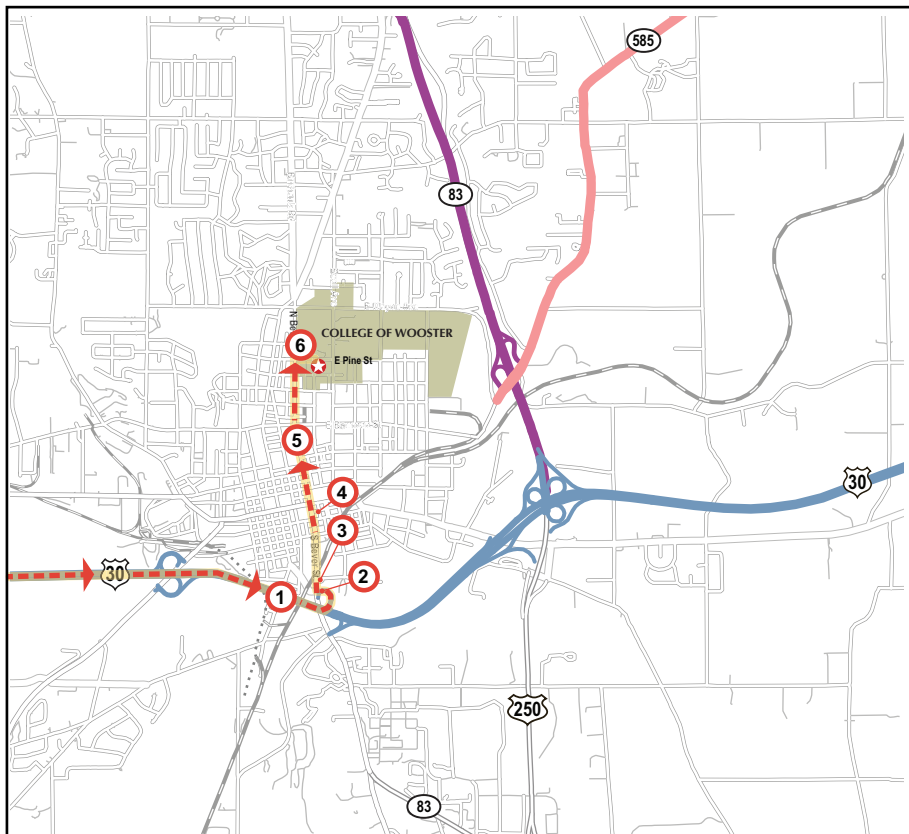
Off-campus Approach From Canton

1. Existing DOT sign on Rte 30 is good.
2. At the stoplight at the end of the off ramp there is a directional sign for Wooster; may want to consider adding a small COW trailblazer.
3. After making the turn onto Bever the road splits into a straight ahead and right hand turn onto Freedlander. Recommend a directional trailblazer so driver remains in the left-hand lane.
4. There is one trailblazer sign on this route, but, it does not carry any COW visual graphic identity.
5. There are a number of stoplights, some with left turn lanes and it would be helpful to have a “confidence” trailblazer near these intersections.
6. Existing vehicular directional at intersection of Bever and Pine should be maintained.



Off-campus Approach From Columbus

1. Existing DOT sign on Rte 30 is good.
2. At the stoplight at the end of the off ramp there is a directional sign for Wooster; may want to consider adding a small COW trailblazer.
3. After making the turn onto Bever the road splits into a straight ahead and right hand turn onto Freedlander. Recommend a directional trailblazer so driver remains in the left-hand lane.
4. There is one trailblazer sign on this route, but, it does not carry any COW visual graphic identity.
5. There are a number of stoplights, some with left turn lanes and it would be helpful to have a “confidence” trailblazer near these intersections.
6. Existing vehicular directional at intersection of Bever and Pine should be maintained.



