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## Dayton-area university to build \$15M residence hall for new honors college

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A historic Dayton-area college is embarking on improvements. The project will further modernize its campus.

Central State University broke ground Friday on a \$15 million residence hall that will accommodate both near-term and future enrollment growth for its new honors college.

Construction will begin in late August on the 57,000-square-foot building, which is being built on vacant land between the Carnegie Library and the National Afro-American Museum & Cultural Center. It should be completed by next July and will open just before the fall 2022 semester.

Developed by University Housing Solutions, the three-story residence hall will contain multipurpose space, common areas,



COURTESY OF CENTRAL STATE UNIVERSITY

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Meghan Schmidt, development director for University Housing Solutions.

It will also have first-floor offices and administrative space for faculty and staff, which Central State can use as a "welcome center" for new and prospective honors students during recruitment season.

"This is significant for Central State," Dr. F. Eric Brooks, provost and vice president for academic affairs at CSU, told me. "It's going to allow us to recruit regionally, nationally and internationally."

"One of our big pushes is to have larger international presence on our campus," he said. "Building this residence hall — and a robust honors college — will allow us to do that."

The honors college is a new feature at Central State. Its establishment is being led by Dr. Jack Thomas, president of CSU, who last summer earmarked the creation of an honors college as one of nine major priorities for the university.

The college won't launch until fall 2022, around the same time the new residence hall opens. But in less than a year, it has already admitted 240 students — 107 of which are freshmen. And that number is still increasing, Thomas said.

"We knew it was going to grow," Thomas told me. "But I really didn't know how fast it was going to grow."

Central State has reserved two existing dorms for honors students: John's Hall and Fox Hall, which also were developed by University Housing Solutions. Once the new residence hall is complete, CSU will transition its upperclassmen from Fox Hall into the new building.

"We want to provide apartment-style living to upperclassmen to help prepare them to transition into a career," said Dr. Paul Schlag, executive director of honors and international affairs. "Really, we're just expanding the housing options because we have so many honors students."



university is actively looking for donors interested in pursuing naming rights.

Upon completion, the new facility will join a slate of existing on-campus housing at CSU. Currently, the university operates eight residence halls that house more than 1,200 students.

Based in Greene County, Central State University is a regionally accredited, 1890 land-grant university founded more than 130 years ago. It is the ninth-largest postsecondary institution in the region with more than 2,000 enrolled students, according to DBJ research.

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