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\$16.4 MILLION

USF-Poly Will Get State Money

By [Robin Williams Adams](#)
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LAKELAND | University of South Florida Polytechnic Chief Executive Officer Marshall Goodman can start taking deep breaths again now that Gov. Charlie Crist has signed a state budget that includes \$16.4 million for its new campus.

Crist's 2007 veto of funding for the new campus delayed its timetable by a year.

"We're obviously very grateful that the governor has endorsed the appropriations recommended by the legislature," Goodman said in an e-mail Thursday, adding that he's also grateful to lawmakers for agreeing to make a substantial investment in a tough budget year.

"The new funding - for construction as well as for programs and faculty - affirms what we said last year," Goodman said. "The polytechnic vision isn't anyone's 'pet project' and it isn't just a local concern. It's a state priority."

The state Board of Governors, which oversees the state university system, had recommended \$3.6 million for USF Poly construction funding this year. The Florida House put that amount in its budget. The Senate had \$11 million in its version.

State Sen. J.D. Alexander, R-Lake Wales, used his clout to push for a higher amount during late-session budget negotiations. The end result is that USF Poly will get \$11.4 million as the second installment in a three-year funding plan to establish its new campus at Interstate 4 and the Polk Parkway.

The other \$5 million included in the state budget is for faculty and staff at the new campus.

"This is an extraordinary opportunity at exactly the right time for Florida," Goodman said. "We have lots of work yet to do, but the governor's signature (Wednesday) was a crucial step."

The \$11.4 million adds to \$15 million legislators earmarked for the campus in 2008. Supporters hope in the 2010 session to get a final \$15 million toward construction.

The estimated cost of getting the university established is \$62 million. That includes planning, design, infrastructure and construction. Negotiations have been ongoing with Santiago Calatrava, an internationally known Spanish architect and engineer.

[Robin Williams Adams can be reached at robin.adams@theledger.com or 863-802-7558. Political Editor Bill Ruffy contributed to this article.]

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Marshall Goodman, Ph.D., Vice President and Campus Executive Officer University of South Florida Lakeland, with artist renderings of the new USF Campus to be built next to the Polk Parkway and I-4, in his office at the USF/PCC campus in Lakeland, Florida on September 11, 2007

