

Campus site boosted

Despite slow progress in its re-development and enduring social blight, the East Village is still the first choice to locate a downtown campus, University of Calgary president Harvey Weingarten said yesterday.

The campus will enable the U of C to academically overtake institutions like the University of Toronto within four decades, said Weingarten.

"We will leapfrog over other universities and they will strive to emulate what we're doing," he said.

Uncertainty in revitalizing the area and harsh indictment by the crime-fighting Guardian Angels on its drug problems don't faze champions of the proposed campus, to cost more than \$200 million, said Weingarten.

"Having the kind of presence of an urban campus adds to the strengthening of the revitalization," he said.

The campus could be an anchor in the rebuilding of the area while adding nearly 8,000 student spots, he said.

And it would attract a new breed of students who wouldn't normally consider university, said Weingarten.

Students such as those enrolled in nursing and social work who are already gaining work experience in the East Village are insistent the campus would provide a superb educational window into the community, added Weingarten.

The U of C president hailed city council's decision yesterday to secure the land needed for the campus, which was initially slated to begin taking students in 2007.