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Viewed from above, the construction site of The Fitzgerald at UB Midtown is making considerable headway.

Courtesy of University of Baltimore

Fitzgerald Project Promises Replacing Classes a Groundbreaking Opportunities in 2010 Challenge at UB

By IBRAHIM DABO
Senior Staff Writer

Barnes & Noble Booksellers is preparing to launch a "superstore" in the retail portion of The Fitzgerald at UB Midtown, part of a \$77 million project which also includes a new parking garage and an apartment tower.

President Robert L. Bogomolny said the University of Baltimore is excited to bring the major retailer to midtown Baltimore, a move that would not only benefit UB students but would also have a far-reaching effect on Baltimore. The opening is slated for next year.

"Barnes & Noble's presence is a significant move upwards in the trajectory of the Fitzgerald project," Bogomolny said. "It will have a strongly positive impact on midtown, bringing more life and activity to a part of the city that is poised for growth. Our partnership has scored a big win for Baltimore."

Jade Roth, vice president of books, Barnes & Noble, said the partnership with UB is very

important.

"We are really looking forward to being able to come to the university [and] be able to serve both the academic community needs and the general community needs," Roth said. "We see this as a great marriage and a great partnership."

Roth added that the store would offer a wide variety of products and services which not only include traditional college store products, but many that are available in a local Barnes & Noble superstore—large, general books and school and art supplies.

UB will receive a percentage of Barnes & Noble's sales as commission in exchange for the 20,000 square feet of retail space, in addition to the rent, which will be significantly higher than that of the retailer's current space in the Student Center, said Barbara Aughenbaugh, associate vice president in the division of administration and finance. Aughenbaugh said the Barnes

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- UB is a public-private partner; The Bozzuto Group and the Gould Property Company were selected after a request for proposal was issued by the university in 2005.
- The agreement includes a long-term ground lease that will provide UB with a percentage of revenues generated from the project.
- The development will attract interest from the Mount Vernon Cultural Arts District, the Maryland Institute College of Art and the Bolton Hill neighborhood while capitalizing on growing market demand for retail and residential opportunities in the area.
- The project will consist of 275 luxury apartments, 25,000 square feet of retail space and a 1,245-space parking garage.
- The total project is estimated at \$77 million.

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Compiled by Ibrahim Dabo

By IBIDUNMADE LAYI-OYO
Staff Writer

Stuck with a class you aren't ready to handle just yet? There are options, but they come with deadlines you can't afford to miss.

If, for any reason, you are earning below a "C," thus failing a course, you can repeat and replace the grade on your transcript; grades can only be averaged (not replaced) in the University of Baltimore School of Law, said Phillip Closius, dean.

The number of grades that can be replaced at the Yale Gordon College of Liberal Arts and the Merrick School of Business varies. First-year students can replace four; second-year students, three; juniors and seniors, two; and graduates, one.

"The second grade replaces the first grade, [regardless] of which is higher" said Richard Morell, registrar. "If you failed a course at UB, you cannot repeat it anywhere else. The repeated course must be the original course; no substitute course is acceptable for a grade replacement. When the number of repeat-and-replace opportunities is exhausted, every subsequent grade stays on the transcript."

Over the course of the semester, there are various opportunities and deadlines for getting out of a class.

The first option is to drop the class. The advantage of this option is that it gives you an opportunity to get a feel for the class and decide if you are ready to have it on your plate within first two weeks of classes. This option is closed after this time has elapsed.

Another opportunity comes midway into the semester. It involves dropping a class with a "W" withdrawal on your transcript against the class (deadlines are March 16 for the law school and March 30 for the business school and college of liberal arts).

The last option to withdraw from a class is called an "administrative withdrawal," which is used absolutely at the discretion of the faculty. It is granted to students who are having extreme difficulties.

"It's great to be given a second chance without being penalized if you are not succeeding," said Annette Peterson, who has a master's degree in Human Services Administration.

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& Noble, which is being built on a UB-owned site at West Mount Royal Avenue and Oliver Street, will bring great opportunity to UB students and the community because of its diverse offerings.

"We are very enthusiastic about this," Aughenbaugh said. "The Barnes & Noble academic superstore is a very big deal for us. This is great opportunity for the development project and the university, UB has such a good partnership with Barnes & Noble and the location is so prominent...we believe it will be win-win for all involved."

Aside from a 60-seat Starbucks-branded café located on the mezzanine level, the superstore will carry among its collection supplementary class materials that may not have been available before in its current bookstore on campus, said Rob Streib, director of auxiliary enterprises at UB.

"With a lot of the enrollment initiatives we had, our need outweigh the size of the bookstore," Streib said. "There is a very high demand need in our neighborhood for a community bookstore that's not just a bookstore; it's a destination, some place you can go and drink coffee and read a book."

The current bookstore in the student center will close when the superstore is completed. The convenience store will remain open in the center.

Heather Young, corporate communications, said the project will

be significant addition in the community.

"I think it is great that Barnes & Noble is coming to Mount Vernon. Yes, it is a small, artistic neighborhood, but we need more people coming through to make it safer and more enjoyable for all," Young said.

"I would say it would probably be the second most popular gathering place for our students, second to the Student Center," said Steve Cassard, vice president of facilities management and capital planning.

