

Construction continues to climb

BY ALEX PENA

Staff reporter

Florida Gulf Coast University is building six brand new buildings on campus. An engineering building, the Lutgert School of Business, the Hospitality Management building, the 400-bed Everglades Hall dormitory, a new athletics building, and a second parking garage have all broken ground and are in various stages of construction.

Vice President of Administrative Services Joe Shepard told *Eagle News* about the process that the university has taken to start construction on these new buildings.

The \$20 million Lutgert School of Business is expected to be completed for incoming students in fall 2008. The building is being funded by both donations and state money. Five million dollars were donated by the Lutgert family, which was then matched with another \$5 million donation. The total \$10 million in donations was matched by the state, allocating approximately \$20 million to the building itself.

The Lutgert College of Business will add about seven or eight additional classrooms to the university. Shepard said the building will consist of a lot of glass, an open courtyard and plenty of room for students to lounge, relax and study. The building is also being linked with an atrium that will connect to

both the Lutgert Hall of Business and the new engineering building.

With a cost of \$25 million, the engineering building is expected to be completed in spring 2009 with funds coming from both donations and the state. Approximately \$5 million was donated from the Whitaker Foundation. Bobby Ginn gave another two and a half million dollars. Donations accounted for \$15 million of the building's cost.

The state donated another \$9 million, which Shepard said will help finish the atrium that will link the engineering building to Lutgert Hall.

The building will add two new classrooms and ten new labs to the university. "Engineering will be a little bit of a different type of building than we have built before," said Shepard. He added that although there are very few classrooms inside the building, the style of teaching will combine labs with the classroom.

The next building that is being constructed is the first of FGCU's new housing complex, Everglades

Hall. The dormitory is going to be more geared towards community style living.

Shepard said a survey went out to all students, and they indicated a desire for a more communal style of on-campus living. These dorms will have interior corridors to develop the community, with more student life and resident programming being planned to go on inside of housing.

The building itself will accommodate 400 students and will have a cafeteria inside, which will most likely be buffet style like Eagle Dining.

"I think (Eagle Dining) will be better than The Perch though," said Joe Shepard. "It's going to be more of a socialization place."

The rooms themselves will have four students per room, with single bedrooms. Two of the single bedrooms will form a space in the middle for a sink and a shower. There will be a toilet and another sink on the other side, so that whenever a shower is in use, someone can still use the toilet or sink.

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Unlike North Lake Village where there is an open breeze way, security should be better because not everyone will be able to get inside. Joe Shepard said Everglades Hall will be the first of three similar buildings. This first building is expected to be ready by this fall, and the next by fall 2009. No date has been set yet for the third hall.

With construction plans touching the entire FGCU campus, talk of a new student union has come up. The university has secured some money and the plan is to build an expansion. That expansion is going to be primarily used for clubs, socialization, office space and to expand the ballroom. The book store may also receive additional space for the first time. The cafeteria could also get an add-on, possibly building upwards to a second story. The plans to give the bookstore more space could enable them to add more merchandise, including FGCU apparel, and more shelf space for an expanding curriculum.

An architect has already been hired for the Student Union expansion.

The next step is to construct a plan. The goal is to start construction by this fall and have it finished at the latest by spring 2010, according to Shepard.

The hospitality management building is also under construction. This building is also planned to be finished in time for the start of classes in fall 2008. Inside the building there will be a spa, a kitchen area and even a wine tasting area. All these amenities will be part of the curriculum for the program. It will also include a ballroom in order to help students who need to train in catering and event planning.

Another building in the planning stage is Academic Building Seven, which will be located in between the Lutgert School of Business and the engineering building. Academic seven will be primarily used for science classes. A new performing arts center is also in the works and slotted to go up right next to the arts complex and the new parking garage, which is being finished up this week. It will consist of an auditorium and a studio.

Most of the university's new construction plans take into account the surrounding environment. Through the development of parking garages and taller buildings, it appears that FGCU is poised to build upwards, not outwards.