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## Press release : 2002 : 02 : 26 : Student housing approved for USF St. Petersburg

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### **Student housing approved for USF St. Petersburg**

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA. (Feb. 26, 2002) -- Students attending the University of South Florida St. Petersburg could soon begin living on campus.

The university's campus board voted unanimously Tuesday, Feb. 26, to begin negotiating leases with downtown apartment complexes to provide the first-ever housing accommodations for students. The school also will begin the search for an independent non-profit corporation to build residence halls on campus.

The action by the board allows campus officials to begin negotiating master leases with adjacent privately held residential property owners. The first apartments could be available for an anticipated 40 to 120 students in the fall of 2003.

The independent not-for-profit foundation sought by the board would develop and operate residence suites for another 240 students. The residences would be built on university-owned land.

The plan approved by the board envisions on-campus housing that would consist of four-bedroom single apartments and two-bedroom double suites. Construction would occur in phases, with the first units available in 2004.

Before the vote, USF President Judy Genshaft told the board that "this is precedent setting. There is no regional campus in Florida with housing. We're treading new ground."

Currently, there is demand for 120 beds, said Steve Ritch, associate vice president for student affairs, who oversaw the comprehensive housing study conducted by Triad Research Inc., the lead consultant.

"In two years, we feel confident we would have demand for 240 beds," Ritch said.

A committee composed of officials from both the St. Petersburg and Tampa campuses found "minimal" housing in downtown St. Petersburg priced for students, Ritch said. An assessment of the local real estate market located fewer than 40 independently owned rentals near the campus.

He added that a committee study had found that 80 percent of potential freshmen and sophomores considered on- or near-campus housing to be "extremely" or "somewhat" important. For more information, call Steve Ritch at (727) 553-1162.