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■ HUGE GROWTH REQUIRES QUICK ACTION

New dorm, classrooms to go up at XU

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Xavier University will welcome its biggest freshman class this fall, and it plans a new dorm and a new classroom building to keep up with the growing student body.

Xavier's incoming class of at least 1,150 students will be more than one-third larger than last year's class of 860. The university will add 10 more sections of freshman English and math. It also will convert double rooms into triples and suite living rooms to bedrooms to house students.

Construction starts later this year on a new residence

hall to open by fall 2011 at the bottom of Ledgewood Avenue, just across the street from Bellarmine Chapel. It will house about 300 students.

Next summer, the school will raze Alter Hall, the classroom building that houses about 40 percent of XU's courses, and build a \$17 million classroom building to be complete by early 2012.

The projects are in addition to construction under way for a new home for the Williams College of Business and a new Learning Commons, named the Hoff Academic Quad. Those buildings should be ready by fall 2010.

Just last year, Xavier im-

posed a midyear budget cut and froze most hiring. The increased enrollment caused it to lift the freeze and gives it financial flexibility to build new buildings at a time when many universities are mothballing new construction projects.

"We know the bottleneck on the upper limits of the university now is dorm space," XU President Father Michael Graham said. "What's in front of us is a kind of growth era for the university. To be able to pull that off in this kind of environment is quite remarkable."

Xavier also had planned to build student apartments at the Xavier Square development near Montgomery Road.

But that project is stalled, and XU could not afford to wait for the new space.

To finance the new buildings, Xavier will issue new debt this fall and use student room-and-board fees to make the payments. It currently holds more than \$150 million in total debt. To pay for the new classroom building, the school will use savings from current construction, reserve funds and private gifts.

The school received a record 7,113 applications this year, accepted 5,229 and already has more than 1,200 deposits to reserve a spot, said Terry Richards, vice president of student enrollment.

Square back to the drawing board

Xavier University will pull back on the Xavier Square development it planned for Montgomery Road and Dana Avenue in Norwood.

XU planned to join with developer Corporex Cos. to put apartments, stores and restaurants, a campus health center and its bookstore on the 20-acre site. The school announced a delay in construction last fall because of the economy. Monday, XU officials said they will revisit the plan.

"We will do something there," said Beth Amyot, vice president of financial adminis-

tration. "We've stepped back, and we're re-evaluating all of that land."

The Xavier Square site, which the university now is calling East Campus, has a long history. A chemical plant exploded there in 1990, and Xavier acquired the land by 2000. It demolished the old Zumbiel packaging plant last year and has spent more than \$15 million over a decade to assemble the site.

Xavier also owns the Norwood Plaza on Montgomery Road, just north of the Xavier Square site.