

On Tuesday
November 6th,
vote for
PATTI MINTER
Paid for by Patti Minter for Kentucky

Mother
Teacher
Advocate



Hancock
BANK AND TRUST
2501 Crossings Blvd Bowling Green KY 42101
1.270.467.3315 NMLS# 442109

**FIND THE MORTGAGE LOAN
RIGHT FOR YOU**

www.hancockbankonline.com Member FDIC

Home / News

https://www.bgdailynews.com/news/wku-residence-hall-revamp-moves-forward/article_0e114b7c-df5e-5d0d-8b7d-f25a81db2f11.html

WKU residence hall revamp moves forward

By AARON MUDD amudd@bgdailynews.com Oct 26, 2018

Western Kentucky University president Tim Caboni speaks Friday, September 7, 2018, during an unveiling of a mobile weather classroom at WKU's Department of Environmental Health and Safety. (Bac Totrong/photo@bgdailynews.com)

Buy Now

Bac Totrong/Daily News

Plans to build two new high-end residence halls at Western Kentucky University moved forward Friday after the university's Board of Regents approved a land swap that will make the project possible.

"We're really excited about the project," WKU President Timothy Caboni told the Daily News, referring to plans to replace Bemis Lawrence Hall and Barnes-Campbell Hall. The plan is to replace Bemis Lawrence Hall first.

"This was an important step to being able to move forward and hit our target date of fall 2020 for that new facility," Caboni said, describing it as the first step in creating a new village for first-year students on the south end of campus.

Both buildings will be replaced with “pod-style” residence halls by 2021. The concept features smaller sets of rooms that share common amenities, such as a bathroom and lounge area. Speaking in an interview, Caboni said the university is seeing high demand for higher-end residence halls, but that WKU wants to ensure options for students of all incomes.

Mike Reagle, WKU’s director of housing and dining, previously told the Daily News that each “pod” will house about 25 students with three pods per floor, bringing each building’s capacity to 400 beds. Officials expect the project that replaces both residence halls to cost about \$48 million.

The new residence halls will also be more elongated to enclose a new green space over the parking lot near Pearce-Ford Tower, translating to a loss of parking at the bottom of the hill. That’s where the land swap comes in.

Under the terms of the property transfer, the Student Life Foundation will trade roughly 3.8 acres of land it owns in the 1400 block of Park and High streets for the same amount of land in and around the Pearce-Ford Tower lot.

The Student Life Foundation will pay to build a parking lot on the Park and High streets property to offset the parking lost at the bottom of the hill. Plans for the project indicate the lot will have 364 spaces. Commuter student parking will be moved to the Park and High streets lot, and residential parking in the Pearce-Ford Tower lot will be moved across the street to the University Boulevard lot.

The goal is to make way for a large green space Reagle described at the meeting as a second South Lawn. He added that buildings would also feature more private hotel-style rooms for upperclassmen who could act as mentors to freshmen students.

“This clearly aligns with the strategic plan,” Reagle said, describing WKU’s goal to recruit and retain more students and offer a more robust first-year experience. “It’s exactly what we need to be doing to meet that.”

The Board of Regents also got an update Friday on where WKU stands with its fall enrollment.

Brian Kuster, vice president for enrollment and student experience, read from an enrollment report that outlined the university's efforts to improve outreach to potential students and ensure WKU is admitting students who have the best chance to graduate. WKU tightened its admissions standards, which will likely affect the size of the 2019 freshman class.

"The 2,943 first-time, first-year students enrolled this semester is a smaller number than previous years, but the data clearly show that they are more likely to persist," he said. "The average ACT (score) of this fall's class is 23.3 with an average high school GPA of 3.39. That's the highest in WKU's history."

The university is also seeing fewer international students, which typically pay a higher tuition rate.

"At our peak, we enrolled about 1,400 international students, but this year, due to a number of factors that number is 545," Kuster said. He said the university has created a new associate provost position to boost that number.

Kuster noted that WKU is "within 1 percent of our targeted tuition revenue estimates."

"That means we're getting better at determining the actual amount of revenue that enrollment will generate and we can budget accordingly, rather than budgeting on how many students we hope we'll have," he said.

– Follow education reporter Aaron Mudd on Twitter @BGDN_edbeat or visit bgdailynews.com.



Aaron Mudd

Education reporter. Covers education and related issues, focusing primarily on the Bowling Green and Warren County public school districts and Western Kentucky University.

