

## University considers finances and aesthetics for new dorms

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UNC Asheville moves forward with plans for a new residence hall and renovations for Governors Village after selecting two architects, blending financial feasibility with aesthetically pleasing architecture.

"We tried to understand from the students what their likes and dislikes were and what their wish list was," said Jeff Huberman, from Gantt Huberman Architects, located in Charlotte. "We found out it was very beneficial for us to get a better understanding from the students what their goals for a new residential hall would be."

Gantt Huberman Architects specialize in sustainable designs, and worked on projects for UNC Charlotte's Center City Building and College of Education Building, UNC Greensboro's Aycock Auditorium Renovation and student housing for UNC Charlotte.

The goal to move students into the renovated halls by this fall, and the new residence halls by 2012 depends on efficient planning and cooperation among officials, according to Huberman.

"Both schedules, for both projects, are very aggressive," he said. "There's one ingredient, in all of these schedules, that we have no control over, and that's the construction office."

UNCA needs to accumulate revenue to pay off the loans, so the roughly \$4.7 million renovation project and \$24 million new residence hall could increase housing rates by 3 percent, according to John Pierce, vice chancellor of finance and operations at UNCA.

"We have plenty of capacity, as long as we have projects that we are borrowing money for, where we have revenues to support the debt," he said. "If we had no revenue to support a project, then the available debt capacity is about \$12 million."

According to Chancellor Anne Ponder, funds for the project may be pooled with



Stephanie Schon- Staff Photographer

**After renovations, Governors Village will house an additional 100 beds, according to campus officials. Along with renovation plans, the university plans to build a new 107,000-square-foot residence hall.**

other campuses of similar size in order to further reduce costs.

"The debt capacity is the facet of that that's pertinent and necessary for us to move forward," she said. "This is a great example of great folks all across the campus working together on this."

The new 107,000 square foot residence hall will offer 300 additional beds. Governors Village, built in the late 1960s, will be renovated for safety and accessibility, and gain 100 beds, according to university officials.

"To get it up and constructed by August of 2011, we're going to have to work,



John Pierce

whether it's working with students, board approval, or working with the state construction office. We have to really pay a lot of attention to the schedule," Pierce said.

UNCA's credit debt rating, based on various financial studies, allows the university \$195 million in loans for self-sustaining projects.

"UNCA's ability to borrow for self-

supporting projects, while not completely limitless, is substantial. So when we talk about our capacity, when we have projects that pay for themselves, then we have a lot of debt capacity," Pierce said. "When borrowing money, people want to know what kind of financial resources, what kind of strength of revenue sources there is behind it. By just the sheer nature of what size we are, we get into a relative range at this point in time."

During a trustees meeting, Huberman

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