Sac State to build new residence hall next to the river

Sacramento State will break ground this summer on a 416-bed residence hall with spectacular views of the American River. The California State University (CSU) Board of Trustees approved the $54.9 million project today.

The four-story structure, to be built alongside the river levee on a parking lot south of Desmond Hall, will house 252 freshmen and 164 sophomores. It will join the existing American River Courtyard as centerpieces of the University’s newly named North Housing Village.

The project is funded by the rent and housing fees paid by students who live in campus residences. The Housing Fund is separate from the General Operating fund, and no student tuition fees will be used for the project.

Construction is scheduled for completion in May 2017, with the first student-occupants moving in for the fall 2017 semester. This will be the first new construction on campus since The WELL, Sac State’s recreation and wellness center, opened in September 2010.

“It’s the first project off the Campus Master Plan that we will finish,” says Ali Izadian, associate vice president for Facilities Services. “When we started working on the Master Plan, we said, ‘The American River is a treasure for our campus.’ And with the complex being built next to the river, we will really engage with it.”

Among the principles of the Master Plan is to create appropriate riverfront development, maximize view opportunities, and provide informal and enlivened gathering places for the campus community, particularly students.

The 126,000-square-foot residence hall, simply called Student Housing Phase II for now, will feature a shady interior courtyard; a rooftop terrace and gathering space with outdoor views of the American River and the nearby Guy West and H Street bridges; a large multipurpose room with a communal kitchen; a classroom; a computer lab; recreation and laundry facilities; a fitness center; and administrative and campus support offices. The new residence hall also will feature one faculty apartment and two staff apartments.

In keeping with Sacramento State’s commitment to sustainability, the new hall will be built to the U.S. Green Building Council’s specifications for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification.

The general color scheme will be a variety of earth tones. The proposed site plan includes drought-tolerant plants and reclaimed water for irrigation. Bicycle parking will be provided for residents, who can easily access the American River bike trail from the Guy West and H Street bridges.

The residence hall will house 252 freshmen, living two to a room, and 164 sophomores living in single-occupancy rooms. Both the freshman and sophomore wings will offer shared living areas.
“While first-year students tend to want their own room, anecdotal evidence indicates that the more students connect with their community and one another, the more successful they will be,” says Michael Speros, director of Housing and Residential Life. “The best way to provide that experience is through shared living space. Once they have that first year under their belt, students may apply to live in the sophomore-experience community, which offers the privacy of a single room yet maintains the community theme through multiple shared community bathrooms and social spaces.”

Sacramento-based Otto Construction is the building contractor for Student Housing Phase II, and two of the construction-team leaders for this project were “Made at Sac State”: Rick McVey, vice president for preconstruction and a graduate of the award-winning Construction Management Department; and project manager Melissa Barrenchea, who earned her bachelor’s degree in fine arts before getting a certificate in construction management through UC Davis’ extension program. – Dixie Reid