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USF Poly Building Expected To Begin This Fall

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The Ledger

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LAKELAND | Land clearing for the University of South Florida Polytechnic's new campus, and construction of infrastructure like power lines and utilities, is expected to start this fall.

Construction should start on its first building - the Science, Innovation and Technology Building - in fall 2011 with an expected 20-month construction period. That schedule, if maintained, has USF Poly officials projecting occupancy of the site in summer 2013.



Summer 2013 would be one year later than the summer 2012 opening date expected in October, when architect-engineer Santiago Calatrava unveiled his vision for the campus to the overall USF system's trustees.

In the intervening time, the amount of state money USF Poly would receive for construction, infrastructure and faculty varied widely as Gov. Charlie Crist and State Sen. J.D. Alexander, a Lake Wales Republican who was Senate budget chief, sparred.

Crist's veto of construction money Alexander shepherded through the legislature angered USF Poly supporters, but they were taking the high road at Monday's USF Poly board meeting.

USF Poly did get \$16 million in new base funding, said Marshall Goodman, the school's chief executive. While \$6 million is for the upcoming pharmacy program, \$10 million goes toward transforming USF Poly into an autonomous polytechnic within the USF system.

"That is a tremendous win for the campus and brings with it a tremendous amount of responsibility," Goodman said.

Calatrava currently is working on the physical infrastructure required, Goodman said.

USF Poly also is laying groundwork for adding freshman and sophomore classes and getting Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation separate from that of the main USF system.

Judith Ponticell, senior associate vice president, took the local board through updated information on students and faculty contained in the accreditation bid. She hopes the application, after going through multiple-levels at USF in Tampa, can go to SACS in October.

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