Schreiner adding $4.8M apartment complex

By Alison Beshur
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Construction crews will begin this month on a $4.8 million apartment-style residential complex at Schreiner University. The unnamed project is expected to be completed by mid-August, in time for students returning for the fall semester.

Fred Gamble, vice president for administration and finance, said the new housing is needed to provide for the university’s population growth.

“This fall, when we opened, we did not have a bed,” Gamble said. “We had a plan to house students temporarily in hotels.”

Student population at the small private university increased 13 percent to 930 students for the fall 2006 semester. About 80 percent of last year’s freshmen class are resident students, Gamble said.

“When we started the fall semester with only six empty beds, we knew action was called for, and we were prepared to act,” said Schreiner president Tim Summerlin, who hopes needed rain won’t interfere with construction.

The new complex will be built in a diamond shape with three furnished apartment buildings and a community center on the northwest side of campus, near Hanszen Fine Arts building. Each of the 1,200-square-foot apartment units will include four bedrooms, two bathrooms, a living room and kitchen.

Dallas-based WSI Architects Inc. designed the building complex and Collegiate Development Services in Irving will build the apartment complex, Gamble said.

The buildings’ design includes metal roofs and bricks that will blend in with existing structures on the university’s campus.

Focus groups with students helped finalize some of the interior details, said Peg Layton, vice president for enrollment and student services and dean of students. They gave input on furniture, kitchen appliance size, overhead lighting, flooring and storage space.

The university requires students who aren’t from Kerr or contiguous counties...
to live on campus for three years.

“So, much of our growth is coming out of San Antonio,” Layton said. “They definitely need to live on campus.”

The new apartments will be about 25 percent larger than the Pecan Grove apartments.

Students who participated in the focus groups liked the extra space in the new apartments and the bathroom design. Sinks and vanities will be separate from the baths and toilets.

Exit doors will feed into a common breezeway, which will create a sense of community, Layton said. In the center of the four buildings will be a gazebo and barbecue area.

“It will facilitate people meeting each other and dealing with each other,” Gamble added.

The community center will be have several club storage areas, meeting and social rooms and a covered patio.

Marketing junior, Joshua Schumann, said it would be “super fun” to live in the new apartments with three of his best friends. The 21-year-old student said he hopes to be selected as one of the resident assistants in the apartments.

“We can have dinner parties, movie nights,” said Schumann, who has been a resident assistant for two years in Trull, a freshman dorm. “We love to play board games every night. It will be fun.”

Tiffany Andresen, director of residence life, echoed Schumann’s excitement about the construction project.

"It means we're going to add new staff members. We're not going to have to worry about off-campus housing, hotels,” Andresen said. “We have been so small for so long. It's exciting to see how we're growing.”

Gamble said this likely is the first of a two housing expansions.

“Probably in the next two years, we're going to have to add at least 100 extra beds after these," Gamble said. “It’s a visual sign of progress and growth.”

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