

University makes building renovation and expansion plans

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STAFF WRITER

UNC Wilmington students, already paying some of the highest fees in the state, may soon have to reach even deeper into their pockets.

School administrators are grappling with projected boosts in enrollment and trying to decide how these growing demands will be met.

One solution came in the form of the \$3.1 billion Higher Education Bond Referendum, which was passed by North Carolina voters last November. The Bond allocates roughly \$108 million to the university to cover the improvement of educational facilities.

UNC's portion of the bond will be divided into five areas: land acquisition, construction, building-renovations, infrastructure upgrades and technology upgrades, according to Robert Fry, assistant to the chancellor on planning.

This includes buying property around the Center for Marine Science at Myrtle Grove, in order to expand the program. New construction on the main campus will consist of the erection of a creative arts building and the Watson School of Education building.

Beyond that, renovations in various academic buildings across campus which do not meet current codes will be needed, according to Fry.

These buildings will include Westside, Friday and Kenan Halls. Infrastructure expansion covers the

improvement of UNCW's water and sewer distribution systems, electrical utilities, roads and sidewalks. Technology upgrades will also be implemented with the bond, by enhancing campus computer networks and services.

However, the bond also brings a host of new costs stemming from the construction of additional buildings and renovations. Since it only provides for state-supported facilities, UNCW's administrators are left deciding how to make the rest of campus meet the standards set by the bond.

The university has to come up with the money needed to enhance student support centers such as the University Union, Warwick Center, residence halls and dining halls.

"To maintain the upgrades after the bond is gone...it's going to take a considerable amount of money," Fry said. "You've got to put money back into (the new facilities) to meet current standards."

One major issue on the floor now is the expansion of the University Union, which was built in 1983 when UNCW had an undergraduate enrollment of only approximately 5,000, according to Patricia Leonard, vice chancellor for student affairs.

"We are in desperate need of expansion of that facility," Leonard said.

Plans have been sketched out for a new University Union aimed at making "student services more one-stop type of shopping," Fry said.

Kennedy to launch CoastKeeper

STAFF REPORT

THE SEAHAWK

The North Carolina Coastal Federation will officially launch its CoastKeeper Program at 4 p.m. on Thursday at the Center for Marine Science. Robert F. Kennedy Jr., President of the Water Keeper Alliance, will be the keynote speaker.

The Water Keeper Alliance approved the North Carolina Coastal Federation in November 2000 to license three CoastKeepers. The federation currently operates an office in Wilmington.

The Keeper Program started on New York's Hudson River, where a coalition of commercial and recreational fishermen mobilized in 1966 to reclaim the Hudson from polluters. They built a boat to patrol the River, hired the first full-time Riverkeeper in 1983 and began filing lawsuits against municipal and industrial polluters.

By 1998, they had filed more than 150

successful legal actions against Hudson River polluters. Largely as a result of their work, the river that was once dead for large stretches in 1966 is now one of the richest water bodies in the North Atlantic. The Hudson's miraculous recovery has helped to make the Keeper program an international model for ecosystem protection.

Kennedy represents the worldwide group of keepers who now patrol 63 water bodies throughout the United States, Mexico, Canada and Central America. The son of the late U.S. Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, D-N.Y., Kennedy, Jr. is a renowned environmental lawyer, writer and activist. He is chief prosecuting attorney for the Hudson Riverkeeper Fund and senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council.

The public is invited to attend the CoastKeeper Launch by calling the North Carolina Coastal Federation at 252-393-8185 or emailing nccf@nccoast.org.



The University Union is one of the buildings on campus to be renovated in the near future.

The idea is to provide all the necessary student services in one place so that students do not have to leave campus and then come back in order to find what they need. Suggestions include a larger food court, more retail options and putting the bookstore, mailboxes and the University Union all under one roof.

However, any augmentations made to

student services will not be approved by the state of North Carolina. The money will come from either student fees or fundraising. University officials are searching for major donors in order to avoid an increase in fees.

"We are very sensitive not to want to raise student fees," Leonard said.

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