

Continuity report: SPARC proposal

Over the last year, Student Affairs was in negotiations with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to obtain funds for the seismic repair of the Men's Gym, which was damaged in the 1994 earthquake. The negotiations included a staging space to house those units which would be displaced during the seismic retrofitting of the Men's Gym. Student Affairs felt that it would be wise to take advantage of this funding to convert the staging facility into a permanent facility by providing supplemental funds to FEMA's staging monies. In addition, Student Affairs felt that it would also be advantageous to renovate the gym during the Men's Gym seismic retrofitting, which would improve the space for student programming and other student affairs needs. Student Affairs talked to SFAC members about initial plans during the summer of 1998.

This served as the initial planning for what became the Student Programs, Activities, and Resources Complex (SPARC) referendum. However, due to the difficult nature of the FEMA negotiations, further discussion on the referendum did not take place until early 1999. At that point, Student Affairs met with the chair and vice-chair of the Student Fee Advisory Committee, among other student government representatives, to inform them of the details of the proposal, receive feedback, and integrate these suggestions into a more complete proposal. It was apparent, however, that it might be difficult to have the referendum ready for the student ballot in early May, given the short timeline that Student Affairs had to go from initial planning to the final ballot measure.

The first official presentation to SFAC by AVC Jane Permaul and AVC Bob Naples on March 10th, 1999 provided insight into the nuts and bolts of the proposal: the SPARC referendum was a \$90/year fee intended for several purposes. First, the fee would create new space for student affairs and student-initiated programming, including entities such as the Campus Retention Committee and the Center for Student Programming. It also planned to centralize a number of services located far apart on the campus - including Student Psychological Services and the Women's Resource Center - into one main location. The proposal planned two additions to the Wooden Center - Wooden Center North and Wooden Center West - which would allow men's and women's lockers, as well as additional fitness space, to become part of the Wooden Center. Finally, the referendum included a reserve for deferred maintenance of student fee-funded facilities such as Sunset Canyon Recreation Center (SCRC) and the Intramural fields.

Much of the justification of this referendum in the initial information packet centered around the relatively low campus fees that UCLA students pay, in comparison to other UC campuses. In addition, the SPARC referendum fee would begin in the same year that the \$51 annual ASUCLA fee would sunset to \$7.50, in 2002-2003, which would increase the overall student fee by only \$46.50. Even with the new referendum, argued the proposal, UCLA students would still be paying among the lowest campus fees of any campus in the UC system. A final reason in support of the referendum was that it

had been quite a long time since the last major referendum, which was for the Wooden Center, was approved in 1978.

After the presentation, SFAC spent some time deliberating on whether to endorse the referendum and decided to wait until a more complete and final version of the referendum was available for evaluation. This version was obtained after USAC asked Student Affairs a number of questions, including a breakdown of the costs of SPARC and a map of the changes proposed by SPARC. After some consideration, USAC reworked the proposal into a condensed proposal with a smaller fee to be put on the student ballot. This version reduced the referendum fee from the initially proposed \$90/year to \$54/year and excluded items considered to be part of Phase 2 of the SPARC proposal: the proposed Wooden Center West expansion, lighting of the Intramural fields, and repairs to SCRC. However, in reducing the fee to what USAC felt was a more palatable amount for students, the condensed referendum would still take full advantage of timing and the FEMA money to renovate the Men's Gym and turn the staging facility into a permanent facility. Other modifications to the proposal included a student-majority board of governors to advise Student Affairs and the Chancellor as to the best use of space.

SFAC waited until the language of the referendum on the ballot became available, and decided to send USAC and Student Affairs feedback on the wording of the ballot measure. In particular, SFAC was concerned that the ballot measure did not include much of the information previously available to SFAC during the informational meetings with Student Affairs, and that it was unclear whether deferred maintenance monies would be included in the referendum. After these concerns were allayed and the final version of the ballot measure was available, a majority of SFAC members endorsed the ballot, and a letter of endorsement was sent to the Daily Bruin. Unfortunately, because the final language became available just before the election, the endorsement letter was received too late to be included in the Daily Bruin's election coverage.

