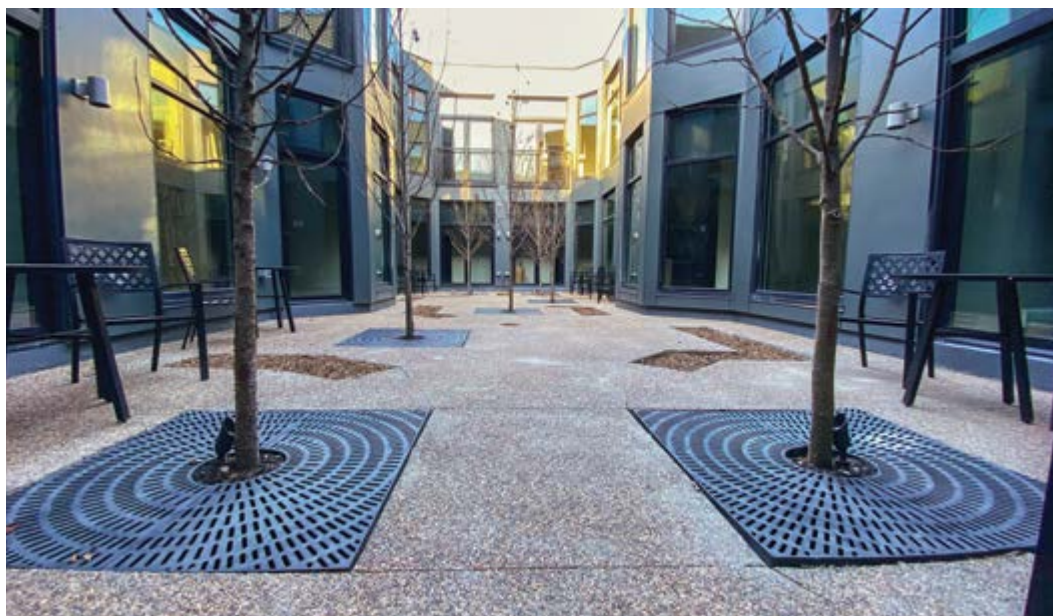






Future-Proofing the Modern Campus

**WHY TREE INFRASTRUCTURE IS ESSENTIAL,
NOT OPTIONAL**

BY MARY BERKLICH

Colleges and universities are being asked to do more than ever—educate, innovate, attract, retain, and inspire—often while navigating tight budgets, aging infrastructure, and increasing expectations around sustainability and student wellbeing. In today's society, “future-proofing” a campus isn't just about new buildings or cutting-edge technology. It's about making smart, long-term investments in the everyday spaces that shape how students, staff, and communities experience campus life.

continued...



Intentional, well-maintained treescapes are one of the most impactful ways to achieve this. Trees are not just aesthetic enhancements. When thoughtfully planned and properly supported, they are infrastructure. They influence safety, wellness, accessibility, environmental performance, and even institutional perception. And for campus leaders looking to build resilient, adaptable environments, treescapes offer a rare combination of immediate visual impact and long-term return.

The Impact on Student Experience

Take a walk around any memorable campus, and you'll notice a common thread: tree-lined paths, shaded quads, and inviting green spaces. These aren't accidental. They are the result of deliberate planning that recognizes trees as foundational to the campus experience.

Outdoor spaces strongly influence how students and visitors perceive a campus. Treescapes create welcoming environments that support well-being, engagement, and usability.

continued...

Play More. Stay Longer. Worry Less.



 **ANCHOR™**
INDUSTRIES INC.

CONTACT US TODAY!

7701 Highway 41 N • Evansville, IN 47725 USA
Clear Span: 800-544-4445 • Shade: 800-255-5552
www.anchorinc.com • custdiv@anchorinc.com

Custom Branding

At LaptopsAnytime™, we recognize that the success and excitement of your new kiosk is based on showcasing the best of your school's distinctive branding. Our seasoned pros will design and produce custom

graphics for you. The idea behind the graphics is to help promote the kiosk, and the laptop/charger initiative underlying it. Build enthusiasm for using the service at the same time as promoting your brand.



Self-Service Dispensing Kiosks

Repair Depot - Long/Short Term



OVER 6 MILLION 6,000,000
ANNUAL CHECKOUTS AND GROWING

Powered By  **LAPTOPSANYTIME™**
Automated Checkout Kiosks
1-877-836-3727 • LaptopsAnytime.com

When properly planned, treescapes build:

- Stronger first impression during campus visits
- Access to shaded, comfortable outdoor spaces
- Reduced stress and improved mental wellbeing
- Increased opportunities to gather, study, and interact

In a competitive higher education landscape, these experiences directly support recruitment, retention, and campus identity.

Designing for Environmental Resilience

Trees play a critical role in campus functionality and long-term sustainability. Beyond enhancing appearance, they contribute to:

- Reducing heat island effects and moderating temperatures
- Managing stormwater runoff
- Improving air quality

- Reducing noise pollution
- Defining walkways, entrances, and gathering spaces

For facilities teams and campus planners, this means trees should be treated with the same level of consideration as sidewalks, lighting, and drainage systems. They are not decorative add-ons—they are working assets.

