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Correction Appended

## **Information Technology Institute Continues to Grow Gift of Dorm Opens Some Eyes Regent (SEE CORRECTION ) Wilson Maintains UNO Is Commuter Campus for Omahans Dorm Comparisons**

**BYLINE:** TODD VON KAMPEN

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Some University of Nebraska regents still don't want the University of Nebraska at Omaha to turn into a residential campus, despite Saturday's acceptance of an Omaha foundation's offer to build, run and donate a \$ 15 million residence hall and meeting area for UNO's information technology institute.

But three regents say the institute's statewide mission and the scope of what (SEE CORRECTION) Chairman Nancy O'Brien called "a very large and a very generous gift" produced unanimous support for the Suzanne and Walter Scott Foundation's plans for UNO's second apartment-style dormitory.

"It is in support of a program that I support, and it is focused on that program," said (SEE CORRECTION) Regent Charles Wilson of Lincoln, a skeptic of building dorms at UNO. "And it comes with a conference center, so it's not just a residence hall."

Regents and UNO officials say they also were attracted by the foundation's offer to bear all the costs and build it to last for up to 100 years.

Jim Buck, UNO vice chancellor for university affairs, said the residence hall will help lure students to the nearly completed Peter Kiewit Information Science, Technology and Engineering Institute, situated on the former Ak-Sar-Ben racetrack site.

"This was such a wonderful opportunity and a wonderful gift that I don't think there was any question that this was the right thing to do," said O'Brien of Waterloo, the (SEE CORRECTION) regents' chairwoman.

Construction plans moved into high gear Monday for the 160-student residence hall, which will be built on eight acres west of 63rd Street between Woolworth Avenue and Pine Street.

Principal architect Timothy Holland said Kiewit Construction Co., the principal contractor, hopes to start turning earth by late April and have the dorm ready for students by August 2000.

That's about a year after the scheduled opening of the Kiewit Institute and UNO's first dorm, the 576-student University Village near 60th and Dodge Streets on the main campus. Regents voted 6-1 in June 1995 to approve the latter dorm, which aims to provide homes for athletes, foreign and honors students and incoming freshmen.

Wilson, who cast the no vote in 1995, said Monday that he still wants to maintain UNO's mission as a commuter campus mainly serving Omaha residents.

Regent Chuck Hassebrook of Walthill agreed, saying it makes no financial sense to set up UNO as a competitor for traditional students with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

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But Hassebrook said dorms at UNO make sense for groups of students who wouldn't be well-served otherwise.

"It makes sense at IST&E because in the area of information technology, we have decided that the program that serves the whole state is the program based in Omaha," he said.

University leaders and attorneys reviewed the plans and the lease agreement before Saturday's meeting to ensure that the project was guaranteed to be high-quality, O'Brien said.

Foundation officials said they made the offer to ensure housing for holders of 60 Scott scholarships to the Kiewit Institute. Those students would get first priority.

The residence hall isn't designed to make money, and whether it breaks even depends on the foundation's success in drawing students and hosting summer events at the Kiewit Institute, said foundation board member John Boyer.

"If you add A plus B, sometimes it doesn't equal AB," he said.

The nonprofit Scott Foundation will pay all the Kiewit dorm's construction costs and will manage and maintain the buildings for 40 years, Boyer said. NU will assume title to the buildings when they are finished, he said.

The foundation will pay NU \$ 100 per year in rent for the land. That's the same amount that a for-profit group is paying the university for the dorm it is building on UNO's main campus. However, the for-profit group also is paying the university 25 percent of its net income.

Because the project is a gift to NU, the Scott Foundation was free to choose Kiewit Construction or anyone else as contractor, said university general counsel Dick Wood.

The university took bids on who should run the for-profit dorm being built on UNO's campus. A limited partnership won that contract and selected a St. Louis construction firm to build its dorm.

Holland said the Scott Foundation dorm and commons building will be built with cast-in-place concrete, a metal roof and brick on the outside.

Buck said University Village - the dorm nearly completed on UNO's main campus - uses high-quality wood construction.

The Scott Foundation's plans should give its dorm a far longer life.

### **Dorm Comparisons**

Scott Foundation's nonprofit dorm

Location: Ak-Sar-Ben campus

Construction cost: \$ 15 million

Capacity: 160 students

Rent to students: Not set. Can be up to 15 percent more than the for-profit dorm.

Opening: August 2000

Lease with university: \$ 100 a year for 40 years

Additional payment: None

For-profit dorm

Location: UNO's main campus

Construction cost: \$ 10.6 million

Capacity: 576 students

Rent to students: \$ 307 per month

Opening: Fall 1999

Lease with university: \$ 100 a year for 40 years

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Additional payment: 25 percent of net income

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**CORRECTION:** CORRECTION. Nancy O'Brien is chairman of the Nebraska Board of Regents. Charles Wilson is a regent. The published version was incorrect. The online version has been corrected. Sidebar included.

**GRAPHIC:** B&W Photos/2 BILL BATSON/1, **BUILDING SITE:** The residence hall and meeting area will be built on eight acres west of 63rd Street between Woolworth Avenue and Pine Street. Construction is expected to be completed by August 2000., CHRISTINE THOMPSON/1, **BRICK AND MORTAR:** A model of the new \$ 15 million residence hall shows a brick apartment-like structure that builders say will last up to 100 years and house 160 students. The commons building is to the right.; BILL BATSON/WORLD-HERALD/1sf CHRISTINE THOMPSON/WORLD-HERALD/1sf

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