

Open Forum Proposed Soccer Project
February 1, 2016
CU, Mazama/Scott, Klamath Falls
Video-conference to Room #225, Wilsonville Campus

Open forum began at 5:00 pm

Introduction

Associate Vice President for Communications Di Saunders called the forum to order and thanked everyone for participating in the final soccer forum. These meetings are for informational sharing and listening to receive your input, questions, and concerns regarding the project.

President Maples provided a general overview of the proposed soccer field project and funding. There was an opportunity presented a few years ago to use specific bonds that were designated for athletic facilities and auxiliary projects. The bonding became available to Oregon Tech because another university in the system had a project that came in under budget. The opportunity for Oregon Tech to use the excess dollars for auxiliary projects was approved by the former State Board of Higher Education. The likelihood that this type of funding will become available in the future is extremely low. It is particularly challenging for Oregon Tech to receive funding for athletics projects because we do not offer any required classes or majors related to athletics. The original purpose of the funding was for renovation of the existing football field to meet the NCAA soccer field specifications and hopefully redo the track at the same time. To say that the budget proposals came in over budget is a mild understatement. The proposals were extremely over budget and there was no amount of value engineering that could make the original project work so it was put on hold. We went back to the drawing board to consider other options, hence the move to Purvine field and the focus primarily on the soccer field. In the meantime our new Board of Trustees came on board and there was a change in how we do things at Oregon Tech. With the change in structure, there was a change in the way we gather information, and a change in interest of the board which is overseeing what is going on in the university. All projects that exceed one million dollars will require approval of the board. So we started with a special board meeting in December. In retrospect, it was not the best time to do that. We were trying to meet a deadline of being able to use the bonds before they expire and there is a certain amount of time to use them. If we are going to use the bonds at all, we will have to meet a timeline. The special board meeting was done so quickly that I did not have time to request input and get information out like I should have across campus. The board appropriately, moved their decision to the February board meeting so that information, questions, and feedback could be gathered.

President Maples shared his goal of getting soccer back to campus and the opportunities that the field would bring to improve the culture and student life on campus.

Athletic Director Michel Schell reported that the Board of Trustees approved continuation of the design process at the special board meeting held in December. That was done because we are dealing with a limited construction window of the summer and fall. Construction in the winter and spring in Klamath Falls is challenging. The bonds have to be utilized and the facility has to

be substantially complete by June 2, 2017. We are actively designing the project, and held the first onsite meeting on January 21 to receive an overview of the drainage plan and technical aspects of the project. Athletics is working on the department finances and has been for the last couple of years to make sure this project will work. A lot of the funding is already incorporated in the athletics budget but we will have to go out and seek money through camps, additional advertising, and donations. This is an athletics department project and the entire staff is focused on bringing soccer back to campus. We feel that we are up to the challenge, we are ready to go and hope to make this happen.

Q&A and Comments

Carl Thomas, Director of Admissions: I have followed this process and intentionally missed the last two forums. I am a huge proponent of this project for our university. I have done quite a bit of research and reading of white papers about what athletics does and I feel strongly that our university really needs this. In so many ways, Oregon Tech leads the way but in other ways we are being left behind. That is from a selfish recruitment position as I recruit for our university. With all due respect to my Alma Mater SOU, Oregon Tech is the best university that I have worked for. What we do here and what we stick to, we do a great job. To go out and recruit for this great institution and to hear about the sister institutions and their expansions is frustrating. Oregon Tech blows other campuses away with our programs and graduate success and we remain untouched with average starting salaries. As an ambassador for this university, this soccer field is just one of the things we have to do and it would be a huge positive step forward. This project does have an association on academics and what our students get when they get here. This field would be a positive thing for our university as we move in the next era and next phase of Oregon Tech. Students have a tough choice when they are selecting colleges and universities. Oregon Tech is not always the top choice, Klamath Falls (I love Klamath Falls) is not always the top choice but the more we can do to make ourselves stand out will be a good thing for this university.

