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Joslin, Lesser and UMass Bldg. Authority break ground on \$54 million University Suites; Walsh Bros. is const. manager and Add Inc. is designer for 148,000 s/f residence hall

April 19, 2012 - Construction Design & Engineering

UMass Lowell, the UMass Building Authority (UMBA) and community leaders broke ground on the new University Suites residence hall, a \$54 million building that will bring the number of resident students to fifty percent.

The 148,000 s/f hall will include four- and six-bed units, kitchen/lounge areas, study rooms, an outdoor courtyard and more.

"The University Suites not only fulfill a great need for more student housing, but offer students the best in campus living", said Katherine Craven, executive director of UMBA. "The building is state-of-the-art and energy efficient, while remaining true in its architecture and appearance to the textile and industrial histories of Lowell."

Slated to open in Fall 2013, University Suites will be the first new residence hall constructed on campus since 1989 and represents a new model of campus housing in an all-suites building. The new residence hall will be constructed in part with recycled materials and with the goal of maximum energy efficiency throughout, striving for LEED Silver certification.

"With student enrolling now topping 15,000, up 37% over the past five years, the demand for student housing has also grown. Research shows that students who live on campus are more apt to be academically successful and the entire campus community is more cohesive when a greater percentage of students lives on campus. Currently, 40% of undergraduates live in university housing, up from 28% five years ago; the goal is to reach 50%," said chancellor Marty Meehan.

The residence hall will accommodate 472 students, propelling the university to its goal of a 50-50 split between resident and commuter students, a priority identified by chancellor Meehan shortly after he was named to the post in 2007. Apartment-style housing for 510 students adjacent to south campus, under construction by a private developer, is also scheduled to open in Fall 2013.

The official groundbreaking of University Suites at the Aiken St. site began after a brief program across the street at the Campus Recreation Center with chancellor Meehan, state representative Thomas Golden, mayor Patrick Murphy, UMBA executive director Katherine Craven and Mass. commissioner of Higher Education Richard Freeland.

UMBA is managing the project in partnership with Joslin, Lesser + Associates Inc. of Watertown. The building's architect is ADD Inc of Boston. Walsh Brothers of Boston is the building's construction manager. The project is just one of several under way that are transforming the UMass Lowell campus. Seven new facilities are scheduled to open in the next two years.

For more than 50 years, the UMBA, an independent quasi-public authority, has worked to enhance the educational, research and residential environments for the five campuses of the University of Massachusetts. Currently, more than 20 projects are underway on all UMass campuses, including

the state of the art Sherman Center at UMass Worcester Medical School, the Integrated Science Building at UMass Boston, a bio-processing center for UMass Dartmouth, the Emerging Technology and Innovation Center at UMass Lowell, and the Commonwealth Honors College construction at UMass Amherst. Working with the UMass president and Board of Trustees, UMBA strives to deliver the most cost-effective, highest quality construction of world class research facilities, venture development centers, dormitories and student life facilities and other buildings that strengthen the University's reputation as one of the top educational institutions in the country and as a top economic development driver for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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