



**Press Release  
October 2021**

**Lesley University announces plans to make major investments in its three Cambridge campuses to innovate and transform its learning environment and public spaces for university and community benefit.**

- **Intends to invest in major capital improvements over the next three to five years**
- **Goals include better aligning spaces with Lesley’s unique academic programs, sustainably revitalizing facilities and the landscape, and further connecting and integrating the three campuses**
- **Preliminary concepts include focusing real estate portfolio to narrow footprint and increase efficiency while adding critical facilities**
- **Looks forward to partnering with Cambridge community to achieve best possible outcome.**

**CAMBRIDGE, Mass.** — Lesley University announced plans to make significant investments in its three Cambridge campuses to enhance the student learning potential and better support its unique suite of programs around the human arts of teacher education, counseling and psychology and creative and visual arts. The plans will improve and modernize the facilities to reflect Lesley’s innovative approach and better integrate and utilize each of the campuses and their respective public spaces.

Lesley will begin a community engagement process during the Fall of 2021 to more specifically describe its vision and solicit input from city officials, neighborhood residents and other stakeholders on how Lesley can best align its goals with those of the Cambridge community to create environments that welcome and inspire everyone who inhabits these spaces.

In describing the vision for the campus plan, President Janet L. Steinmayer stated, “We are very excited about the potential for this plan to enhance the learning environment for our students and solidify Lesley’s standing as a leader in human arts education through disciplines that foster the deep human connections essential to a healthy society. We will be investing in major capital improvements over the next three to five years and have engaged a talented team of architects, designers, and real estate professionals to help us fully realize this vision. Lesley is deeply committed to remaining a good neighbor

and community partner and seeking mutually beneficial enhancements to our campuses that invest in the potential of our students and our community. We are confident that the changes we envision will be well-aligned with Cambridge’s needs and values.”

Early projects to potentially include:

- Renovations to several key buildings on the historic former Episcopal Divinity School campus such as: transforming St. John’s Chapel into a multi-use performance space and black box theater; restoring Reed Hall, the centerpiece of that campus on Brattle Street; and renovating each of the student residence halls over a three-year period.
- Revitalization of its flagship University Hall in Porter Square to provide a defining and more welcoming entry, and state of the art classrooms and academic offices, while continuing to house a vibrant mix of retail businesses to serve neighborhood and student needs.
- Landscaping and outdoor seating across all three campuses designed to retain the distinct architectural and neighborhood context and provide a more welcoming and cohesive campus identity and sense of place for Lesley and its neighbors.

As part of its overall multi-year campus plan, Lesley intends to sell several buildings that are either underutilized, vacant or not well-suited to its programmatic needs and reinvest the proceeds in a range of capital improvements to yield significantly better facilities overall. Narrowing the breadth of facilities will also increase the school’s energy efficiency, sustainability and accessibility.

Together, these changes aim to position Lesley to meet the evolving educational needs of its diverse student body while contributing positively to the cultural and economic vitality of the Cambridge community.

### **Campus Planning Partners**

Lesley is working with local and New England-based partners Austin Architects, Centerbrook Architects and Planners, Stimson Studio, and Group C to conceive and execute the architectural, landscaping and other work described above. Cushman & Wakefield will broker the real estate sales. Leggat McCall Properties and Graffito are consulting on development and retail strategy.

### **About Lesley**

Lesley University—located in Cambridge, Massachusetts, one of the most dynamic learning environments in the country—uniquely focuses on the human arts, with programs that live at the intersection of education, counseling, and the visual arts.

Lesley students study across four schools and colleges—a professionally-focused liberal arts college, an independent college of art and design, a graduate school of education, and a graduate school of social sciences—as well as in the Threshold Program, a residential program for students with a variety of learning differences.

We educate the people—the teachers, counselors, therapists, social workers, artists, policy makers, writers, and business leaders—who practice these arts, and act as catalysts for a more connected and just world.

**For more information**

Please visit [Lesley.edu/Campus-Plan](https://lesley.edu/Campus-Plan) or email [CampusPlan@lesley.edu](mailto:CampusPlan@lesley.edu).

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