USC Village Breaks Ground

1. Left to right: Maria Guadalupe Garrido, a USC parent and community representative; Yohey Tokumitsu, Graduate Student Government president; Ainsley Carry, vice provost for student affairs; USC Trustee Kathleen Leavey McCarthy; USC President C. L. Max Nikias; Los Angeles County supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas; Los Angeles City Council member Curren Price; and Andrew Menard, Undergraduate Student Government president

2. President Nikias addresses the crowd.

3. Councilman Price and President Nikias

4. Former Los Angeles mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and USC First Lady Niki C. Nikias

5. Mrs. McCarthy, President Nikias, and Supervisor Ridley-Thomas

Photos by Gus Ruelas
By Michael McDonald

The University of Southern California, the state’s largest private college, has raised $3.7 billion, putting it on pace to meet a $6 billion capital campaign goal by the end of 2018.

The university, which plans to break ground today on a $650 million campus expansion, has received four gifts of more than $100 million, including a $220 million anonymous donation, according to President C. L. “Max” Nikias. The $6 billion campaign was the largest-ever when unveiled in 2011, until it was surpassed by Harvard University’s $6.5 billion drive.

“One of the reasons for our success is the broad array of disciplines at the university,” Nikias said in an interview. “We still have a lot of work ahead of us.”

Donations to U.S. colleges and universities rose 9 percent to a record $33.8 billion in the year ended June 2013 as stock market gains spurred philanthropy, according to a report from the Council for Aid to Education in February. A mid-year report on major gifts by the consultant Marts & Lundy found 22 donations of $50 million or greater through June, compared with 34 in all of last year.

Harvard has raised $3.8 billion for its campaign unveiled in September, Christine Heenan, a spokeswoman for the Cambridge, Massachusetts-based university, said last week.

Student Village

A centerpiece of the USC campaign is a 15-acre student village adjacent to the existing campus that will include 1.25 million square feet of residential and retail space. The biggest single development project in USC history, the village is expected to cost $650 million and expand the number of beds on campus to 6,200 from 3,500.

USC was founded in 1880 and has about 40,000 students, including the largest number of foreign students in the U.S., according to the Institute of International Education. The university has a $4.5 billion endowment, up about $640 million in a year as a result of donations and an investment gain of about 19 percent, Nikias said.