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## WKU moves forward with residence hall upgrades

By AARON MUDD [amudd@bgdailynews.com](mailto:amudd@bgdailynews.com) Oct 20, 2018

Western Kentucky University is moving ahead with a project to transform Bemis Lawrence Hall and Barnes Campbell Hall by 2021.

Mike Reagle, director of housing and dining at WKU, said both buildings will be replaced with “pod-style” residence halls that feature smaller sets of rooms that share amenities.

The residence halls will also have living learning communities that cater to different academic interests.

“We know that, from a retention standpoint, that students that are involved in these living learning communities tend to persist at a greater rate,” Reagle said.

The \$48 million project will involve demolishing and rebuilding both residence halls. It will replace them with more elongated buildings that wrap around a new green space to be built over the parking lot for Pearce Ford Tower.

“This will be everyone’s front lawn,” Reagle said, describing the space as a hub for the community at the bottom of the hill.

In the buildings, each floor will have three pods that can accommodate about 25 students per pod. The pods include several double-bed rooms that share a bathroom and living area. The living areas will feature large windows that let in natural light and overlook the green space.

Some rooms do have their own bathrooms, but they're reserved for upperclassmen who will mentor freshmen living in the residence halls, Reagle said.

Each building will include five floors of student rooms with 400 beds in all.

Ultimately, the goal is to improve student success, Reagle said.

“Having new buildings will help us to attract students into the nicer facilities, but at the same time (students) will also be attached to these living learning communities that will help them academically,” he said.

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