Crystle Barfield, business management, said Barnes & Noble will allow students to have many resources they need on campus.

"I think that having a Barnes & Noble so close to campus will put UB up in the ranking with some of the other top-ranking colleges in Maryland, like John Hopkins," Barfield said.

Becky Slogeris, graphic design at the Maryland Institute College of Art, said: "I hope we'll see this serve as a meeting ground for MICA and UB students, a much needed connection between our campuses."

During the planning process, UB emphasized to city officials the need for increased parking capacity, and that the overall development should benefit the university, Cassard said.

This paved way for the construction of a new parking garage estimated at \$25 million, scheduled for completion in spring 2010. Out

of 1,245 parking spaces, 950 will be designated to UB, thus increasing the university's overall parking capacity by one-third. Tiered parking rates will go into effect upon completion of the garage (see info box for rates).

"The benefit that UB gets is, of course, the below-market parking rate for the 950 spaces in that garage," Cassard said, adding that approximately 60 percent of UB's population that commutes will park in the new facility because of its proximity to campus and enhanced attractions.

While Diana Blessing, Forensic Science, said the addition of parking spaces could lessen parking problems, she said the amount that a student places on his or her parking access card should not matter in relation to the price that person pays to park.

"That system basically punishes people that do not have extra financial aid to put on their card and they need to do it as they get paid from work. Everyone should be able to pay the \$4.32- \$7.32 rates," Blessing said, referring to the tiered parking arrangement.

Lead developer, The Bozzuto Group, is also overseeing the development of the 275 market-rate apartments scheduled for completion in spring 2011.

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This rendering reflects the possible structure of the Barnes & Noble superstore announced for The Fitzgerald at UB Midtown.

Courtesy of University of Baltimore

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"Also, opportunities to drop classes are universal. I have attended another university and the same thing happens. You can drop classes. It's really a great opportunity."

Even with all of the options, school officials encourage students to get help early.

"Talk to academic advisers; they are there to help you and they are willing to help" said Dr. Margaret Prothast, associate liberal arts dean.

"A lot of services are available at UB. Students need to be proactive

and take advantage of the opportunities, never wait till it is too late" said Larry Thomas, dean of the College of Liberal Arts. "Overcome the embarrassment and ask for help. All discussions are confidential. Even if the problem is not academic, we can still lead students to where they can get help."

"Students need to read the catalog, it contains valuable information. Ignorance of the rule is not an excuse," Morrell said.

They also need to accept reality. "It's great to give students oppor-

tunities, but they need to work hard; education requires a lot of hard work," Thomas said

"I've had to drop a class in UB because it wasn't working; and I wasn't going to fail the class. It's a good opportunity. However, we have enough chances. We cannot ask for more...that will be pushing it," said Thoretta Barnes, who has a master's degree in Human Services.

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TUITION FREEZE ON THE DOCKET

By BROOKE CARLTON
Contributing Writer

Since 2006, University System of Maryland undergraduates have been benefiting from a freeze on in-state tuition. When Gov. Martin O'Malley's recent proposal to extend the freeze to the 2009-2010 school year raised some eyebrows, it left USM officials and students wondering how they were going to be affected.

With the shaky economy, many students are seeking financial breaks wherever possible, so the extension of the tuition freeze would be of significant relief to them for the upcoming school year.

Critics wonder, however, whether this proposition is just a stability sustenance leading up to a drastic increase in USM tuition rates as soon as the freeze is over.

Among advocates of the extension is Harry Schuckel, senior vice president of administration and finance. Though it may threaten the university's budget, Schuckel characterizes the tuition freeze as a "competitive advantage."

"University of Baltimore is an access school...by being more affordable, we make that [access] more possible," Schuckel said. "[The freeze] is very consistent with our core mission, which is to provide access to education."

"It's going to favor us by remaining frozen...[UB] especially, as other state universities attract many more out-of-state students," he said. "It's going to make us more attractive, especially since we have good quality programs."

Schuckel contrasts the present

possibility of tuition increase with economic uncertainty of past college days.

"There's nothing on the horizon that I see that was true in the early to mid-'70s," he said. "I remember being at a university and they raised tuition by 18.2% and that was not unusual...I don't think there's anything in the cards like that right now."

Like Schuckel, Tambria Thacker, business, supports the extension of the freeze.

"They say the economy is going to get worse before it gets better. A lift of the tuition freeze...might make students financially ineligible to go to college," Thacker said. "And they can barely afford it now."

Compared to other USM schools like UMBC, University of Baltimore's tuition is relatively low. For in-state, undergraduate admission for Fall 2008, UMBC's tuition and fees totaled \$4,390 per semester, whereas UB's in-state, undergraduate tuition for Fall 2008 totaled \$3525.50. It should be noted that UB's graduate tuition is not under the freeze and continues to climb.

Because of UB's tuition appeal, many UB undergraduates were not even aware of the ongoing freeze. Even so, Abdu Eaton, English, says the lift of the freeze would not affect his enrollment.

"It wouldn't increase too much," Eaton said of the tuition rate. "Even if tuition were raised, I would still attend."

The state legislature is due to decide on the proposal within the next month.

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