

Landscape Measure

Animating the University Landscape to Promote Social Distancing

@Roger Williams University, Bristol, Rhode Island
#landscapearchitecture #architecture #ecologicaldesign #covid19 #socialdistancelandscape

LEONARD YUI, AIA, LEED AP
Associate Professor of Architecture
Hassenfeld Faculty Fellow, Sustainable Studies Faculty
School of Architecture Art & Historic Preservation
Roger Williams University
lyui@rwu.edu

Director
Wildish Design
www.wildishdesign.com

A University Landscape that...

- provides a safer learning environment
- requires minimal cleaning and maintenance
- teaches social distancing; self-organizing
- encourages outdoor socializations
- reduces interior space loads
- utilizes unused outdoor spaces
- offers significant value while saving \$ + Time
- supplies biophilic (nature) engagement

Students can quickly self-organize

OUTDOOR spaces are

18.7 x

less contagious than

INDOOR environments

Nishiura, H., Oshitani, H., & Kobayashi, T. (2020). Closed environments facilitate secondary transmission of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). medRxiv. <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.02.28.20029272v2>


"...of more than 7,300 cases in China,

just **ONE** was connected to **OUTDOOR** transmission."

Qian, H., Miao, T., Li, L. I. U., Zheng, X., Luo, D., & Li, Y. (2020). Indoor transmission of SARS-CoV-2. medRxiv. <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.04.04.20053058v1.full.pdf>
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/15/us/coronavirus-what-to-do-outside.html>

Share!

K-8 schools, libraries, museums, government spaces, parks, camps, places of worship, corporate parks, daycares, backyards, etc.

Creative Commons 
Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

Questions & Photos welcomed:
lyui@rwu.edu

Wildish Design

Easy Maintenance

The design prioritizes the important landscape maintenance related factors:

