



KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of Superintendent

Dr. Donna Peterson, Superintendent of Schools
148 North Binkley Street Soldotna, Alaska 99669-7553
Phone (907) 714-8888 Fax (907) 262-9132

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: November 16, 2007
TO: Members, Board of Education
FROM: Donna Peterson, Ed.D. *Donna Peterson*
Superintendent of Schools
RE: Resolution 07-08-3, Support of KPC Student Housing

Gary Turner, Director of Kenai Peninsula College, has requested a resolution of support from the Board of Education for local student housing. It is my understanding that letters of support will be forthcoming from the cities and the Borough. The idea is that the item could be on the Board of Regents agenda for the University system next year, thus a packet is being assembled with information, timelines, and resolutions/letters of support. The School District is providing a letter of support and encourages the Board of Education's review and adoption of the attached resolution. Informational items are provided by KPC regarding student housing at the Kenai River Campus and about the impact of housing on community campuses.

KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

RESOLUTION 07-08-3

SUPPORTING STUDENT HOUSING FOR THE KENAI PENINSULA COLLEGE

Whereas, the Kenai Peninsula College has provided postsecondary education on the Kenai Peninsula since 1964 to a borough service area encompassing more than 25,000 square miles,

Whereas, KPC has no housing for students wanting to live on campus while attending the college,

Whereas, the Kenai Peninsula has numerous rural and remote, off-the-road system villages and these students have two choices to attend college: attend a major University of Alaska campus or move to the Lower 48,

Whereas, if you grow up in Tyonek, Ninilchik, Moose Pass or Cooper Landing, attending a university in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau or the Lower 48 is often a difficult transition,

Whereas, 60% of rural and Native students who attend the university's urban campuses do not complete their education goals,

Whereas; large cities may be intimidating and large universities may be confusing and may not provide the personal touch these students need. Urban institutions are a "long way away from home," especially for anxious, small community and village students,

Whereas, rural students who choose to attend KPC find small classes with strong remediation and tutoring programs to assist them as they bridge the gap to college level courses,

Whereas, KPC prides itself on offering courses and degrees that are offered nowhere else in Alaska including Process Technology (KPC provides this degree program at two of the three locations in the state); Paramedical Technology, Industrial Process Instrumentation and Digital Arts,

Whereas, student housing at KPC will give rural students an option to attend college near their homes instead of leaving Alaska or going to a large city in Alaska.

Whereas, student housing will allow these students to take a transition step to a larger community before moving onto a large university and city, if they so desire,

Whereas, for the past three years the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly has requested \$10 million for KPC housing in its annual priority list sent to the Alaska Legislature,

Therefore, be it resolved that University of Alaska Anchorage Chancellor Fran Ulmer, University of Alaska President Mark Hamilton and the University of Alaska Board of Regents, support and encourage the construction of a 100-bed student housing complex on KPC's Kenai River Campus.

Adopted by the Kenai Peninsula Borough Board of Education on this 3rd day of December, 2007.

Liz Downing, Vice President
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
Board of Education

ATTEST: _____
Sally Tachick
Notary Public, State of Alaska
My Commission Expires 07/25/09

Student Housing at Kenai Peninsula College, Kenai River Campus

Kenai Peninsula Students . . .

The Kenai Peninsula has numerous rural and remote, off-the-road system villages. These students have two choices to attend college: attend a major University of Alaska campus or go outside. If you grow up in Tyonek or Ninilchik, going to Anchorage or the Lower 48 is like moving to New York City.

Large cities are intimidating. Large institutions are confusing with complicated processes and don't provide the personal touch these students need. Major higher education institutions are a "long way away from home," especially for anxious, small community students.

Rural students who choose to attend Kenai Peninsula College (KPC) find small classes with strong remediation and tutoring programs to assist students as they bridge the gap to college level courses. They find an excellent program of preparation for jobs or further education. However, without student housing these students have no avenue to pursue their education if they live outside commuting distance.

Rural Alaskan Students . . .

