

CSI starting interviews to hire master architect

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With a guarantee that the money to pay architects and engineers soon will be available, the College of Staten Island will hire a master architect to design its new campus in Willowbrook.

CSI, in conjunction with City University of New York facilities officials, will interview six or seven architectural firms on Aug. 13 at the University Center in Manhattan, said Edmond L. Volpe, president of CSI. "Shortly after that day, we will choose a master architect," he said.

CUNY selected which firms to interview by determining what companies could handle the scope of the work, he said, and those that also expressed interest in the job.

Design, not economy, will determine which architect gets the project, said Kenneth Klindt-worth, CSI's director of facilities. The fee, regardless of which firm is selected, is a percentage of the total construction cost, he said.

The state Dormitory Authority — the agency that arranges financing and manages City University of New York construction — will then hire a project manager, Volpe said.

Consolidation of CSI's St. George and Sunnyside campuses on the soon-to-be-vacated Staten Island Developmental Center grounds is expected to be completed in the early 1990s. The St. George campus is scheduled to close in 1991; the Sunnyside campus in 1992.

The construction already has been delayed more than a year because the state Dormitory Authority could not sell bonds to finance CSI's and other CUNY construction. Legislation approved this month resolved that problem.

Another problem arose less than two weeks ago. The state Dormitory Authority (SDA) was planning a bond sale, but none of the proceeds were for CSI as originally planned. The SDA was prohibited from selling bonds for CSI because the environmental im-

pact statement (EIS) — which was in the city's hands — was incomplete.

After a week of frantic negotiations, Sen. John J. Marchi, R-Staten Island, arranged for the SDA to lead the EIS review process instead of the city, which Marchi said was taking too long. In conjunction with that transfer, the SDA agreed to guarantee funds for CSI when the EIS was completed.

Last week, the SDA sold \$543 million in bonds, \$190 million for new CUNY construction, said Theodore A. Holmes, general counsel for the Dormitory Authority. Because the EIS is still incomplete, the SDA could not legally sell bonds for CSI, but the legislation that provided for the bond sale also permits the SDA and CUNY to move funds among CUNY's senior colleges, Holmes said.

Therefore, some of the interest earned on the \$190 million, which has been invested, will be channeled to CSI. (The remaining dollars raised through the bond sale will refinance old bonds.) The earliest money could be available is in mid-October, Holmes said.

Volpe said without Marchi's intervention, the construction could have been delayed yet another year. "We owe a tremendous debt to Sen. Marchi. He stepped in and resolved a difficult problem," Volpe said.

The former lead agencies — the City Planning department and the city Department of Environmental Protection — kept asking questions, Volpe said. "We expected closure but it didn't seem to be coming. The consultant (AKRF, Inc. of Manhattan, which is preparing the EIS) had been responding to one set of queries after another," Volpe said.

If the money becomes available in mid-October, groundbreaking could begin next fall, although demolition of some buildings could begin earlier, Volpe said. He and CUNY officials will work with the master architect during the next year designing the cam-

pus. Once construction begins, the Dormitory Authority's construction manager primarily will run things, he said.

Some EISs can be completed in three months, some take two years — it depends on the size of the project, said Marilyn Mammamo, director of the Staten Island office of the Department of City Planning, which had been one of the lead agencies.

The CSI project is comparable to the Teleport, the satellite antenna field and office park on the West Shore. That EIS also took more than a year to prepare, she said.

The city deferred lead agency status to the SDA because the city does not have to take any discretionary action, such as changing the zoning. Since the SDA is preparing the EISs for other CUNY projects, "it makes a lot of sense" for that agency to coordinate CSI's EIS as well, Ms. Mammamo said.