Key Wayfinding Issues

1. Location of campus within city of Wooster does not always allow for easy delineation of campus boundaries; diminishes a visitor's "sense of arrival."
2. A primary challenge for first time visitors is finding the campus; there is a need for trailblazer signs to help guide visitors.
3. There is a lack of vehicular signs for primary destinations other than Admissions.
 - Need signs to address three primary types of visitors:
 - Prospective Students
 - Special Events (Arts, Conferences, Camps)
 - Athletic Venues
4. Visitor parking needs to be better identified and signs for finding Security, and other locations where parking passes may be obtained, needs to be addressed.
5. Need to add campus maps and information at key locations
 - Recommend providing information to facilitate self-guided tours of campus for those times when visitors make unscheduled visits to campus (especially when the visitor center is closed.)
6. Size of the campus does not require pedestrian wayfinding signage if permanent maps can be placed at key locations.
7. Gateway signs do not reinforce visual identity, lack consistency and are difficult to see (especially at night as they are not lighted.)
8. Need a way to have a consistent method of building identification.
 - Mix of building mounted and freestanding signs
 - Determine whether building identification signs are needed for vehicular traffic.
9. Handicapped accessible entrances need to be identified and handicapped trailblazer signs are needed where the entrances are not clearly visible from the primary pathways.

10. Enhance gateways to improve visibility and create an enhanced “sense of arrival”
 - Add lighting to key entrance signs
11. Explore possibility of having a unique street sign design for use on campus and along campus boundaries to help better define the edges of the campus.
12. Sign system needs a consistent visual identity to help reinforce image objectives.
 - Logos and graphics that reinforce visual identity used in published and electronic communications
 - Color schemes that reinforce image
 - Sign designs that work with campus architecture and better reflects the spirit and identity of the school.
13. Add clearly visible street addresses to buildings for emergency response vehicles.
14. Other considerations:
 - Route prospective students to campus to come in on Beall rather than Bever
 - Beall is the “heart” of the campus and is more visually appealing (especially with the new streetscaping) and gives more of a sense of being “on campus.”
 - Bringing visitors in on E. Wayne is also a much more impressive pathway as it brings them by the golf course, the Wooster Inn and the athletic fields.

Recommendations

Off-campus Wayfinding

A majority of visitors will be traveling to the campus by motor vehicle, a critical need is to assist navigation from arterial roadways to the campus.

1. Trailblazers are needed on arterial roads from major highways to help direct visitors to the campus:
 - Some will be directional.
 - Others will be “confidence” markers.
2. Recommend that prospective students be brought to Admissions on Beall instead of Bever.
 - This would also include bringing visitors from Cleveland and Akron in on E. Wayne to Beall.
3. Improve graphics of trailblazers to make them more distinctive
4. Placements and directions that allow drivers time to navigate into the proper lanes where changes of direction occur.

Gateways/Entrances

Gateways serve to provide a “sense of arrival” and reinforce your institution’s identity or branding at the entry points to the campus.

- Gateways should include graphic visual identity elements - conveying a message of quality, stability and prominence.
 - Landscaping and other elements should help define the edges of campus from its surroundings.
 - A distinctive landscaping and hardscaping informs motorists that they are entering a special pedestrian oriented district. This serves to both help reinforce the college’s identity objectives and safety interests.
1. Improved gateways to define campus edges, reinforce college’s identity and create a better “sense of arrival.”
 2. Create continuity of design to reinforce identity.
 3. Gateway features should include lighting for nighttime visitors to events, conferences and athletic venues.

On-campus Wayfinding

The size of the campus and its and its campus plan make pedestrian navigation fairly easy. While the campus is small, motorists navigating the campus would benefit from the addition of vehicular directionals for primary destinations of first-time and infrequent visitors, including entertainment events, conferences, camps and athletic venues.

1. Add vehicular directional signs at primary and secondary decision nodes to primary destinations, that includes administrative offices, special events and athletic venues.
2. Add permanent map/information at key locations to assist pedestrian wayfinding.
 - Include hard copies of maps at these destinations and possibly QR codes for downloading information onto smart-phones or electronic tablets.
 - Provide information for self-guided tours for times when Admissions office is closed.

Visitor Parking

1. Visitor parking should be identified with a lot sign visible from the street.
 - If only a few spaces are available for visitors within a lot, then there should be signs that direct visitors to those spaces and the spaces should be clearly identified.
2. Printed and web-based directions for visitors should note that parking permits are required for visitors and note how/where they can obtain permits.
3. Signs just beyond campus gateways should note that visitors must obtain parking permits at Safety & Security.
4. Vehicular directional signs should provide directions to Safety & Security.
5. Safety & Security office needs a highly visible sign noting their location and where a visitor can park to obtain a permit.