When KPC attends the Alaska Federation of Natives Conference each year, Native parents and elders express overwhelming interest in wanting to send their students to the Peninsula. They believe the KPC atmosphere, friendliness of the community and semi-rural setting would well suit their high school graduates that want to attend college but are intimidated by the large campuses in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau. They are also well aware of the lack of success of other students from their villages who have initially attended large universities.

KPC prides itself on offering courses and degrees that are offered nowhere else in Alaska including Process Technology (KPC provides this degree program at two of the three locations in the state); Paramedical Technology, Industrial Process Instrumentation and Digital Arts, which are offered only at KPC in Alaska. Students have to move to the Peninsula to get these degrees.

Other potential students will want to receive skills training at the Kenai River Campus (KRC) to take advantage of jobs in the mining, gas and petroleum industry. With the anticipated "Perfect Storm" of new projects needing thousands of new workers—many will need short term housing in order to take Mining and Petroleum Training Service (MAPTS) courses.

When one considers these three facts the need for student housing becomes extremely evident.

Transition Campuses...

Student housing at the KRC will give rural students an option to attend college near their homes instead of leaving Alaska or going to a large city in Alaska. Many deselect college as an option because the large campuses are just too far away, too large and too confusing. Moving from a village of 200 people to a city of more than 100,000 is too large a step for most 18-20 year olds.

Housing will allow these students to take an intermediate step to a larger community before moving onto a large university and city, if they so desire.

The Proposed Housing Solution . . .

KPC proposes the construction of an 80-100-bed facility at the Kenai River Campus to house students. KRC presently has most of the Campus Services and Business Office infrastructure in place to support housed students. Rental fees generated would provide sufficient funding to support a Residence Life coordinator and Residence Life Administrative assistant.

Return on Investment...

The construction of student housing will place rural students on a level-playing field with those from the metropolitan areas by providing them access to a quality education and increased chances for success in college and in life. Students will benefit, the State of Alaska will benefit, the Kenai Peninsula Borough will benefit, and it will further stop the brain drain from the Kenai Peninsula.

Impact of Housing on KPC and National Community College Housing Trends—What the Experts Say About Positive Impacts

If KPC were to construct student housing (100 beds) we could potentially increase our annual SCH production by 2,400 (12 credits/student/semester), a 12% increase over our 20,000 annual average. This would add another \$307,200 annually to our tuition revenue at today's tuition cost. In December 2002, UA Statewide stated that tuition receipts could be used to support student housing programs. With two recent senior faculty retirements and one projected for May 2008, KPC will also have considerable salary savings to be used in support of resident life positions.

UA community campuses need to be viewed differently than they have in the past. They should be considered “feeder campuses” to the MAUs and not virtually stand-alone 2-year degree and certificate granting community colleges. The MAUs' GER courses are filled to capacity and the “main” campuses are unable to meet the demand. UA has matured to the point where we should operate similar to other Lower 48 university systems by using community campuses to provide the first two years of GERs and then students matriculate to the universities. Examples include Penn State, University of Maine and University of Maryland. UA community campuses continue to offer more high-demand job programs such as nursing, allied health and process technology where rural students in a region must sometimes drive more than 70 miles to take these courses. With gas prices approaching \$3.30/gallon on the Kenai, commuting is becoming a very expensive option that many cannot afford.

KPC offers degrees that are available nowhere else in Alaska: Process Technology, Paramedical Technology, Instrumentation and Digital Arts. If a student wants these degrees, they have to move here, but there is no student housing. Students from our region and the Lower 48 state they would KPC if there were only student housing.

Alaska Christian College is a residential institution 250 yards from where KPC housing would be built. ACC has a dining/conference facility that can feed up to 200 students while their enrollment will never be more than 50. KPC partners with ACC in numerous ways and their president has stated that if KPC had housing, students would be able to purchase meal cards so they could walk to the ACC campus thus negating a need for a KPC dining hall, unless a developer wanted to build one to support the summer tourist industry.

What the Experts Say about the Positive Impact of Student Housing

Housing at community colleges across the US is becoming a rapidly growing trend with more than 240 public 2-year colleges and 70 independent colleges now having on-campus housing¹.

How does housing impact students?

