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Lindsay Marshall
University Services Communications Coordinator
832.842.4722
lmarshall@uh.edu

BOARD OF REGENTS APPROVES NEW RESIDENCE HALLS AND WEST DINING HALL

Houston, May 19, 2011 – UH is moving on up in the ranks and, with recent decisions by the Board of Regents, student life is gaining ground along with it. With the approval of three new construction projects on Wednesday, May 18, the west side of campus will become energized with student life and move the university toward its goal of becoming a more residential campus.

Research shows college students who live on campus have a more engaging college experience and therefore are more successful and graduate at higher rates. UH has set a goal to have 7,500 UH students living on campus by 2015. To help reach this goal, the Board of Regents approved plans for Cougar Village Phase II and a Sophomore Residence Hall to replace Cougar Place. A new free-standing West Dining Hall was also approved during the meeting. The three projects are expected to create an extended zone of student activity and a campus life fostering student success.

“The addition of Cougar Village II, the new sophomore residence hall, and the West Dining Hall is another exciting step toward our commitment to student life at the University of Houston. We are proud to be a part of the growth that supports student success towards graduation and beyond,” said Don Yackley, the new Executive Director of Residential Life and Housing.

The two new residential halls are planned for completion in time for the fall semester 2013. Cougar Village Phase II will be designed to LEED silver standards and will be located on Wheeler Avenue along the southern edge of the UH campus. It will contain approximately 1,100 beds. Each unit will have two bedrooms and a shared bathroom. The facility will also contain staff and support space as well as apartments for residential staff and resident assistants. Construction is anticipated to begin in March 2012.

The Sophomore Residence Hall will take the place of the current Cougar Place and will be designed to LEED silver standards. The new facility will provide a transition for second-year or sophomore residents as they move from Cougar Village and Moody Towers. The Sophomore Residence Hall is planned to hold 800 to 1,000 beds in suite-style rooms. Each resident will enjoy their own bedroom with two of the four suitemates in each sharing a bathroom. The suites will each have a shared living space to socialize with their roommates, study or just relax. Study and social lounges, classrooms and living learning spaces specifically geared toward the student development and needs of its residents is also planned for the facility.
“To help a new student’s transition and integration into a university campus is greatly enhanced by living on campus,” said Dr. Mike Lawrence, Interim Vice Chancellor/Vice President for Student Affairs. “All research indicates that a student living on campus will have a higher grade point average versus a student living off campus. This is another exciting milestone for the University of Houston following up on its Tier One and Princeton Review recognition.”

All the new residents will have another new place to eat with the approval of plans for a West Dining Hall. The free-standing facility will offer Real Food on Campus to the west side of campus and nearby residents of the Quadrangle and new Sophomore Residence Hall. The current Oberholtzer Dining Hall will close once the new facility is completed. The 25,000 gross-square-foot facility will be designed to meet LEED silver standards. Construction will begin in October 2011 for an anticipated completion by Fall 2012.

With these three new projects, the university is moving ahead in its 20-year master plan to guide us as our university grows. For more information on UH housing facilities, visit www.housing.uh.edu. For more information on UH Dining Services, visit www.uh.edu/dining.

About the University of Houston

The University of Houston is a comprehensive national research institution serving the globally competitive Houston and Gulf Coast Region by providing world-class faculty, experiential learning and strategic industry partnerships. UH serves more than 38,500 students in the nation’s fourth-largest city, located in the most ethnically and culturally diverse region of the country.