

Bethany campus deal in flux

Officials decline to
discuss delays in
SV property sale

Bethany College
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418-12

SCOTTS VALLEY — Olivet University officials did not close a real estate deal to buy the former Bethany University property Tuesday as previously announced.

Olivet, a small Christian college with roots in South Korea, has been leasing the campus since August, just two months after Bethany University closed its doors under financial duress.

Last year, Olivet announced it would buy the property on Bethany Drive and turn it into its worldwide headquarters. Initially it hoped to close escrow on Nov. 30 but that date has been pushed back at least three times. The reason is unknown.

That's caused mounting frustration for the Northern California-Nevada District of the Assemblies of God, which took over ownership of the property after Bethany closed — and signed on to about half of Bethany's \$15 million debt, according to Jay Herndon, who serves as the district's secretary.

The asking price for the property is \$22 million, and two "For Sale" signs remained on the Bethany campus Tuesday afternoon.

Herndon confirmed escrow did not close, but declined to give specifics.

"There was a conflicting message, so I don't want to miscommunicate," he said. "I need to clarify one of the statements that Olivet made."

Dr. William Wagner, Olivet's president, also declined to elaborate, saying only that "the whole thing is still open because there are a lot of different things we're still negotiating," and that Olivet is "not leaving anytime soon."

"Whether or not it closes the next day or the next day or the next day" is still being negotiated, he said. According to Wagner, Olivet is in simultaneous talks to purchase the former Borland property on Enterprise Way. It went up on the auction block Nov. 29, with an opening bid

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of \$12.2 million, but there were no takers. The property's selling price hasn't been disclosed.

Jim Wiseman, a partner with the real estate firm involved in those talks, did not return calls seeking comment Tuesday.

Last month, Ray Tallman, Olivet's vice president, said escrow would close this week. Tallman said Olivet was "not renegeing on any commitments by any means," and that "there's full agreement of the payment both in the interim and at the conclusion."

Meanwhile, district officials



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are expected to give an update on the status of the sale at an annual business meeting Saturday in Sacramento.

Olivet also is eyeing a 217-acre campus in Northfield, Mass. The owners of that campus plan to give it away to a

Christian school, but Jerry Pattengale, who's heading the search committee, said a decision will not be made until later this month.

Follow Sentinel reporter Kimberly White on Twitter @kwhite95066.

Olivet University was scheduled to close escrow on its Bethany Drive campus Tuesday, but did not.