

Cost of moving CSI has doubled in 5 years

Price tag now \$400 million

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The cost of moving the College of Staten Island (CSI) from its two campuses in St. George and Sunnyside to Willowbrook has doubled in the five years since the consolidation at the former Staten Island Developmental Center was first proposed.

CSI President Edmond Volpe

made mention of the \$400 million price tag — up from \$200 million — during a briefing on the progress the college has made during the last decade to the Committee of 100 for Public Higher Education on Staten Island.

While acknowledging the increased cost, Volpe said the use of the Willowbrook site still represented a savings over the cost of

building an entirely new campus from the ground up.

In an interview following the meeting, Volpe said some \$100 million in increased costs arose from delays that have taken place since the Willowbrook site was selected for the consolidation and a 110-acre site in Ocean Breeze was abandoned.

"It cost \$20 million more every year we waited," Volpe said.

Peter Capone, president of Edward Durrell Stone Associates, the

firm that drafted the master plan for the consolidated campus, called the project "very lean" when it came to costs.

The boost in the estimate, he said, came from having "real projections, not figures pulled out of thin air."

During a slide presentation, Capone displayed working models of a campus that would use more than a dozen of the existing buildings, including 10 that will be used for classes, two that be used by

administration and the power plant that will heat the 200-acre complex.

Also on the drawing boards are four new buildings, including a theater complex that will house a 900-seat auditorium, a 450-seat traditional theater, a smaller experimental theater and recital and lecture halls.

The other new buildings are the library, a student center, a gym that includes a swimming pool,

plans and put off creation of new academic programs outlined by Dr. Barry Bressler, the school's vice president for academic affairs, earlier in the briefing.

The first of the two phases in the construction project is to cost \$261 million, more than the initial \$220 worth of bonds sold in 1986 by the state Dormitory Authority to finance the sale.

An additional \$80 in bonds was sold later. This still leaves the school needing \$100 million to meet the new cost projections.

But Volpe said he had "assurances" that the money was available to complete the project.

"I couldn't stop it now if I wanted to," he said. "It has to go forward."

Work on removing asbestos from what was once a hospital for World War II wounded servicemen is slated to begin in March at a cost of \$18 million, up from original projections of \$3 million.

Edward Durrell Stone's Capone said groundbreaking for the campus should take place this year.

Willowbrook campus are a sports complex that includes several softball fields, a football practice field, a track and a baseball diamond.

Also on the boards are plans for parking lots able to accommodate 3,000 cars.

When completed, according to Capone, the new CSI campus will be the largest of the 19 four- and two-year college campuses in the City University of New York System (CUNY).

With 10,600 full- and part-time students now, CSI will be able to expand enrollment to 12,000 with the additional space.

The announcement that construction of the new campus will cost more than expected comes at a time when the CUNY system is facing a tight budget.

The university recently announced it may have to lay off nearly 1,400 full- and part-time faculty and staff.

Volpe acknowledged that CSI has already had to cancel hiring