

LTCC board to mull building student housing

By Kathryn Reed

When Lake Tahoe Community College students start classes in fall 2020 they might have the option of living on campus.

This afternoon the college board will hear a presentation by representatives of Brailsford & Dunlavy about the feasibility of having residential housing at LTCC.

The company investigated what type of housing students would like on campus, if they even wanted it and then delved into different scenarios to make it a reality.

While no decision will be made at the meeting today, which starts at 4:30pm, the board is expected to vote just after the first of the year about student housing.

“For the college to financially survive, being a destination college is the right concept. To be a destination college, housing is important,” LTCC President Kindred Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News*.

About five years ago 17 percent of the students enrolled at LTCC were not from Tahoe. That percentage has grown to 41 percent.

Those students need someplace to call home while they are studying here. As the rental market has continued to be squeezed in the last several years, their options have dwindled. A survey found nearly 66 percent of the students had a difficult time attaining housing.

While student housing might be below market rate, it will only be for students. Specific criteria would need to be figured out if the board agrees to go forward with the housing idea.

Taking a certain number of units each quarter may be required, and putting a limit on the number of years allowed in the student housing could be another rule.

The consultants believe housing for about 100 students would be do-able.

The dorms are proposed to go near the phys ed building and would likely be two stories. Depending on how many it would accommodate, the structure could also go near the new university center. The smell from the South Tahoe Public Utility District is a concern behind the gym.

Students told the consultants they don't need frills. What they want is something affordable, to be able to rent just for the academic year and to have study spaces. They aren't looking for traditional apartments, but instead shared suites.

Food service is something else to be ironed out.

"We could reinstate food in the student center. I've seen some colleges provide food vouchers at the local businesses," Murillo said. "That helps local businesses and helps students get a good meal."

She said the most likely scenario is a developer will build the facility and a third party will operate it.

"We really have to look at the affordability for students. What would work cost-wise for them," Murillo said.