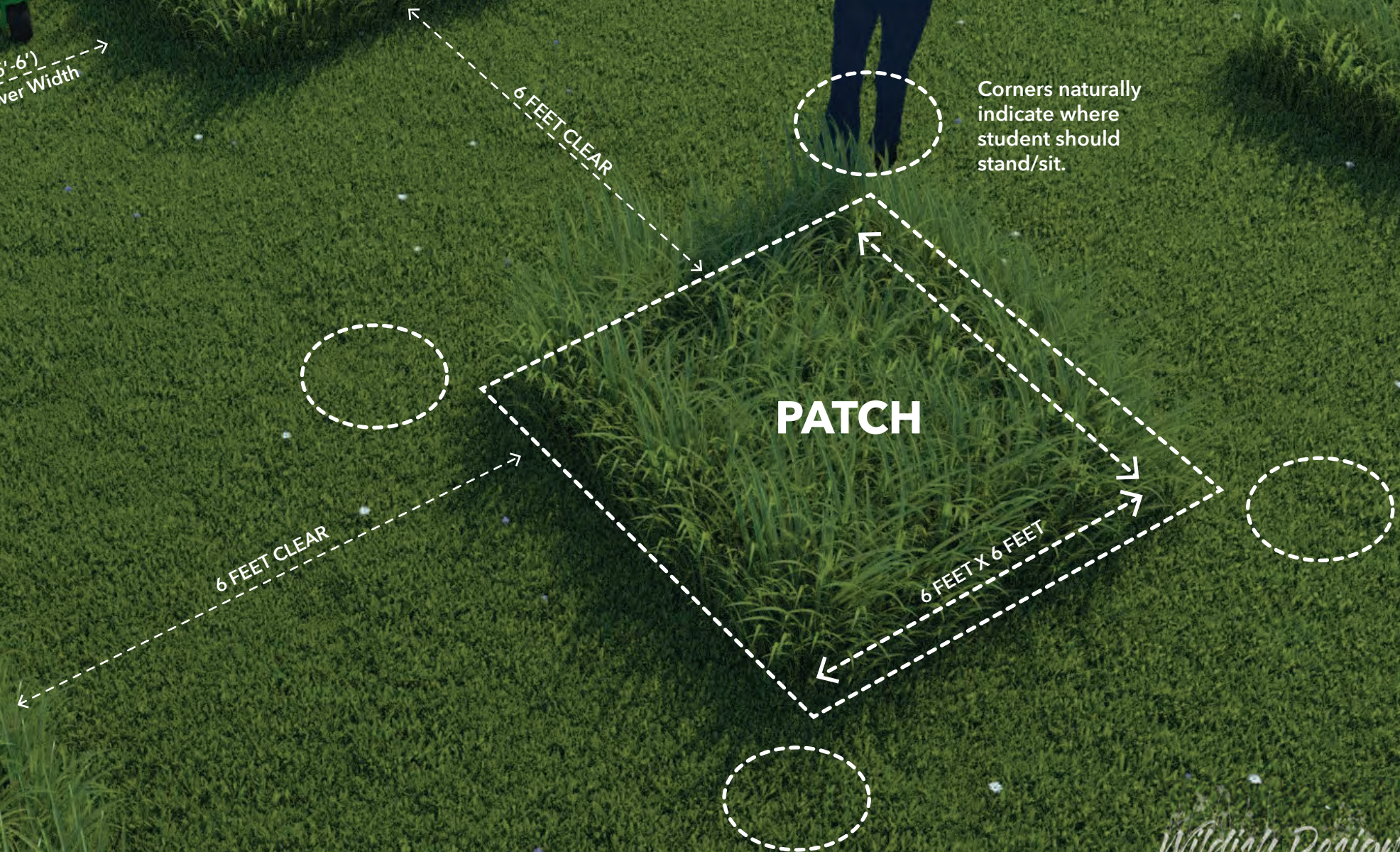
- **6' Paths:** Pathways are 6' clear for social distancing and allows for typical industrial rider mower width (60"-72").
- **Efficient Grid:** Simple grid pattern allows for speedy maintenance. The end of the pathways have extra space to allow the rider mowers to turn.
- **Mow Less - Save \$:** 50% of the grass will be left to grow decreasing the overall amount to cut. This will save on fuel, labor, expense and time. It even provides ecological activities. A great return on investment (ROI).
- **Minimal Intervention:** The design can be easily reset if desired and requires minimal materials and costs.



60" - 72" (5'-6')
Standard Mower Width



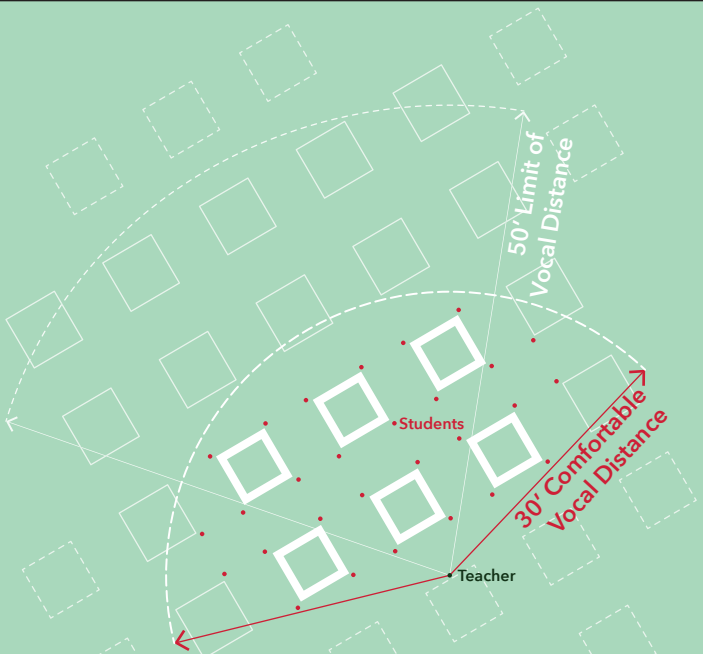
Corners naturally indicate where student should stand/sit.



