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Edinboro University of Pennsylvania lays out plans for Porreco College

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BY ERIE TIMES-NEWS | Saturday, April 26, 2014, 5:30 p.m.

Edinboro University of Pennsylvania officials have outlined plans for an \$11 million transformation of Porreco Center into Porreco College, a community college alternative.

The university expects a maximum increase in enrollment initially from 300 students to 450.

Edinboro officials answered questions on Thursday from many of the 40 people who live near the property on West 38th Street.

Starting in the fall, the college will offer associate's degree and job training programs for students similar to those at community colleges.

"With these renovations, we will have the room and the facilities to educate more of the Erie population, and education at a price that everyone can afford," said Nate Ritchey, dean of the university's College of Science and Health Professions.

Derek Gates, 36, of Erie said he left the meeting feeling better about the university's plans.

"I didn't want a big community college with a lot of students coming in and maybe expansion in the area with traffic and things like that," Gates said. "But since they're keeping the property the same way and maybe even dressing it up a bit, I think it's a great thing."

Officials discussed plans at the Porreco campus that include renovating an empty dairy barn into a science lab and agricultural incubator, of turning a cottage into a speech language and hearing center, and of converting a garage into a bookstore.

Plans for the campus' main barn include adding classrooms and a cafe.

University President Julie Wollman said the school plans to invest \$11 million in renovations of the 26-acre Porreco campus in stages during the next 10 years.

Wollman said the university's goal is to increase enrollment at the college to 1,000 to 1,500 in the next seven to 10 years.

Officials on March 26 announced plans overhaul the college center into Porreco College.

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