By Nick Phillips

Cypress Hall, UNCP’s newest residential hall, opened for the Fall 2011 semester and has seen a great turnout to its facility, despite the walk from main campus and most academic buildings.

“It is a nice facility we are proud to have in our inventory. It has been a great response for students interested in joining Cypress Hall,” UNCP Director of Housing and Residence Life Preston Swiney said.

That turnout is equal to the size of having the 476-bed Cypress filled to 96 percent capacity, a number that is a little higher than originally anticipated for this fall.

Cypress Hall offers 94 double-occupancy bedroom suites and 25 single bedroom rooms, and both designs feature a common lounge area and a suite bathroom.

Originally tabbed to be an upperclassman facility, Cypress Hall is housing its fair share of freshmen as well.

“Swiney said that the decision was made in late May/early June to open Cypress to freshmen, after allowing returning students additional time to change their room assignments for this year as well as the spring as well as the fall. Returning students and keep them living on campus past the first year that freshmen were asked in the order in which the completed housing contracts were returned, in theory, a reward to those who chose UNCP early.

Visitation

One difference of Cypress Hall is that 24/7 visitation, a policy that is not in place in any other dorm.

Swiney was quick to point out that just because there is the option for around the clock visitation, “that doesn’t mean you don’t keep in mind your roommates and suites issues and study habits.”

While some upperclassmen may feel that it is not fair to allow 24/7 visitation to dorms, even to those freshmen just beginning college, Swiney was not one to see who would be interested in changing their room assignment to Cypress Hall.

According to Swiney, the freshmen were asked in the order in which the completed housing contracts were returned, in theory, a reward to those who chose UNCP early.

The Office of Housing and Residence Life contacted over 200 freshmen to see who would be interested in changing their room assignment to Cypress Hall.

Swiney said that the transition of North Hall from male to female was smooth, as “normally those students who stayed in there would move up to an Oak, or Village or now Cypress.”

“In a year, the new students won’t even know that it was a female residence hall,” Swiney said of North Hall.

With the addition of Cypress Hall, the number of students in the older residence halls decreased, but was expected.

Currently, North Hall is 70 percent occupied with 134 males living in the 192-bed facility. There is no one living on the sixth floor of North Hall.

In Belk Hall, the 193-bed facility is 93 percent full with 106 females living in the residence hall.

West Hall

The Office of Housing and Residence Life was out of West Hall by the middle of June, turning the former residence hall over to the university’s space allocation committee.

“We turned the keys in and didn’t look in the rear view mirror. We went on and moved to a newer facility,” Swiney said.

Beds, desks, dressers and other items from rooms in West Hall are currently being stored in unoccupied rooms in Wellons Hall.

Wellons, another all-female facility, has only 23 students residing in it this fall, leading Swiney to say “we will not be back in there next year, I don’t envision that.”

Greek letters

Returning students and faculty walking past the Belk, North, Wellons and West buildings cannot help but notice the giant Greek letters on the sides of the various buildings.

Some of those letters seem backwards now, with Greek sorority letters still hung on the outside of the now-male North Hall and Greek fraternity letters on the outside of West Hall.

Keeping them there

This fall marked the first year that freshmen were required to live in on-campus housing.

Swiney is hoping that, along with a new marketing push, will help retain students and keep them living on campus past the first year.

“One of the great additions to our new residence halls over the last few years, I think that the amenities we have and the environment we have, students will de, no plans to go on campus,” Swiney said.