Designing for Longevity, Not Just Installation

Planting trees is only the first step. The real challenge—and opportunity—lies in designing systems that allow those trees to thrive for decades.

Too often, campuses invest in planting initiatives without fully considering long-term maintenance and protection. The result? Trees that struggle to grow, damaged root systems, or infrastructure conflicts that lead to premature removal.

Future-proofing requires a shift in mindset: from short-term installation to long-term performance.

Key considerations include:

1. Root Zone Protection

Healthy trees depend on healthy root systems. In high-traffic campus environments, roots are often compacted by foot traffic, vehicles, or construction.

Solutions like tree grates that protect the root zone—while still allowing for pedestrian access—are essential.

2. Pedestrian Safety and Accessibility

Campuses must meet accessibility standards while maintaining safe walking surfaces. Tree installations should integrate seamlessly with surrounding pathways to eliminate trip hazards and ensure ADA compliance.

continued...

Building or renovating a gymnasium?



Call the design experts at IPI by Bison at 800-637-7968 for premium custom ceiling and wall mounted basketball backstops, divider curtains, wall padding and gym accessories.

IPI by Bison projects include quality Bison sports equipment!



Divider Curtains & Batting Cages



Wall Padding



Ceiling & Wall Mounted Backstops



Ceiling & Floor Mounted Volleyball Systems



FIBA APPROVED EQUIPMENT



MADE IN AMERICA



NFHS PARTNER

REQUEST A QUOTE

THE EXCLUSIVE NFHS PARTNER FOR BASKETBALL EQUIPMENT



4specs.com



MasterSpec



speclink-e



ARCAT



Competition Basketball Portables



CAMPUS CRUISER CART

The durable utility cart for move-ins and move-outs that folds flat for storage in between uses.

- *Straight sidewalls for more efficient packing*
- *Non-tapered design also prevents tipping*
- *Sidewalls and base are easily cleanable*
- *Stores in a fraction of the space of other carts*

Contact Us



+865-985-0884



www.CampusCruiserCart.com

Made in the USA by L-S Industries



NEW ROUNDED FRAMES



100 CARTS





This means prioritizing:

- Flush, stable surfaces
- Consistent spacing and materials
- Durable systems that won't shift over time

3. *Material Durability*

Outdoor environments are demanding. Freeze-thaw cycles, UV exposure, and heavy use can degrade traditional materials quickly.

Selecting long-lasting, low-maintenance materials, such as HDPE recycled plastic, reduces lifecycle costs and ensures that infrastructure continues to perform without constant repair or replacement.

4. *Growth and Expandability*

Healthy, enduring trees require more than just soil; they need the physical space and structural protection for their root systems to flourish. Implementing tree grate systems that offer effortless expandability—requiring minimal tools for adjustment—provides a strategic, long-term solution that allows campus trees to grow safely and robustly without compromising surrounding infrastructure.

Planning for the Next 20–50 Years

Future-proofing a campus means thinking beyond immediate needs. It requires asking:

- Will these trees still thrive decades from now?
- Will this infrastructure hold up under increasing usage?
- Can these systems adapt as the campus grows and changes?
- Are we investing in solutions that reduce long-term costs, not just upfront expenses?

Treescapes, when done right, answer all of these questions positively. They are one of the few investments that appreciate in value over time—both financially and experientially.

A Call to Rethink Campus Priorities

It's easy to focus on large-scale projects when planning for the future. New buildings, technology upgrades, and major renovations often dominate the conversation. But the spaces in between—the walkways, courtyards, and green areas—are where daily campus life unfolds.

These are the spaces that shape perception,

influence behavior, and create lasting impressions.

By elevating treescapes from an afterthought to a strategic priority, colleges and universities can:

- Strengthen their identity and appeal
- Support student wellbeing and engagement
- Improve environmental performance
- Reduce long-term maintenance costs
- Build more resilient, adaptable campuses

Looking Ahead

The campuses that will thrive in the coming decades are those that balance innovation with intention. They will be places where infrastructure works quietly in the background—supporting safety, sustainability, and experience without demanding constant attention.

Treescapes are a key part of that equation.

They offer a way to invest in the future while delivering immediate, visible benefits. They connect people to place, soften the built environment, and create spaces that invite interaction and exploration.

At PolyGrate, we believe that the path to future-ready campuses runs through thoughtful, durable, and sustainable landscape infrastructure. By committing to the long-term success of your trees—and the systems that support them—you're not just planting for today. You're building a campus that will thrive for generations.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Mary has worked in marketing and sales management within the plastics manufacturing industry for over 30 years, building strong relationships and helping find practical solutions. She enjoys connecting with people, supporting growth, and bringing experience, reliability, and creativity to every opportunity.



**Get Your Team
GAME READY!**

VERSASPORT
WOOD SPORT LOCKERS

CUSTOM INSTALLS



Made in America Since 1936
Metal, Plastic, Phenolic & Wood Lockers



LIST INDUSTRIES INC.

800-776-1342

✉ info@ListIndustries.com

🌐 ListIndustries.com