1. Dr. Corsair, faculty member: In my observation, this seems like a lot of money that will benefit a few students. I hear that this will benefit campus life but it will not affect Wilsonville and other campuses. What is this really going to do and who will this help?

President Maples: In a general sense, enrollment of the university is enrollment of the university as a whole. Enrollment includes the Klamath Falls and Wilsonville campuses, extension campuses, and all online courses. The way we get reimbursed by the state, is going to be based on the graduation rate and the programs we offer. To the extent that we can increase enrollment it will hopefully help create a culture that will create a student life that drives graduation rates. There are all kinds of studies that show the better student life, the more students are connected which affects the graduation rates. All those things help the university broadly, and finally I would say that it is an athletics department budget. The athletics department will be paying this. They will balance it against other sports if they have to balance it against other sports if it does not work out the way they think it will.

2. Todd Breedlove, faculty member: We have a promise of donations to help fund this but if they don't come through who will be responsible for that? I am concerned that we are

going to the well too many times and say that it is an athletics problem but it is more than that. If we are going to the community to request donations for athletics, when we need to ask for support for academics they may not have the resources to give any money.

I know the money is supposed to be earmarked for athletics. By the way I am a very big supporter of athletics, we have several athletes in our programs. But, I also see a lot of facilities that are not being maintained. For instance, let's take a look at the stadium stands where we host our graduation ceremonies where our friends and family are getting slivers as they sit on the stands because they are in such poor shape. Some of this money can be used to increase what we have rather than starting something new. Where is the maintenance going to come from? We have the bond but any facility we build has to be maintained. That is where we are running into problems, if you look at Purvine, how many people have class where half of the chairs are broken. I know we cannot use earmarked funds for academics, but that also sells Oregon Tech to students. When we have students visit us, some of the places we take them are not well maintained. I don't want to see us go into another project where we also see the maintenance lapse.

Michael Schell: In some ways we are going to reduce maintenance costs in that we are not watering a typical grass field. There should be significantly less water and mowing. The difference with turf is the field has to be rolled which potentially could be done by coaches or grounds crew and is only done when athletics is using the surface. The turf itself typically has an 8-year warranty. If there is no damage, the normal wear and tear stuff should be covered within that 8 years. There are other things that we can do to maintain the turf.

Ultimately, I have budget authority in athletics and as the person in charge, it is my responsibility to redistribute the budget to make this project work. It is a must pay expense, there are must pay expenses in the department and there are expenses that do not have to occur.

3. CJ Riley, Faculty member: We are working with Steen Sports Park on evaluating energy measures. I am curious what the impact of losing Oregon Tech will have on them. Are they likely to close as a result?

Mark Dodson, President of Basin United and Board member for Steen Sports Park: Thank you for your question as it has been asked numerous times through this process. OIT and Oregon Tech Athletics has been a great partner and we appreciate everything they do. We would prefer that the rumors stop. Steen Park will be fine whether Oregon Tech remains with us or builds their own facility. They are a great community partner and we will continue to work with them in whatever capacity we need to and we fully support the facility being built on campus.

Derrick DeGroot, Community member, and father of a son shopping for a program: Being a collegiate athlete has its perks, when you are shopping for schools you are looking for a professional looking program as an athlete. From a state wide perspective, all of our partners through Oregon Youth Soccer, we work with the coaches to host tournaments. One of the

questions that is asked by the athletes is related to the quality of the facilities. I believe that as a community member that you will gain more community support by having a program onsite and not through the chaos that is Basin United Soccer Club on a daily basis. The athletes would attest to the fact that you go there to practice and play and there are 250-300 kids on the field at any given time and you can double that in parents and it is not the easiest environment to improve their skills.