Building Identification

1. Recommend that all buildings have an architectural building-mounted sign located near the primary entrance.
 - a. Eliminate smaller pedestrian oriented sign at the primary entrances.
 - b. Due to the nature of Neo-Gothic architecture it may not be possible to integrate a building-mounted sign for every build, requiring a free-standing sign place near the primary entry.
2. For secondary entrances recommend a building-mounted plaque type sign located near the entrance.
 - a. If the secondary entrance is not visible from primary pathways, then add a smaller free-standing sign to denote the entry point.
3. Add street address to buildings.
 - a. Separate sign from architectural signs
 - b. May be added to freestanding signs
4. For large buildings that are set back from the street consider use of larger freestanding ground-mounted signs placed near the street.

Special Needs

1. Accessible entrances should be identified with a small plaque located adjacent to the entrance.
2. Use of handicapped trailblazers should be placed adjacent to walkways to guide visitors to accessible entrances if the primary entrance is not handicapped accessible.

Other

Because the campus sits within the city of Wooster and is bounded by public streets it is important to define the edges of the campus to help set it apart from the city proper to give the school its own “sense of place.” This also helps identify the area as a pedestrian oriented district to motorists.

1. In addition to the banners placed on Beall, recommend place banners at the outer edges of the campus along the roadways.
2. Explore the possibility of having unique street sign blades for the campus that are distinct from those used by the city.

Ideation

Preliminary Concepts

Following review of the results of the Research & Analysis Phase with the Wayfinding Task Force preliminary concepts for a campus wide sign system were developed. Five different concepts were developed expressing a range of directions. Only a few of the recommended sign types were designed and illustrated to establish a variety of potential design directions.

Design objectives to guide our design efforts were developed based on interviews with staff and from our Task Force meetings.

- To better reflect the College of Wooster's visual brand identity.
- To more fully integrate the signs with the campus architecture.
- Improve wayfinding to and around the campus.

The college currently utilizes the wordmark "The College of Wooster" in its print and web based media. Aside from athletics, a stylized logo of Kauke Hall and the Wooster "W" are used in various forms of visual identity.

Brand statements used include *Independent Minds, Working Together* and *America's Premier College for Mentored Undergraduate Research*.

Based on our observations and interviews we would assign the following "brand traits" to the college:

- Quality
- Sense of Community • Forward Looking

These brand or image traits were used to help develop the direction of our design efforts for the campus wayfinding sign system. The following items were also used to guide our conceptual efforts:

1. Tradition and Pride - a prestige that we would liken to those of Ivy League schools.
2. To incorporate the vibrancy and colors used in college's visual communications.
3. To bring some relation to the school's unique plaid - an historical reference.

