6-19-2003


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Sharing a Vision:
Barnes & Noble Joins USF St. Petersburg’s Plans for Future

June 19, 2003 - St. Petersburg, Fla.

For now, it may be ‘the little shop around the corner’ but, if the shared vision of Barnes & Noble and USF St. Petersburg comes to fruition, it will soon become St. Petersburg’s first and only multi-use “Academic Superstore.”

At the June Campus Board of Trustees meeting, USF St. Petersburg announced a landmark partnership with Barnes & Noble Bookstores that answers immediate needs and holds great promise for the future. Effective July 1, Barnes & Noble is moving into the existing USF St. Petersburg Bookstore located on the ground floor of Coquina Hall.

Artist renderings were unveiled showing Barnes & Noble and USF St. Petersburg’s shared vision of building a multi-level parking garage and “Academic Superstore” featuring a two- or three-story bookstore and cyber café. The new facility will provide textbooks and services to students and serve as a gateway to downtown St. Petersburg. The mixed-use facility is planned for the corner of 5th Avenue South and 3rd Street South, offering downtown shoppers, workers and residents access to a multitude of merchandise and services.

“In these uncertain economic times, it is encouraging to see the university and Barnes & Noble sharing this vision,” said Susan Sietsma, USF St. Petersburg Student Government President. “The projected project will be beneficial to both USF St. Petersburg students and the community. Our campus is rapidly growing and projections are that our student population will double within the next decade, so parking is a serious issue for students. Since the state does not fund student parking, it is up to the university to raise the money to make this vision a reality.”

In addition to purchasing the inventory of the current store, Barnes & Noble will fund a $60,000 remodeling project of the existing space. The agreement calls for Barnes & Noble to remit between 7% and 9% of its sales to USF St. Petersburg. They will also provide a $3,000 scholarship annually, convenient remote buyback locations for textbooks, career opportunities for existing bookstore staff and retail student interns, a full-service internet commerce program, and the development of a website with links to professors. The store will house a textbook department, academic and scholarly book department, and a general merchandise department that will carry newspapers, books and items for the general public.

Barnes & Noble currently runs the bookstore at USF Sarasota and, in addition to USF St. Petersburg, they will also manage the stores on the Tampa campus and at the Health Sciences Center Bookstore.

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