

CSULB buying Brooks campus

Property purchased for \$11.1 million will be site of new housing for 700 students.

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LONG BEACH - Cal State Long Beach President F. King Alexander on Tuesday announced the university's purchase of the 5.04-acre Brooks College property, which will be used for more student housing.

The property, located at 4825 E. Pacific Coast Highway, was purchased for \$11.1 million, and planned renovations could cost the CSULB Foundation - an independent, nonprofit arm of the university - up to another \$10 million, Alexander said.

There's a severe student housing shortage, Alexander noted, adding that new housing on the CSULB campus could have cost as much as \$82 million.

"It's the right deal at the right time," he said.

The site - about a mile from the university - is owned by the Tilley Development Corp.

Brooks College - a fashion, design and technology school owned by the Career Education Corp. - has a lease on the property until June 2009, when the university expects to take over the operations of the property.

Brooks College is no longer accepting applications for new students and its final graduation will be in March 2009. Students currently enrolled will be able to complete their programs.

Alexander said student housing is a key goal of the university. Alexander said students and their parents often seek assurances that there are residential units available.

He said there were 65,000 applications for the upcoming academic year. There are about 35,000 students at CSULB and the campus residential halls house just under 2,000 of them.

"Increasing student living and learning opportunities is an important priority for our campus," Alexander added.

"Currently, we have a long waiting list of students hoping to live on campus or in other forms of university housing," he said. "The Brooks College site will help fill a part of that need."

According to university officials, there are about 200 CSULB students living at the Brooks campus and they use a shuttle between CSULB and the Brooks housing. The university plans to increase the housing units to accommodate 700 students.

"We have to get aggressive," Alexander said of the push for new student housing units.

The purchase of the Brooks College site is the first addition to CSULB's student residential housing in 21 years, university officials said.

The deal was approved Monday by the university foundation's executive board.

The Brooks property also includes three buildings with residential, classroom and office spaces. The 177,000 square feet of facilities also include a dining hall, computer laboratories and a swimming pool. Faculty may also be housed on the Brooks campus, according to a CSULB statement.

Many of the classrooms at Brooks College will be converted to student living spaces. And there also will be classrooms for night continuation education programs, Alexander said.

University officials said the new student housing will be self-supporting, and not a drain on the university or foundation.

"In fact, the total cost of this project will be less than one-third what it would cost to build new student housing for 700 students," said Bill Griffith, the university's vice president of administration and finance.