Preliminary Concept A



Preliminary Concept B



PERSPECTIVE - BUILDING ID



Preliminary Concept C



PERSPECTIVE - BUILDING ID



PRIMARY FREESTANDING BUILDING ID

VEHICULAR DIRECTIONAL

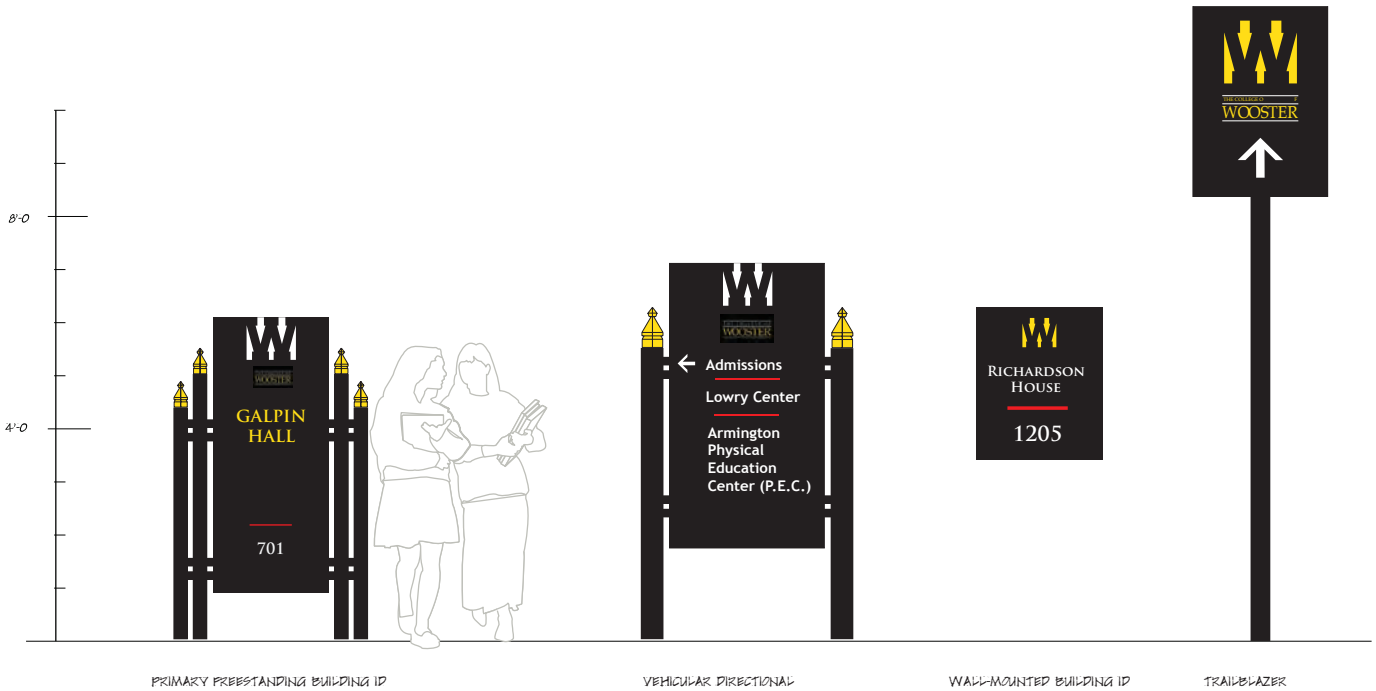
WALL-MOUNTED BUILDING ID

TRAILBLAZER

Preliminary Concept D



PERSPECTIVE - BUILDING ID



PRIMARY FREESTANDING BUILDING ID

VEHICULAR DIRECTIONAL

WALL-MOUNTED BUILDING ID

TRAILBLAZER

Preliminary Concept E



PERSPECTIVE - BUILDING ID



Concepts

Based on feedback from the Wayfinding Task Force that preliminary Concept A was the best direction with some concerns regarding maintenance and proper use of visual identity elements, we undertook revisions to arrive at two conceptual directions for further review.

The concept revisions incorporate the feedback from the task force and look to strengthen the new visual identity guidelines into the sign design. The concepts also further expands on the variety of sign types required for the campus wayfinding system.

Concept 1

Concept 1 is an update to preliminary concept “A”. The primary freestanding sign features a layered face with carved type for the building name with a gold inlay. The college seal has been replaced with the college’s stacked wordmark; gold letters with white rules. Solid supports are added to the post; eliminating any voids than may cause maintenance problems.



Concept 1 - System



Concept 2

Concept 2 is an optional concept with a sign face modeled on Kauke Hall's archway and decorative posts that reflects the campus architecture. A heavy top border is created (on Primary Freestanding Building signs a 1/2" reveal is added) painted to match PMS 123 gold. The stacked wordmark is used as an identifying feature; gold letters with white rules.

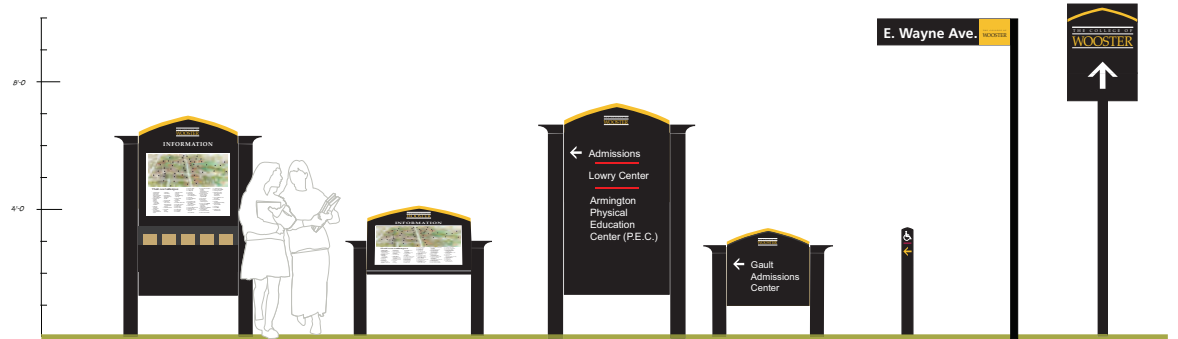


Concept 2 - System



Gateway Entry Sign

Building Identification Signs



Information Kiosk

Campus Map

Vehicular Directional Signs

Handicapped Trailblazer

Street Sign

Vehicular Trailblazer