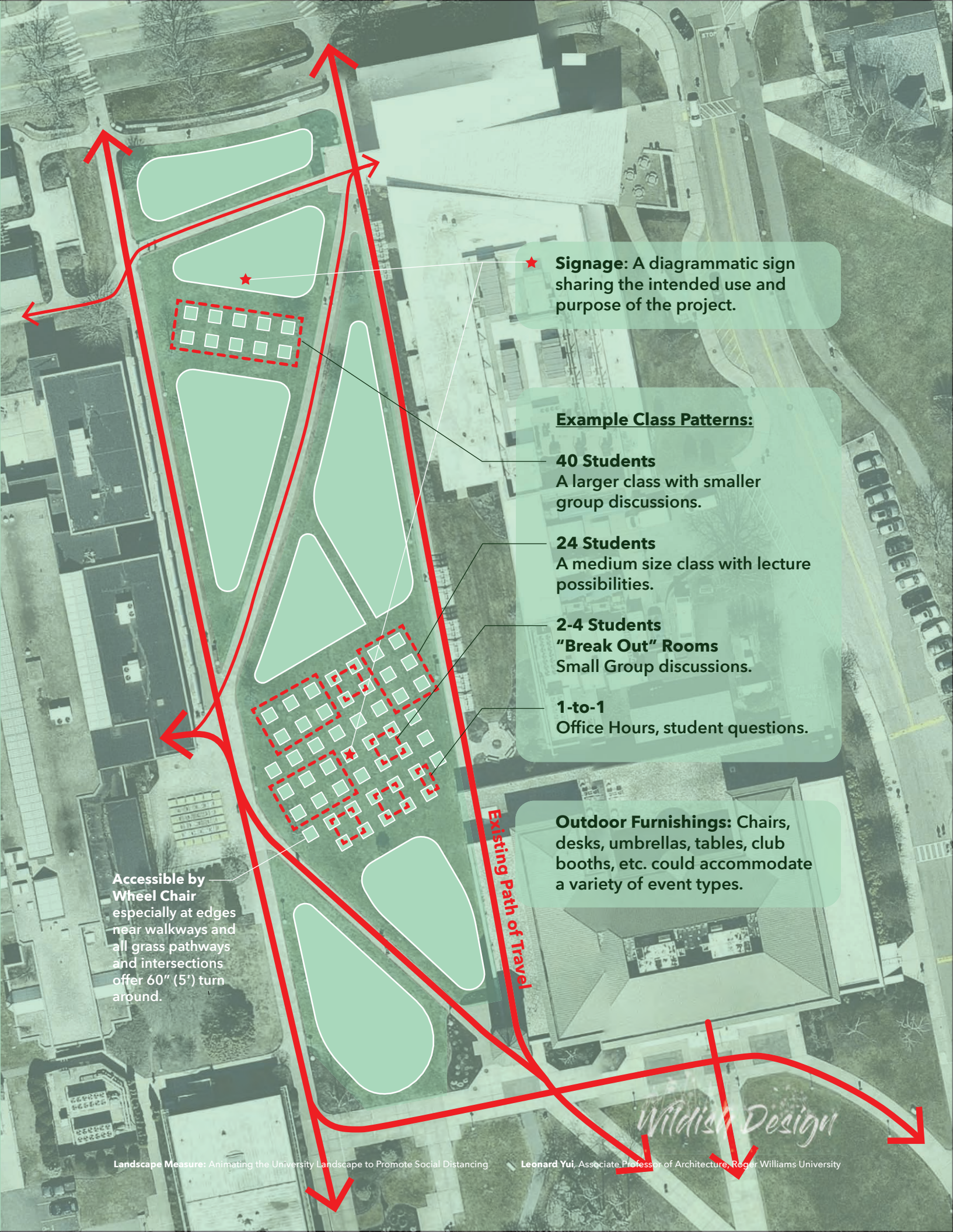
