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Housing demand has NCCU leasing

By ANNE BLYTHE
STAFF WRITER

DURHAM — There has been a lot of pillow talk this summer at N.C. Central University.

Administrators discovered midway through July that more upperclassmen than usual wanted to live on campus this coming school year, a realization that had officials scrambling for beds. "We try to house all the freshmen and sophomores," said Roland H. Gaines, vice chancellor of student affairs.

Many juniors and seniors and some professional students already put down full deposits for the fall semester. So administrators wanted to honor their requests.

On July 15, Chancellor James H. Ammons Jr. informed UNC system president Molly Broad of the issue and asked to invoke emergency bidding procedures that would allow the university to enter into a lease agreement with Campus Apartments Inc., a Philadelphia-based company sprucing up an apartment complex on East Cornwallis Drive.

With assistance from the Council of State and the State Property Office, the university entered into a \$2.6 million lease with Campus Apartments, securing 480 beds in the Campus Crossings apartment complex at 1400 E. Cornwallis.

With the stroke of a pen, the new apartment managers were able to lease all but 82 of the complex's beds for an entire academic year. The apartment managers have decided that the remaining units will go to NCCU students, too.

"This was fortunate for everyone here," said Daniel Bernstein, senior vice president and chief operating officer of Campus Apartments Inc.

The apartments are designed like student suites with private bathrooms off each bedroom. Each apartment is furnished, and each bedroom has high-speed Internet and cable access.

The emergency leasing comes



NCCU varsity football players Tim Martin, left, a senior defensive back, and his roommate, sophomore tight end Corey Gaddy, carry gear into their apartment at Campus Crossings.

STAFF PHOTO BY HARRY LYNCH

as NCCU is making tremendous strides toward an enrollment goal that UNC system officials laid out for the historically black university nearly five years ago.

University officials adopted a Focused-Growth Initiative in 2000, devising plans for seven campuses — Elizabeth City State University, Fayetteville State University, N.C. A&T State University in Greensboro, NCCU in Durham, the UNC-Pembroke, Western Carolina University and Winston-Salem State University.

With the number of high school graduates in North Carolina expected to rise rapidly during the next several decades, the UNC system designated the five historically black universities, the historically American Indian institution and one historically white school in the western part of the state as places that would aggressively pursue enrollment growth.

Winston-Salem State is leading the pack, nearly 32 percent above its target. N.C. A&T was 15 percent above its target last fall, and N.C. Central was 14 percent above its goal for last academic year, with 7,727 students enrolled.

Although the numbers for this fall could go up or down a bit depending on how many students actually show up for the new semester, Ammons says the student population is likely to be over the mark. The biotech and biomanagement programs are big draws in this economy, he said.

"We are engaged in a very aggressive marketing and recruitment program," Ammons said. "It's going extremely well."

But it's not just expanded enrollment that put administrators on the hunt for more student housing this summer.

With bond money, the campus has been able to refurbish and

build new student quarters, enticing more juniors and seniors.

In June, administrators cut ribbons at Annie Day Shepard, a 75-year-old building that got a \$7.3 million renovation. In addition to the new automatic sprinkler systems, central air conditioning and new windows, the residence hall has a state-of-the-art computer lounge, a recreation room and suites with private bathrooms.

New Baynes, a new, \$15 million residential hall, has many of the same amenities and a courtyard amphitheater.

That more juniors and seniors want to live on campus is a positive sign, Ammons says, and a good marketing tool to use when recruiting new students.

"It resonates," Ammons said.

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