

UNC Asheville prepares campus for two influential construction projects

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UNC Asheville begins construction for five apartment-style residences, a community director apartment and an addendum to Highsmith in May. The projects were largely guided by student input, and multiple workshops were conducted by project designers in order to work directly with the student body. The apartment-style residences will house 294 students in an effort to grant more returning students the option of on-campus housing.

"One of the things we looked for as a committee was how the designers interact with the students and how they took student feedback," said Vollie Barnwell, director of housing and student life operations.

Student feedback became crucial to the housing project, according to Barnwell.

"From a designer's standpoint it would be really easy to come in and kind of do it on their own and not get student feedback, but our designers from both projects were great. They came in and did several workshops," Barnwell said.

The campus has long awaited apartment-style housing, according to Nancy Yeager, associate vice chancellor for student affairs.

"Unlike a lot of our other sister campuses, we do not have any apartment-style housing on campus," Yeager said. "This has been something that we really need, in addition to the fact that students have wanted to live on campus and haven't been able to."

Susan Richey, a senior music student at UNCA, said she would take advantage of apartment-style housing if it were available to her.

"I wanted to be on campus my first year here but I became really tired of living on campus," Richey said. "It just didn't feel like an adult apartment."

Richey, who transferred from UNC Wilmington, said apartment-style housing was available to her

there.

"I thought it was great," Richey said. "It was great to be on campus. It was great to be around people who are my age who wanted to live on campus. You didn't feel like you were staying in a dormitory. You didn't have to go to RA meetings and stuff like that. It was kind of like a more independent housing situation."

According to Yeager, the new apartment-style housing will have four to six bedrooms. Every suite will have a full kitchen, a living area and two bathrooms.

“ WE CAN BUILD ANYTHING AND HAVE STUDENTS LIVE THERE, BUT IT'S BETTER TO BUILD WHAT STUDENTS REALLY WANT.”

-VOLLIE BARNWELL

The residential village will be along Founders Drive. Two of the buildings will sit on the outskirts of the botanical gardens and the remaining three will reside on the current P22 parking lot behind Brown Hall.

"There are also plans for another building that will have a multipurpose room, a fitness room and it's also where the community director apartment will be," Yeager said.

Plans for a new parking deck remain tentative in the construction process, Yeager said. New parking, accounting for 110 parking spaces will become available in lot P29. The lot, which has existed for about 5 or 6 years, sits next to the Health and Counseling Center. Current construction plans intend to

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PHOTO BY MICHAELA HALL

Julio, a construction worker, takes a break from working on the roof of Highsmith.

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