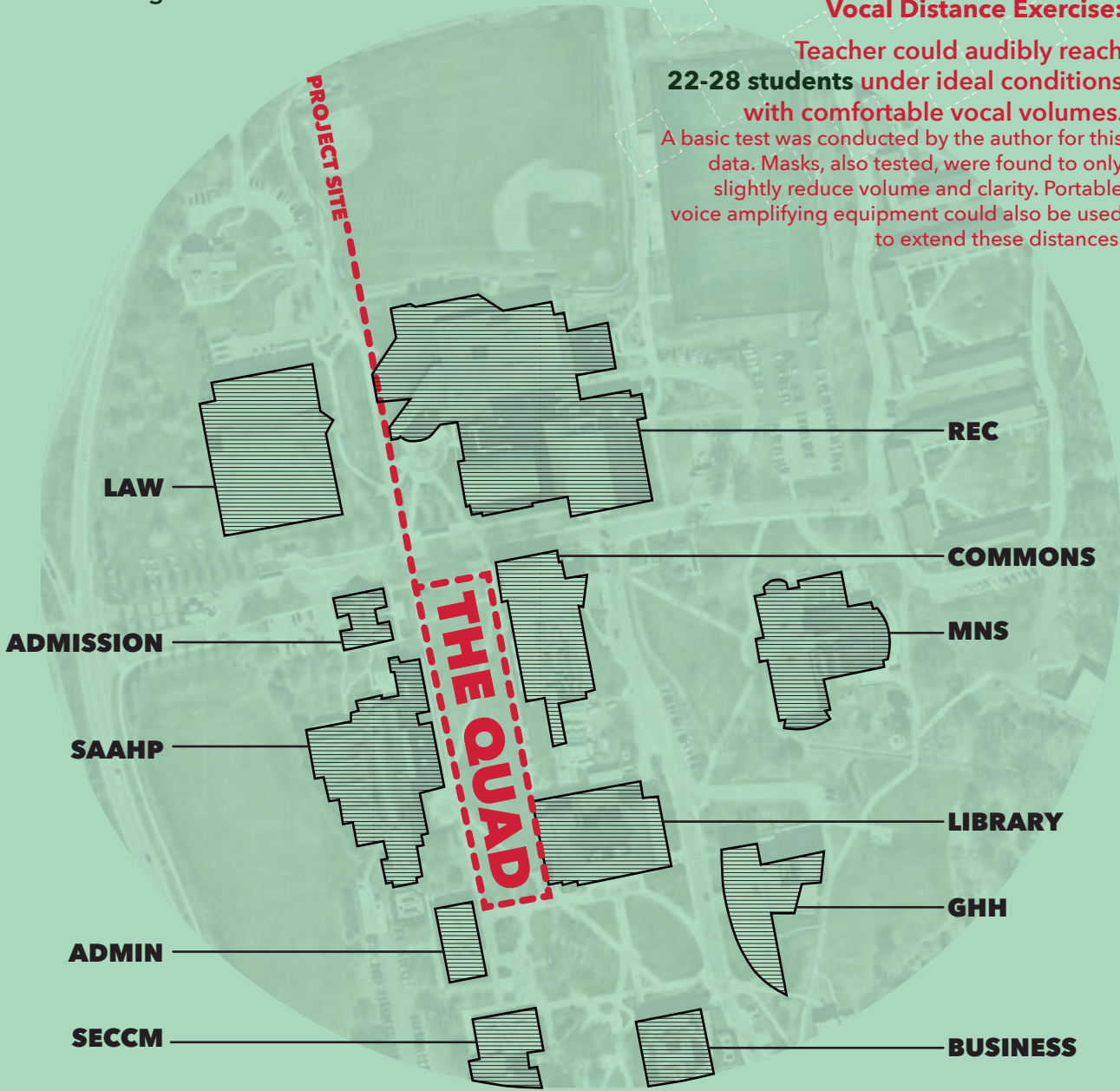
Wildish Design

