

Groundbreaking at BC today

*Construction officially
begins for new residence*

By Elizabeth Harrison
Director of Communications and Media Relations

Today, Brevard College begins a new chapter in its history with a formal groundbreaking ceremony for its 84-bed residence hall.

"With our recent record enrollment numbers, it's the perfect time for a project like this," said Brevard College President David Joyce. "The new residence hall signifies that we are on track with our goals."

The \$6.38 million project is funded by a loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and a bridge loan from Bank of North Carolina. Construction is slated to finish in June 2016, with students moving in by fall of 2016.

The new residence hall is the first phase of a larger project, which includes a second new residence hall and the addition of green space to create a more pedestrian- and cycling-friendly campus. In October 2014, the administration unveiled the design to students and used their feedback to improve the plan.

"At Brevard, we truly appreciate collaborative efforts," said Joyce. "We received feedback on this project from the entire campus community."

The residence hall will take advantage of Kings' Creek and sweeping mountain views by featuring ample grass, a terrace and student gathering spaces. A combination of suite-style and single rooms encourage communal living with amenities and common living areas. Future improvements include a pavilion in the middle of the residential quad.

"The new residence hall is designed with community-building as the goal," said Brevard College Dean for Students Debora D'Anna. "We hope that by providing a balance between living space and gathering space, it will enhance the overall student experience."

Plans are in the works to include energy-efficient features, as many recycled materials as possible and an appearance that is consistent with the rest of campus, Joyce said.

McMillan Padzen and Smith is the project architect and Brantley Construction Company is the contractor.

Norm Witek retires after 47 years at BC

By Hannah Cook
Staff Writer

Farewell to Norman Witek after 47 years of dedication and excellence.

After 47 years of dedication to Brevard College, Coach and instructor Norman Witek will be retiring. Reflecting on his time here, Witek's fondest memories have been working with the runners that he has coached. Witek recalls that his dream upon graduating college was to coach a national championship collegiate team for track or cross country. Soon after finishing college, he was hired for the position of head cross country and track coach here at Brevard College in 1968.

"When I was first hired at Brevard it was a 50/50 job," Witek said. "50 percent was in athletics and 50 percent was in teaching." As his first few years of being an instructor at the college, Witek taught a slew of different classes in the physical education major, such as gymnastics, tumbling, archery, and dance, all the while building a strong cross country and track program here at the college, though fresh out of college himself. It was hard work and he learned as he went along. "I'd never shot a bow and arrow in my life!" he recalls. "I had to go out there and just practice."

A couple of years later, he moved on to the athletic director position and after that, he was granted a division chair title as well. At that point, Witek was teaching a full load, serving as the head coach of the track and field program, division chair, and the athletic director.

During his time at Brevard College, Witek coached the cross country team through six national championship titles. In speaking of his accomplishments, he states "I've been very blessed with finding the right school." He worked hard fighting his way to the top in order to make sure the runners had what they needed. He spent much time working towards getting better budgets for the track and cross country teams and doing everything he could to make sure the team reached success.

Recalling the athletes he coached that were part of his success story, he spoke about two of his first recruits, Lenox Stewart and Reggie McAfee. McAfee went on to be the first African American

to run the 4 minute mile, while Stewart went on to run the 800 meter for the US Olympic team in Trinidad. On from there, Witek took the program through a transformation phase. He states that he was trying to figure out what Brevard was as far as running was concerned.

He figured out after some trial and error that this school, with its mountains and endless trails close by, was best suited for training distance runners. With that in mind, he took advantage of these resources and Witek went on to take his team to win five national titles, the first one being nationals for the marathon in which Witek uniquely coached his team to run as a pack, letting no runner fall behind. From there on, success bred success.

Witek recalls that "things just began to fall into place." When successful athletes would come to Brevard, other successful athletes were drawn to the school, creating an ideal situation. These teams were competitive against division one teams for years, beating large state schools in competition. Norman Witek was recognized for his accomplishments by many, including being inducted into the hall of fame at the high school he attended and being the first and only non-professional athlete to have a shoe named after him (the Adidas 'Witek'). After Witek left coaching, he has still been asked back several times to serve as an interim coach during coaching transitions.

Looking back on the past 47 years, Witek says that the values of the college and what BC worked to instill in its students inspired him in his life. He remembered these values while raising his own children. "There's so much I owe to Brevard," he states in reflection. "There's so much its given me."

Cross country athletes are sad to see Coach Witek retiring as well, as his passion for the sport and his love for the team are evident. However, we have been blessed to work with him and have him as part of our lives. We wish him the best in his retirement. After leaving BC, Witek plans to spend more time traveling to see his children and grandchildren. In a couple of weeks he will be celebrating his retirement with his daughter, Wendi on a trip to Los Vegas.