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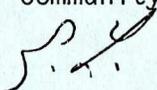
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Edwardsville Bulletin

To the Faculty and Staff of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville

Vol. 12, No. 10
May 21, 1980

MEMO TO: The University Community
FROM: Earl Lazerson 
SUBJECT: University Planning - Student Housing

During Fall Quarter, 1979, SIUE began a comprehensive institutional planning program. As described in the Edwardsville Bulletin of November 14, 1979, the program is composed of numerous short-term planning projects, including the housing area addressed by this report, and a long-term examination of future needs and requirements. Pursuant to the directives of the program, Dr. James R. Buck, Executive Assistant to the President, assembled a study group to prepare a detailed report on student housing.

A. Demand for Student Housing. Within SIUE's service region the current and potential student clientele of the University creates an on-going demand for housing facilities sufficient to warrant a housing development project of at least 250 units.

During Fall Quarter, 1979, the Office of Admissions and Records surveyed persons who had applied and been admitted to SIUE, but who did not register for courses for the fall. This group included 1473 prospective students, with the following characteristics: (1) educational level--103 graduate students, 360 transfer students, and 1010 first time freshmen students; (2) state of residence--1137 Illinois residents, 254 Missouri residents, 55 residents of states other than Illinois or Missouri, and, 27 foreign students; and (3) geographic location in relation to commuting to SIUE--785 were Illinois residents living within a 50 mile radius of the campus, and 688 resided beyond a 50 mile radius from the campus. Results of the survey indicate that about 20% of those admitted did not enroll at SIUE because of the lack of housing facilities; another 4% did not enroll because transportation problems precluded commuting to the campus; and,

that a significant number of these students enrolled in other institutions which either had adequate housing facilities or which were closer to their place of residence, such as State Community College, Belleville Area College, or Lewis and Clark Community College.

A housing survey was administered during registration for Winter Quarter, 1980. The survey was designed to measure the interest of current students in living on-campus if housing facilities were available. Slightly more than 2200 responses were received to the survey of which 82% were from persons presently living off-campus. Of the off-campus resident responses, 28% indicated they would like to live on campus; 22% indicated they were not sure because they wanted additional information about the specific housing facilities, or they were not sure if they could afford to live away from home. Reflective of the student population at SIUE, the two most frequent reasons given by people indicating they were not interested in living on-campus were, (in order of frequency), they were homeowners, or, they lived with their parents or guardians.

Total student demand for on-campus housing, identifiable from the two sources discussed above, falls in the range of 3000 - 3500 students.

A further indicator of the desire of students to live on or near the campus is a review of the city of residence of SIUE students comparing the years 1973 and 1979. Corresponding to the development of potential gasoline shortages and dramatic fuel cost increases are definite trends of student residence relocation toward the campus at Edwardsville and the instruction center at Scott Air Force Base. In large numbers, SIUE students are relocating in order to reduce to a minimum the distances they must travel to the campus. This has resulted in significant student movements into Edwardsville, Glen Carbon, Maryville, and Troy in relation to the Edwardsville campus, and Mascoutah, O'Fallon/Shiloh, and Scott Air Force Base in relation to the Scott instructional center.

The need for additional housing to serve SIUE students is not a matter of attention only on the SIUE campus. Numerous high school guidance counselors in the area have consistently noted that many students do not enroll at SIUE primarily because of housing shortages. Some enroll in community colleges because of their locational convenience, others seek alternate four year institutions, and some feel acceptable alternatives for pursuing higher education are not available to them and move directly into the job market. Concerning students enrolling in area community colleges, local study substantiates the findings of national surveys that many community college students do not pursue general education in the community college and then transfer to a four year institution. Rather, they take some coursework at the community college and then move into the job market leaving their education incomplete.

B. Supply of Student Housing. Within the area immediately servicing the housing needs of the SIUE campus sufficient housing facilities do not exist to satisfy student needs, nor is there a likelihood that such facilities will be developed within the timeframe considered necessary.

Any faculty or staff member or student of the University who has sought housing within the Edwardsville area is aware of the severe shortage of acceptable housing. Apartment housing occupancy rates for Edwardsville area apartment complexes show occupancy rates across-the-board of better than 98%. Waiting lists of students desiring apartments at the University's Tower Lake facilities run hundreds of names long, in some cases necessitating a wait of more than a year to be offered housing space. Information developed by the Illinois Housing Development Authority and the University of Illinois' Housing Research and Development office corroborates this finding. Data from these sources shows that the housing stock from which SIUE students must choose is: scarce in relation to the population size in the area; overcrowded when compared with uniform standards for the number of people per room; and, more frequently deficient and sub-standard when compared with housing stock available in areas where other public universities are located in Illinois.

Prospects for private development of housing facilities which would meet student housing needs are not favorable. During the past three years several area housing developers have conducted feasibility studies for apartment complexes near the campus. In each case, the results were the same: given construction costs, land costs, and financing costs, projects cannot be built which will generate an acceptable return on investment and remain within the price range of prospective renters. A construction feasibility overview conducted by the housing study group confirmed these findings for the present time period. In addition, it must be noted that if private development does occur, many other population groups in Madison County besides SIUE students will be competing for rental spaces. Large numbers of elderly persons, persons receiving public housing assistance, and other forms of housing subsidization live in Madison County and would compete with our students for available new spaces just as they now compete with for existing housing. Generally, landlords seem to prefer such renters to student occupants because they are viewed as less transient and frequently have more stable financial resources.

C. On-Campus Student Housing Development. Development of additional on-campus student housing facilities appears feasible.

Given the levels of student demand for housing facilities, and recognizing that a number of cost savings relating to housing development are available to the University, the study group has concluded that, at minimum, a 250 unit housing complex is feasible for development. The project contemplated would provide housing for approximately 1800 students.

The feasibility of such a project for the University is based on: (1) cost of land; (2) ability to construct units which are not traditional apartments in the sense of each unit having complete kitchen facilities; (3) potential ability of the University to qualify, under state or federal programs, for construction subsidy grants, debt service subsidy programs, or a combination of these; and, (4) ability of the University to raise funds through tax-exempt bond issues.

At present, the study group is developing a proposal for a 250 unit on-campus housing development which would include: 50 two-bedroom apartments similar to those at Tower Lake, each apartment housing four students; and, 200 four-bedroom suites each housing eight students. The four-bedroom suites would not have kitchens located in each suite but would have a minimal food preparation area on each floor. Such a development would be located near the core area so that persons living in the four-bedroom suites could utilize the food service areas in the University Center. This configuration would also allow the Center to maintain extended building hours.

The study report and recommendations from the housing study group are expected to be complete during July or early August. When completed the report will be circulated to the constituency groups, and will then be submitted to the Board of Trustees, the Board of Higher Education, and the General Assembly for appropriate action, and to various governmental entities which could provide financial assistance for construction and/or debt service.

Development of housing facilities to support our student body and promote a healthy future for SIUE is now, and will continue to be, a priority which we will pursue with the greatest zeal and commitment. I am certain that when the time comes to take our case to the various bodies which must approve the proposal, we will have the full support of the constituencies and their representatives.