Retention and Graduation

“Students living on campus are more likely to persist and graduate than students who commute” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 421). Example: On-campus students at the University of South Carolina are 1.7 times more likely to graduate than those who live off-campus.

¹ American Association of Community Colleges web site, “AACC Research and Statistics,” <http://www2.aacc.nche.edu/research/index.htm>

Values and Beliefs

Living on campus positively impacted increases in “aesthetic, cultural, and intellectual values” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 421).

Diversity

Residence halls influence a “positive shift toward more positive and inclusive racial-ethnic attitudes and openness to diversity broadly defined” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, pg. 310)

Academic Achievement

University of Michigan study found that living and learning programs had an impact on students’ academic achievement and intellectual engagement (Pasque and Murphy, 2005)

National surveys indicate students who live in residence halls maintain higher grade point averages and are more likely to stay in school and graduate than students who live off campus. In addition, students who live on campus tend to be more satisfied with their college experience, and have unique opportunities to make lasting friendships.

The Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA calculates that living in a residence hall during a student’s first year increases a student’s chance of finishing college by 12%.

The following information about community college housing is excerpted from “A National Study of On-Campus Housing at Community Colleges,” by Barbara K. Townsend, Jessica Graverholt, Suzanne Spomer, University of Missouri-Columbia. The paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Council for the Study of Community Colleges held in Tampa, Florida, on April 13-14, 2007.

“Research about the impact of living on-campus has almost exclusively focused on four-year colleges and universities. Since most two-year colleges were built to serve their local districts, it was assumed these institutions would have little need for residence halls because their students would live at home and commute to campus. However, changing expectations on the part of students as well as increasing concerns for student retention or transfer are contributing to a greater interest in on-campus housing at two-year colleges (Koslowski, 2006). At a time when increasing attention is being paid not only to student retention but also to student outcomes, institutional leaders should examine every means to increase retention and demonstrate value added to the student. Since residential living is associated with increased student development and greater student engagement, which is linked to retention, it is time for community college leaders to consider whether residential living should be a component of their campus.

Of particular interest for this study is the results stemming from an open-ended question that asked students about the effect of residence hall living upon their academic life. According to the authors, students indicated that no longer having to commute to campus gave them more time to study. On-campus living “also removed many distractions,” such as the chores involved in helping to maintain a residence off-site, either with family or roommates. Additionally, students said it was important to them to have the opportunity to study with their peers regularly, to have more immediate access to facilities such as the library, and to be close to classrooms” (p. 671).

These reasons, as well as others, are also articulated in newspaper reports of why some two-year schools are currently developing on-campus housing. For example, Omaha Metro Community College in Nebraska has just begun providing student housing because college administrators thought such housing would cut down students' commute time and attract more students from outside the Omaha area (There's No Place, 2006). A recent report on Maine's community college system indicates that its administrators want to provide students with more traditional college experiences such as living on campus in the hope that doing so will expose students to more campus programs and help students prepare to transfer. Also, as its student body changes from primarily non-traditional students to younger students, there is an increased need to provide housing for students who live at least 30 miles from the college. Two-year colleges are also finding that students want to live on campus, especially because of cost concerns, but also to know their classmates better. As one student said, "it would make it more of a community instead of a place to go to classes" ("New Dorms," 2006).

In some states community colleges are not permitted to provide on-campus housing. For example, Florida state law prohibits these institutions from using state money for student housing. The community colleges' solution is to allow apartments to be built on campus property, but managed by entities other than the college. This approach avoids legal constraints, while still offering students on-campus housing. These apartments are like other student housing, complete with computer labs, meeting rooms, and a fitness center ("HCC to Consider," 2005). In the state of Washington, private funding has to be found and housing is to be treated as "enterprise facilities and as such they will need to stand on their own" (Orchowski, 2006) in terms of funding. To circumvent state law prohibiting two-year colleges from building on-campus housing, Joliet Junior College and Illinois Central College (ICC) have worked through their Foundations to create housing. Thus "ICC's not-for-profit foundation in 2004 built apartment facilities with a 330-bed capacity" (Colindres, 2007). The housing is "self-sustaining, with rental fees covering the cost of maintenance and upkeep" (Colindres, 2007)."