

Board votes to reaffirm food court

By Brian Bloch
Emerald Reporter

New and current EMU Board of Directors members on Thursday reaffirmed the board's previous decision to support the construction of a food court in the EMU Skylight Refectory.

EMU Board

After an extensive debate over whether to confirm the decision or withdraw the board's request for proposal (RFP) asking potential contractors to bid on placement of a food consortium in the Skylight, the board reaffirmed the decision by a 9-2 vote.

Faculty board members Jim Peters and Greg Lobisser, who voted against the reaffirmation, argued that new board members needed to be more informed about the previous decision process concerning the Skylight, and that the new board needed to re-evaluate that process before confirming the decision.

They contended the original idea of placing a fast food restaurant in the Skylight was worth reconsideration based on potential economic benefits and discrepancies in market research conducted last year.

"It's clear that the requirements of the second RFP would not allow for the income a fast food operation would provide," Lobisser said. "I certainly would hope you would vote not to reaffirm this RFP simply because you don't have enough information."

"I'm very concerned about being stamped into making a decision," Peters said. "We need to determine which options the students really want ... which hasn't been done."

Other board members argued that the development of the second RFP calling for the consor-

tium-style restaurant had been a long, open process where many student views were solicited.

"This whole process has been very inclusive, very open and we've tried to gather a large consensus," said board member Doug Pyle. "It's very clear what students want up there ... (is) having a food-court type of operation."

Adell McMillan, EMU director, said the University and the State Department of General Services are being sued for bidding costs and loss of potential income by Thomason Restaurants for allegedly inappropriately denying a bid from Carl's Jr. earlier this year. The board rejected the Carl's Jr. bid in favor of establishing the food court in the EMU.

"Everything will be considered from reaching a settlement to taking it to court," McMillan said. "There is a possibility that the court might reimburse them for their bidding costs."

In other business, the board unanimously elected Programs Representative Mary Koroloff as summer chairwoman.

The board also passed a motion to send three proposals for EMU renovations to the University Planning Office. According to McMillan, the proposals must be approved by the University administration and the governor and then would be placed on the state's capital construction list to be voted on by the Legislature sometime in the future.

The first renovation proposal calls for expansion of University child care facilities and renovation and construction of off-campus family housing in Westmoreland and other areas.

The remaining proposals are for renovation of the recreation center on the EMU ground floor and an addition to the north end of the building including the Century Rooms, Fir Room and Craft Center.

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