

USD projects approved by Regents

By Travis Gulbrandson

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The state Board of Regents approved a trio of major projects for the University of South Dakota at a meeting Wednesday afternoon in Vermillion.

The regents approved an expansion of the Muenster University Center (MUC), the preliminary facility statement and facility program plan of the USD Science, Health and Research Lab, and the facility program plan of the USD Sports Performance Enhancement Facility Arena.

According to Sheila Gestring, vice president of finance at USD, the MUC expansion essentially will replace the north commons dining facility.

"The expansion will be to the south on both the east and west sides of the existing connector between the library and the facility today," she said.

The university is looking to add 28,000 square feet of seating space in the MUC, and 31,000 square feet overall, Gestring said.

The north commons dining area has approximately 21,000 square feet, she said.

Gestring said current usage numbers point to the expansion as being necessary, with sales of meal plans being up approximately 30 percent, and retail sales in the MUC increased by 45 percent.

"Students are not just dining in this facility," she added. "I think what you'll

find around here is, they come in, they dine, they stay and they study. So, this facility we're finding is utilized most hours of the day, as opposed to the old dining facility. We would find they were using it about three hours of the day extensively."

According to a document distributed to the board of regents, funding for the expansion will come from operating income and cash from the MUC operations totaling \$4,472,393, and a loan from the auxiliary system totaling \$7,127,607, to be repaid from MUC operations through FY2023.

University President James Abbott addressed the board regarding both the Science, Health and Research Lab and the Sports Performance Enhancement Facility Arena.

The lab is being referred to as "the connector" by USD representatives, Abbott said.

"The point is, we're connecting the DakotaDome with the arena using this academic space," he said.

That space will accommodate areas of health sciences including the occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician's assistant and kinesiology and sports sciences programs.

The "connector" also will provide some much-needed space to DakotaDome employees, Abbott said.

"We don't have any space in the Dome for any sort of offices anymore," he



University of South Dakota President James Abbott describes details of facility plans for proposed additions to athletics and academics facilities on the campus, including the addition of a basketball arena near the DakotaDome, the construction of a science, health and research lab, and an outdoor track and soccer complex. Abbott addressed the South Dakota Board of Regent's Committee on Budget and Finance during its Wednesday afternoon meeting in the Muenster University Center.

(David Lias/Vermillion Plain Talk)

said. "We've got four people in little teeny offices, or chairs, really. This will be a much better use of that space, I think, and it will also provide that connection, because I don't think we want to have an arena separate from the Dome."

The connection will be constructed on the south side of the DakotaDome.

According board of regents documents, the lab will be constructed at an estimated cost of

\$10,609,000.

Funding for the project will be \$8,695,000 from HEFF binding in FY2014 and \$1,194,000 in donations, the document said.

Abbott described the USD Sports Performance Enhancement Facility Arena as "a 6,000-seat basketball, volleyball, outdoor track and soccer complex."

According to a Board of Regents document, the project will be constructed

at an estimated cost of \$48,178,885, funding for which will come from more than \$14 million in cash donations, a cash pledge from the USD Foundation of \$9,938,559 and athletic revenues of \$3,400,000.

A further \$20,690 will come from debt financing, repaid with a \$20 million Sanford gift, \$2 million from rental agreements and \$8.4 million from

corporate sponsorship agreements, the document said.

"No student fee increases beyond the amount needed for utilities are anticipated for construction, operation or maintenance of this facility," the document said.

All three projects were met with unanimous approval.

USD cross country sweeps Tim Young Invitational

The University of South Dakota men's cross country team placed seven in the top-eight and the Coyote women placed six in the top 10 to sweep the team standings at the Tim Young Invitational on Saturday.

Jeff Mettler (Eureka, SD) won his second race of the season with a time of 24:52 in the 8k race, and Amber Eickhorn (Wichita, KS) paced the women with a third place finish in 18:07 in the 5k at the Don Baker Course in Vermillion.

The USD men won the meet with 16 points. They were followed by Carleton College (MN) with 51 points and Butler Community College (KS) with 79 points.

The Coyote women finished with 26 points, which was 19 points better than second-place Omaha (45). Minnesota-Morris was third with 71 points.

Mettler's time was eight seconds off the course record that he set last season. It was the first time this season he didn't set a school record at a meet.

The Coyote men had the top-four finishers in the race. Ethan Marquardt (Albert Lea, MN) placed second in 25:16, Mubarik Musa (Worthington, MN) was third in 25:46, and

Brant Haase (Lemmon, SD) was fourth in 25:51. Carleton's Marcus Huderle rounded out the top-five in 26:00.

The Coyotes had the first three finishers outside the top-five. Benson Langat (Kapsabet, Kenya) crossed in sixth at 26:09, Isaac Allen (Lincoln, NE) was seventh in 26:31, and Alex Hohenthanner (Yankton) finished eighth in 26:34.

Minnesota-Morris' Linda

Keller set a new course as she won the women's race in 17:36. Omaha's Amanda Vorthmann placed second eight seconds later (17:44). Eickhorn led a trio of Coyotes to round out the top-five with Katie Wetzstein (Hudson, WS) placing fourth in 18:36 and Megan Hilson (Yankton) finishing fifth in 18:39.

Carol Miller (Mead, NE) was the fourth best finisher for the Coyote women with

a seventh-place finish in 18:45. Jessica Brandli (Rapid City) placed ninth in 18:55, Ali Gress (Papillion, NE) was 10th in 18:56, and Britni Waller (Lincoln, NE) rounded out South Dakota's scoring in 11th at 19:07.

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Ray taught economics at USD School of Business for 33 years and worked with South Dakota's Legislative and Executive branches. He and Mary raised four children here and have been active in the community, including the schools and parish.

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