

# Rec centers need improvement

By Robert Weber  
Emerald Contributor

There is a major crisis facing the University that cannot go unnoticed any longer, and, for once, the discussion doesn't concern the lack of student parking.

The problem is the lack of recreational facilities available to students on an everyday basis, and the only hope for a solution may rest on the shoulders of the student body.

Esslinger Hall, Gerlinger Hall and the Gerlinger Annex are the only areas on campus that are open for student's recreational needs, and all three buildings are used by athletic teams, classes, intramurals and club sports before times for open recreation are made available.

"With the pole vaulters, wrestling and softball teams using the indoor gyms, the times available for open recreation are limited," said Karla Rice, the head of the Recreation and Intramural Department. "This lack of facilities causes a major problem for the average student."

"If there is no facility available at a convenient time for a student then they must either go out into the community and pay for their recreation, which will cost money, or they just don't recreate," Rice said. "And either option is not the solution to the problem."

The lack of facilities is a major concern of the General University Committee on University Sport. The committee, which is headed by Recreation Coordinator Sandy Vaughn, has put forth a proposal for a multi-purpose recreational activity center.

This project calls for a recreational center building that would include two gymnasiums, space for court sports, martial arts, weight rooms, activity rooms, an enclosed swimming pool and associated locker and shower facilities. The project also includes a second phase that would produce three outdoor fields, tennis courts and user parking.

"A center like the one proposed would provide an area for all groups that currently use the recreational areas," said Rice.

The project would help bring the University up to par with other schools of similar size across the nation and especially in the Pacific-10 Conference.

"As it stands right now, we are at the bottom of the conference as far as recreational facilities go," Rice said. "We need something along the lines of what Oregon State has built to provide adequate facilities for our students."

Oregon State has finished the first phase of

the Dixon Center — their recreational center — and are in the process of adding an aquatic center to the facility. The Dixon Center is open to the students daily from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. for a number of different activities. This center places OSU at, or near the top of the list of facilities for Pac-10 schools.

Sports consultant Bill Manning visited the Oregon campus during the spring of 1988 and expressed a deep concern for the lack of facilities available at a school of this size.

"The trend in the conference, and indeed nationally, is a greater recognition of the role played by recreational sports in all aspects of student life, particularly as it relates to recruitment and retention of students," Manning noted in his 1988 study. "It appears that the University of Oregon is quite far behind in such recognition and the provision of facilities to support such valuable programming."

Manning also stressed an immediate need for a plan, and the identification and reserving of land space for a possible site.

The proposed center would satisfy the needs of the University, but the building is expensive and must be financed mainly by auxiliary funds.

Auxiliary funds are raised by a building fee in every student's tuition. These fees are sent to the Oregon Board of Higher Education and put into a pot with similar funds collected at other state schools. The funds are then dispersed to finance building and renovation projects at the state colleges based on a priority list composed by the state. The funds are distributed by the state every two years.

The proposed center is on the list for the University's priority list for the 1991-1993 biennium. It had been on the list for the 1993-1995 biennium but was recently moved up due to the immediate need.

The estimated cost of the first phase of the center comes to almost \$15 million. Add in the estimated \$1 million yearly operating expenses for the center, and the University is faced with a pretty steep bill.

It appears that the present auxiliary funds cannot support a project of this size, so the only way for the center to be approved and built would come from an increase in the student's building fees or financial gifts. Vaughn and others note that the responsibility of funding such a project would fall mostly on the students.

"Nothing of importance is going to happen until the students come forth and let the University know that they are serious about the problem and willing to do something about it," Vaughn said.

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Professor Stanley B. Greenfield, who died in 1987, was an internationally renowned Old and Middle English scholar, winner of the university's Ersted Award for teaching excellence, and a president of the campus chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and best-known honor society for undergraduates.

The essay contest is open to all undergraduates who are admitted and currently enrolled in the University of Oregon. The deadline for entry is April 2, 1990, but earlier entries are encouraged. Three typed copies, which cannot be returned, should be sent to:



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