

63 of 312 DOCUMENTS

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## **UNO Sizes Up South Campus NU regents hear a plan for new buildings and parking at the former site of Ak-Sar-Ben UNO's Long-Term Expansion Proposal**

**BYLINE:** JENA JANOVY

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The University of Nebraska at Omaha's new campus master plan calls for turning the south campus, formerly Ak-Sar-Ben, into an academic and social magnet for students and faculty.

According to the plan presented Saturday to the NU Board of Regents, the university would build a new College of Business Administration, a mini-student center, a pedestrian underpass for Pine Street, two additional buildings and more parking on the 70-acre south campus.

The proposed new construction on the south campus is part of UNO's updated 12-year campus master plan, which carries an estimated \$ 111 million price tag. Of that, university officials said about \$ 65 million would be requested from the state. Additional money would come from private donations.

"The south campus won't be a place just to park and ride the shuttle," said Barry M. Ward, an architect with Clark Enersen Partners who helped craft the plan. "It will become a destination point."

UNO officials did not yet have specific cost estimates for any of the buildings or a timeline for construction.

The plan also assumes that enrollment, which has been stagnant or dropping, would grow from about 14,000 to 16,500. There would be no growth in total faculty or staff.

After hearing the plan, Regent Robert Allen of Hastings suggested that the campus focus more on recruiting and keeping top-quality faculty rather than on adding buildings.

Regents Chairwoman Nancy O'Brien of Waterloo said she was pleased with the plan.

"One always chokes on the price tag," O'Brien said. "But the fact is the majority of that \$ 111 million is for the much-needed renovation of existing space."

The biggest of those renovation projects would transform the Engineering Building into a home for the College of Public Affairs and Community Service. Many of the engineering programs have moved to the Peter Kiewit Institute for Information Science, Technology and Engineering, which is on the former Ak-Sar-Ben site.

The College of Business Administration, adjacent to the Eppley Administration Building, would become home to the College of Education, now housed in Kayser Hall. Some of the College of Arts and Sciences would move to Kayser Hall.

An addition also is proposed for the north side of the library, and a small theater would be added to the fine arts building.

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The regents did not act on the plan Saturday. Instead, the plan will return to the board in August when regents will be asked to approve its concepts. After that, individual projects included in the plan would have to be placed on the university's list of priority capital-construction projects. Regents would have to approve the projects before construction could start.

UNO's master plan was based, in part, on goals the university has established to meet its mission of serving the metropolitan area in areas such as business, education and information sciences, and the state in fields such as criminal justice and social work.

University architects looked at campus space needs and how those matched UNO's goals. They also factored in campus changes since the 1990 plan. Since then, UNO has added the south campus, student residence halls and the Peter Kiewit Institute.

Ward said UNO estimates that the campus has about 1.1 million square feet of usable space. He said that is about 547,000 square feet shy of the space needed for classrooms, labs, study areas, offices and other support and general-use areas.

Ward said the university needs to upgrade classrooms for technology and multimedia equipment. He said the campus also needs more space for students and support services, study space, open space and recreation.

The new master plan would add about 235,000 square feet of space, he said, boosting the usable square footage to about 1.4 million. If UNO followed national space guidelines, he said, the campus still would fall short of space by about 400,000 square feet.

The plan also shows that most of the growth in parking would be on the south campus and that parking could replace the athletic fields there.

UNO Chancellor Nancy Belck stressed that as the south campus develops, it will remain connected with the north campus. For instance, she said, some general-studies courses will be offered in classrooms in the Kiewit Institute, and some technology courses could be offered on the main campus.

In other action, the regents:

Approved the University of Nebraska Medical Center's request to establish a Center for Human Molecular Genetics. The center will be housed in new research space in the Munroe-Meyer Institute on campus and will be directed by Dr. Richard Finnell.

The center will bring together several departments, colleges and institutes for research collaboration. Possible areas of research include mapping potential genes for complex human disorders, including some cancers, and developing potential drugs. About 15 faculty already have expressed interest in participating.

The Medical Center did not seek state money to support the center. Rather, it will be funded through reallocations of faculty and UNMC money.

Hired HDR Architecture Inc. of Omaha to provide architectural and engineering services for UNMC's proposed \$ 73 million Research Centers of Excellence. The fee for the pre-design services is \$ 500,000. The centers are proposed for the west end of campus on the present site of the University Geriatric Center.

Accepted the Medical Center's master plan concept.

Approved seeking requests for proposals for a construction manager for the \$ 8.6 million acquisition and renovation of the Security Mutual Building for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's College of Journalism and Mass Communication.

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