

Fitness center's fate on ballot

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Oregon Daily Emerald

Students will soon be asked to help fund the construction of a new, state-of-the-art recreation and fitness center during the University's upcoming general election.

A ballot measure will let students decide if they are willing to pay an additional \$23 per term starting fall 1997 to help fund an extensive remodeling and construction project at the site of Esslinger Hall.

The proposed 30-year fee increase would cover about half the project's estimated \$18.37 million price tag, while the remaining money would come from Oregon State System of Higher Education building funds and private donations.

"It should be a very attractive ballot measure [to students]," said Associate Dean of Students Gregg Lobisser, who is on the committee that is working to bring modern recreation facilities to the University. "Every [student] dollar gets a dollar."

The project would renovate much of Esslinger Hall, and build extensive new facilities on the building's east side. The new fitness center would include three multi-purpose indoor courts, an elevated indoor jogging track, an indoor rock climbing wall and two indoor batting cages.

Without student commitment to help fund construction, the state and private funding would be in jeopardy, Lobisser said. Once students agree to fund the project, the other sources will commit money as well, he said, because "everybody's waiting for someone else to take the first step."

Supporters of the project have been trying to get a modern fitness center at the University for over a decade. Esslinger Hall, the current fitness center, and nearby facilities are outdated and poorly designed, support-

ON THE BALLOT

WHAT:
To remodel and expand Esslinger Hall into a state-of-the-art recreation and fitness center.

COST:
A fee of \$23 per student per term for the next 30 years.



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ers said.

"We are way behind the times," said ASUO President Leslie Warren, who helped get the measure on the ballot. "If you look at club sports, you realize how many students are interested in this."

"The need for this will only grow in future years," Lobisser said. "The quality of student life at the University of Oregon will be improved [by a new fitness center]."

Club Sports coordinator Sandy Vaughn has visited universities across the nation and said the University's facilities "are definitely at the bottom" of the Pacific-10 Conference. Stanford University recently started construction of a new student fitness center, she said, and both Arizona schools opened major recreation facilities within the last five years.

"Over the years we've been able to see the mistakes that other schools have made," Vaughn said. "It's really time to get going on it. We really can't wait any longer."

A fall 1993 study found that 70 percent of University students use campus recreation facilities and that existing facilities are inadequate to serve students' needs, according to an informational packet on the project.

Plans for the new facility also include covering the intramural fields between the covered tennis courts and Hayward with

AMENITIES

- Three multi-purpose indoor courts
- Two artificial playing fields with night lighting
- Expanded weight and fitness facilities
- Two indoor batting cages
- Improved covered tennis courts
- Increased building access
- One-sixth-mile indoor jogging track
- Indoor rock-climbing wall
- Aerobic and martial arts gyms
- Renovated racquetball courts
- Renovated locker rooms
- Pro-shop and juice bar

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artificial turf and installing a lighting system. Adding turf and lighting would increase field use by 300 percent, Lobisser said.

Chris Ramey, director of University planning, said the entire project would take 18 months to two years, and "you could do parts right away."

"It's a very sensible and efficient way to combine existing facilities and new facilities," Ramey said. "By using existing facilities, you're really saving a lot of money."

If the ballot measure passes, students' incidental fees would increase \$23 per term for 30 years. The fee would be two parts, with \$15.25 of it going toward construction costs and the remaining \$7.75 covering the center's operational costs.

After 30 years, the construction portion of the fee would end, and students would then vote on the center's operational costs.

Two informational presentations on the proposed fitness center will be held in the EMU Walnut Room on April 20 at 3:30 p.m. and April 24 at 3 p.m. Students are welcome to attend.

An Invitation

The University of Oregon's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Alliance and the Dean of Students Office cordially invites you to attend the welcoming reception for Stephanie Carnahan, the University of Oregon's new Coordinator of Educational and Support Services on Thurs. April 20 at 7pm in the Gerlinger Lounge.

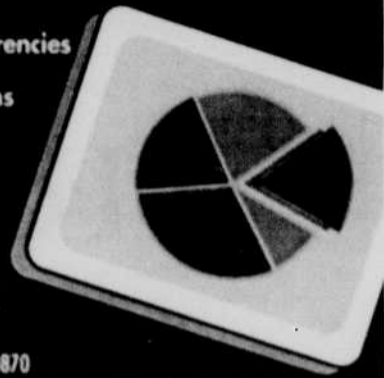
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