Auburn Students Voted "Yes" For New Recreation Center

by Sarah Phillips/Staff Writer
06.04.09 - 07:00 am

Auburn University students voted "yes" in the SGA elections February 12 to support the student referendum to build a new student recreation center.

This new center will have something for everyone, with plenty of open space to accommodate any student who wants to enjoy it. "It's my number one initiative and priority in my list of things to do," said Jacob Watkins, SGA President.

The goals for this project are ambitious. Workers are planning to break ground in the spring of 2010 and have the facility completed in the fall of 2012. But students won't have to worry about finding a new place to workout. The new student recreation center will be completed in phases, allowing students to utilize both old and new areas.

"Students are paying too much for gyms," Watkins said. "We want a place with academics and recreation to create a healthy lifestyle."

Currently students are required to pay only $7.50 for access to the student act, but this fall the fee will increase dramatically. For the fall of 2009 and the spring of 2010 students will pay a $50 fee.

In the fall of 2010 and the spring of 2011 it will rise to $100. The fall of 2011 and the spring of 2012 will require a $150 payment. From the fall of 2012 forward the fee will be set at $200.

All of these payments will be included in a student's full-time tuition. The fees will benefit many future Auburn students, but a number of current students are not pleased that they are paying for it now, including Ashley Wilson, a senior majoring in history.

"I won't get to use it," said Wilson. "But there's nothing I can do."

Students who utilize the student activities center frequently are also concerned. "There's no real need of a new student recreation center," said Osaruyi Imagdor, a senior in biomedical sciences who works out at the student activities center at least three times a week. "Luckily I'm a senior, so it's not bad, but if I was going to be here longer I would have complained."

This short-term frustration with higher tuition can be balanced out by the long-term effects. Auburn's new recreational center project is LEED certified,
meaning that it’s a type of “green” building. Much of the old student activities center will be reused and recycled as the new building takes shape.

Watkins said the new student recreation center will also be better for recruiting new students and will allow Auburn to stay competitive with other schools in the SEC.

But the recruiting may not be positively affected until the project is complete. “There’s already a lot of construction,” said Imaghodor. “(Prospective students) are not seeing what Auburn’s really about. It’s really a beautiful campus.”

The new student activities center will be another addition to Auburn’s campus following The Village, opening fall 2009, and the new Coliseum.

“Students will never need to leave campus anymore,” Watkins said. The new student recreation center is anticipated to include all of the amenities the current center offers as well as an outdoor leisure pool, golf simulator rooms, sand volleyball, indoor walking/running track, lockers and much more.

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