

Property sale retires BUA debt, enables relocation

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Baptist University of the Americas will begin a new chapter in mid-December when it closes on the sale of the property it has occupied the past six years and moves debt-free into repurposed facilities it already owns on 60 acres across Interstate 35.



Abe Jaquez

“It’s a new day for BUA,” President Abe Jaquez said. “The sale of the Barlite Boulevard property allows us to be out of debt, and we will be returning to the home the school’s leaders envisioned for us years ago.

“This is a victory for BUA, for our alumni, for Texas Baptists and for all the Hispanic community in Texas.”

Five years ago, BUA left the eight buildings it had occupied since 1965. It consolidated operations, moving classes and administrative offices into one remodeled medical office building. BUA named the facility the Baugh Building in honor of a major benefactor, the Eula Mae and John Baugh Foundation.

At the time, BUA leaders said the Baugh Building would serve as the

school's home until it could raise funds to build on the acreage it owned across Interstate 35.

Ten years earlier, BUA had received a \$1 million gift and a \$2.5 million interest-free loan from the Christ Is Our Salvation Foundation, established by the Paul and Katy Piper family. Those funds enabled BUA to construct Piper Village, a student housing community, on the BUA-owned acreage.

'Practicing good stewardship'

Now, rather than incur debt through new construction, BUA has renovated those underutilized buildings, converting student housing into classrooms and administrative offices.

"We are grateful for all who made the Baugh Building possible, providing BUA a place to call our own until we could get to our 60-acre home," Jaquez said. "My understanding is the Barlite Boulevard building was meant to serve the school during a transitional period of about 10 years. So, this move puts us five years ahead of schedule.

"We see this as Phase One of many. We are repurposing assets we already hold that were not being fully utilized, retiring our debt and moving home. We believe we are practicing good stewardship of what God has provided."

In recent months, BUA learned of a new and unexpected provision from God, he added. Jerry Carlisle, president of the Texas Baptist Missions Foundation, announced in September an anonymous donor had given \$1.6 million to establish the TBMF Bill Arnold Endowed Scholarship at BUA in honor of the foundation's founder.

"We honor our past and are grateful for all the donors—individuals, foundation, churches and the Baptist General Convention of Texas—who have enabled BUA to reach this point," Jaquez said.

“Now, God has opened a new door of opportunity for the school, and we will walk into the future God has prepared for us.”