Location

The Quad is central to university life and already has key walkways that bring high volume of student traffic. Yet its limited spatial definition, like seating areas, places to rest, etc, leaves the Quad relatively underutilized during the year. Small interventions that allow for pause on the landscape could help to build a sense of student community while providing a safer framework for socializing.



Vocal Distance Exercise:
Teacher could audibly reach 22-28 students under ideal conditions with comfortable vocal volumes. A basic test was conducted by the author for this data. Masks, also tested, were found to only slightly reduce volume and clarity. Portable voice amplifying equipment could also be used to extend these distances.



★ **Signage:** A diagrammatic sign sharing the intended use and purpose of the project.

- Example Class Patterns:**
- 40 Students**
A larger class with smaller group discussions.
 - 24 Students**
A medium size class with lecture possibilities.
 - 2-4 Students**
"Break Out" Rooms
Small Group discussions.
 - 1-to-1**
Office Hours, student questions.

Outdoor Furnishings: Chairs, desks, umbrellas, tables, club booths, etc. could accommodate a variety of event types.

Accessible by Wheel Chair especially at edges near walkways and all grass pathways and intersections offer 60" (5') turn around.

Land Art

'A work of art when placed in a gallery loses its charge, and becomes a portable object or surface disengaged from the outside world.'

Robert Smithson, Landscape Theorist and Land Artist
"Cultural Confinement"

The pandemic highlights a discussion about learning spaces that are largely hidden behind expensive university walls, tangled with technologies and buttressed by the beautiful gallery of underutilized landscapes. The landscape historian Louise Monzingo refers to these outdoor spaces as products of "pastoral capitalism," which are meant to reinforce "elite American values as a whole." The global pandemic coupled with the great social unrest of 2020 suggests an opportunity, if not need, to rethink these open spaces to more critically and artfully serve the **academic community**.

The project design presented here is situated in an emerging set of pandemic related design projects. In Elblag, Poland an art gallery landscape was cleverly transformed into lawn checkerboard to encourage social distancing. In New York, turf at Domino Park was painted with white circles to space groups of people from each other. Other more formal precedents in landscape architecture such as Juan O'Gorman's gridded quad in front of UNAM Library in Mexico City, Maya Lin's "Wave Field" at the University of Michigan, Dan Kiley's "South Garden" at the Art Institute of Chicago, W Architecture and Landscape Architecture's "West Harlem Piers Park" and the traditional use of mown edges in agrarian landscapes are a just few points of inspiration for this design.



Cues to Care

"Cues that indicate human intention are cultural symbols that can be used to frame more novel ecosystems in inhabited landscapes."

Joan Nassauer, Landscape Theorist
"Messy Ecosystems, Orderly Frames"

Visual Cue:
6' wide mow border around all grass islands to (1) produce visual and spatial appeal while reducing labor and fuel costs (2) increase ecological activities and engagement.

Taller grass with greater opportunity for pathways of ecological activity.



15 Students
Medium Classroom

1 Student
Banana Time

4 Students
Bare Feet
"Break Out"
Rooms

Shoes off, spread your toes, and glide!

More than Classrooms...

Lunch Time
Quiet Time
Lament Time
Banana Time
Study Time

Nap Time
Date Time
Office Time
Wild Time
Dream Time

Indoor spaces will benefit greatly if students are drawn to outdoor places. Every small decision to conduct business outside, X 1000s of students, could help to lessen exposure inside and also promotes the opportunity to engage social conversations in a significantly safer setting. The design can accommodate a variety of gathering scales (1-100+ humans) and although the grounds are configured, it allows for - encourages - new possibilities for socializing, learning and teaching yet to be defined.

Wildish Design