Although a sufficient number of students voted (>20% of the total student population), the SPARC referendum failed to win support. This result was most likely due to the too short period of time to prepare the referendum, inform the students, and obtain endorsements from appropriate student representative groups, including SFAC. In particular, the amount of information included with the referendum question may not have been sufficient to inform students as to the many benefits the SPARC referendum would have provided.

However, this is not to say that with additional time, the referendum would have passed. Students are loathe to pay additional fees, regardless of how much more students at other campuses may be paying, and this certainly played a large role in the referendum's downfall. Nevertheless, SFAC hopes that future referenda will have more time for planning, revisions, and dissemination of information.

Deferred maintenance subcommittee report

The deferred maintenance subcommittee was charged with addressing the problems student-utilized buildings are currently facing. Currently, two of the student fee-designated buildings, Pauley Pavilion and Sunset Canyon Recreation Center (SCRC), are facing major repairs. In particular, the Pauley Pavilion roof is in a state of disrepair and in danger of collapse, and several major support beams at SCRC have been extensively damaged by termites. The cost of repairing the Pauley Pavilion roof is estimated to be approximately \$400,000, while the replacement of up to three support beams at SCRC could run as high as \$600,000.

These immediate problems are just the most recent example of the growing need to maintain student-utilized, or, as determined with student majority usage by the Office of the President, student fee-designated buildings. Lack of foresight has created a situation in which most campus buildings, which were built in the 1950's and 1960's, are nearing the end of their lifetime and require major renovations. Although state money has been set aside for deferred maintenance of state-funded buildings such as Murphy Hall, no money has been set aside to maintain student fee buildings. In fact, it is contrary to state budget policy for the Chancellor to use state funds to maintain student fee-funded buildings. The list of these student fee buildings includes Pauley, SCRC, the Men's Gym, Ashe Student Health Center, and the Los Angeles Tennis Center (LATC), among others. Fortunately, LATC was built in the 1980's and the Ashe Center is new, so deferred maintenance is not yet an issue for these buildings.

Nevertheless, the point remains that these structures, which are primarily utilized by students, will require major repairs in the upcoming years for which funds outside the Registration Fee are unavailable. To address this need, the subcommittee recommends the allocation of \$200,000 of temporary continuing funds for the next three years. This would cover existing needs for deferred maintenance until the possible initiation of the SPARC referendum, which would provide funding for deferred maintenance of these buildings starting in 2002-2003. If SPARC is not approved, at the end of the three-year term, SFAC can decide whether to continue funding deferred maintenance for student fee buildings.

With this allocation, it should be stipulated that the money only be spent for major deferred maintenance projects with a lifetime of at least 25 years, and only for buildings which have been designated as student fee buildings for which there is no other source of deferred maintenance funding. Since these buildings are not used solely by students, other users of the buildings should provide money towards the repairs proportional to their usage of the building. The Office of Academic Planning and Budget and Facilities Management should ensure that all users of the buildings participate in funding the projects according to a proportionate share of their use of the facilities. In addition, SFAC will annually review proposals for projects utilizing the deferred maintenance funds so that the money is used for repairs deemed to be of highest priority to students. Any unspent funds at the end of each project during the three-year funding period shall be returned to SFAC's general unallocated pool.

It is important to point out that Registration Fee is shouldering this problem because there does not appear to be any other university commitment to maintaining student fee-associated buildings. This situation is unfortunate, and Registration Fee cannot be

relied upon as the sole source of funds to maintain these buildings, as other student programming needs may take precedence. Nevertheless, the subcommittee feels that this is the best solution to a serious and ongoing issue and hopes that SFAC agrees with this course of action.

- Prepared May 1999