

Union Presbyterian Seminary

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Union Presbyterian Seminary to develop portion of Westwood Tract

RICHMOND, Va (April 23, 2015) - The Union Presbyterian Seminary Board of Trustees has approved a plan that will offer new and critically needed student housing for the first time in nearly 50 years.

The school plans to partner with a developer to build up to 310 apartments on the eastern 15-acres of its 34-acre Westwood Tract, located along Westwood and Rennie avenues in Richmond. Groundbreaking could begin as early as summer 2015 with new apartments opening late summer 2016. Students living on the property will be provided alternate housing during construction.

"The trustees' decision affirms the land's original intent when it was donated more than 100 years ago as a resource in achieving the seminary's mission to prepare pastors, educators, and scholars for ministry in today's world," said President Brian K. Blount. "The new apartments will replace student housing that is inadequate and outdated, and will help us attract top students."

The seminary's newest student housing, Advance Apartments, dates to 1968.

"Some residents have voiced concern about the development," Blount said. "To maintain our tradition of being a good neighbor, we have listened."

The revised plan lowers buildings heights from four stories to three, reduces the number of apartment units from 349 to 310, adds more space between buildings and the street, and ties the development architecturally to the main academic quad. The seminary also will leave the remaining 19 acres untouched as an open space, which the seminary will continue to contribute to the community as a public park. "We can't promise it will never be developed, but we have no immediate plans to do so," Blount said.

"Many of the earliest residents in our community chose to locate in the area specifically because the seminary was here," Blount said. "We plan to continue that legacy in this new development, both as a resource for the seminary's mission and an investment in the future of the community."

To learn more about the Westwood Tract project, visit <https://westwoodtract.wordpress.com/>

About Union Presbyterian Seminary: Founded in 1812, Union Presbyterian Seminary is among the oldest and most respected theological institutions in the United States and one of 10 theological institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). With a mission to prepare pastors, educators and scholars for ministry in today's world, Union serves a diverse student body at campuses in Richmond, Virginia and Charlotte, North Carolina. Its Extended Campus Program offers students a graduate-level education that combines online learning with intensive periods of study on campus. Visit www.upsem.edu.

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