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EDISON

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and alumnus visiting campus Wednesday for a luncheon agreed wholeheartedly with Artiles. "Campus housing is an awesome idea. Historically this has been a commuter school," said Florida's Lt. Gov. Jeff Kottcamp, who keeps a Fort Myers Edison College campus office. "The trend has been for students to take six years to graduate. If they lived on campus they could put more focus on their studies and speed up the degree process."

Scion began the process to measure demand by holding focus groups where students met with company representatives, said Eric Luskin, a company vice president.

"So far we have had a good response to the idea at the two campuses, Lee and Collier, under study," Luskin said. "We have heard that it would save drive time and traffic anxiety. It would make for a more collegial atmosphere and allow for more college activity involvement. It would also open up educational opportunities for students 50 miles from the campus."

Edison could find itself in the same situation as Florida Gulf Coast University if it goes residential. That school recently reported that it cannot keep up with demand for student housing.

"We have reached an agreement with FGCU that students not accepted in their school could study their first two years at Edison," Walker said. "Then they could finish at FGCU. We could offer them housing here."

Clewiston students who would like to attend Edison are stymied, said Hancel Lopez, 18, a first-year student. "They can't because it is a 60-mile commute," he said.

The research by Luskin's company on student demand will be presented to school administration either in January or February. The report plans to state what students' atti-

Edison College facts:

- >> Founded in 1962
- >> Offers 21 associate degree programs and one bachelor's with more to be added
- >> Locations in Lee, Charlotte, Collier and Hendry/Glades counties

tudes are, what kind of housing is desired and what costs would be acceptable.

The report would also show impacts of student housing on other college services such as dining, security and library hours.

"We have seen a lot of students' concerns about parking, safety and costs," Luskin said. "The next step if the college wants to move ahead would be a business plan."

On campus housing costs would not be passed on to students who did not live on campus. The idea would be for the housing to be self-supporting.

Hillsborough Community College's Dale Mabry campus in Tampa is building student housing at what was a primarily commuter campus. Plans call for the school's Hawk's Landing apartments to be completed in January.

"I wouldn't call it dormitory living," said Frank Babcock, Dean of student services at Hillsborough. "The apartments have private bathrooms for each room in a suite, high speed internet and cable, access to game rooms, pool, fitness center and seminar and meeting rooms."

If the students at Edison get behind the idea of on-campus, student housing, there is a possibility the school could also become a community where students live, study, eat, find recreation and form lasting relationships.

"We were a commuter school where students had relationships with their cars and the parking lot," Babcock said. "We are very excited that students living on campus will allow for more campus involvement and for students to develop more friendships." ■

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