Greg Stewart, Softball Coach: I am proud employee of Oregon Tech, this is my twelfth year at Oregon Tech. As the softball coach I have been very fortunate to coach at a school that has so many positives on a daily basis. As an ambassador and a coach for softball is such a great sale for me. First and foremost, I get to talk about the great academic environment that we have at Oregon Tech. Bottom line, these students are here whether they are athletes or not because of the great academic and employment opportunities that they have. With that being said, this is my fourth college that I have had the opportunity to work at, the majority of colleges have done a great job of balancing the athletic, student campus, and athletic environment under one roof and one name. Regardless of our departments or division that we get into with budget and budget concerns, we are still one university and one Oregon Tech. This is an opportunity for us to enhance our campus and progress the entire university. I have seen the progress in our community and on our campus with the Martha Anne Dow Center, the Village, and the future renovation of Cornett Hall. To take a corner of this campus and to make it more presentable to the public eye and more useful to the community is progress. I have had the opportunity to coach 40-45 youth at Steen Sports Park and I would love to have that opportunity to do that on campus. We do bring students to campus in the summer and I can only imagine what this will do for the soccer program to bring students to a campus facility that we are proud of. In my opinion it would be short sighted to not take the opportunity, a good chunk of money through the bond process to improve our campus. I know that there are some negatives out there based on the budget and some negatives about the small number of students that will be affected but I tell you that it will improve campus life and is more about how many more students will be positively affected. Obviously, you can tell that I am proponent of this project but I hope moving forward that faculty, staff, and students can begin to look at this project as a whole. I am hoping that we can continue to show progress towards beautifying our campus and improving our facilities.

4. Dan Ward, ASOIT: I am really excited to hear about this project. How will this project affect some of the events that are already occurring in that area such as the new student orientation, club and community use?

Michael Schell: Our focus number one is Oregon Tech. If the facility is available scheduling wise and someone from off campus wants to use it we will make it available to them but we will put OIT first. We will continue to hosts events down there that the students would like to see and we will continue to work with schedules on that facility. Obviously, we would want to protect the assets. We will not want vehicles on the field, specific shoes will need to be used. We will probably be more involved in what groups are doing and how they are doing it if it is directly on the turf. If we bring lights to campus at some point then that opens the window of opportunity for use of that facility. I still envision that we will host the mock emergency service training and student orientation on the field.

Matt Munhall, Soccer Coach: Coach Stewart made a lot of the points I wanted to make. I will go ahead and take a different approach. I really do not think that we have taken a look at who these students are. These students are Oregon Tech, they represent almost every degree program at Oregon Tech. We have 14 student athletes in Math and Engineering; 7 students in MIT; 12 in Health Science, and 12 in non tech/other programs. We also are being led by a group of men and women seniors that are carrying over a 3.5 GPA. This group embodies Oregon Tech, they are Oregon Tech students, and they are not here just to play soccer they are here to get a degree. With that, we represent 8 different states, 3 different countries and 7 different races and ethnicities; we add diversity to this campus, we bring something that is not necessarily brought just by academics. The men and women soccer teams have donated 120 cumulative hours to this community through community service, clinics, visiting schools, and coaching youth at Basin United. None of these hours were completed on campus. These are Oregon Tech students, this is a collective we, everything that we are doing here is about us. It is not Klamath Falls vs. Wilsonville, athletics vs. academics, or soccer vs. rugby. We are all wearing Oregon Tech gear, we all go to Oregon Tech, and we all work at Oregon Tech. Until we realize that we are all one cumulative entity we are going to continue to butt heads. I think it is time that we look beyond that and figure out how we are going to move forward and support this campus. We want to be on campus, we want to play in front of a home crowd, we want to play on our home turf, and we want to have something we can be proud of.

5. Todd Breedlove, Faculty member: What about the Rugby Team?

Michael Schell: Following the first forum, I reached out to John Bellon, Director of Klamath Falls City Parks. We are on the agenda to present the proposal of potentially setting up a rugby field at Moore Park which is down the street from Oregon Tech. The city is very interested and somewhat excited for the potential opportunity to host rugby.

Soccer player: I spoke at the first forum where I emphasized how much the soccer team appreciates the support of Mike Schell and President Maples. I want to ask the Board of Trustees to share in that support. When we play soccer, we represent Oregon Tech and the Blue and Gold. I am from the Netherlands and I did my fair share of research on Oregon. About three hours from here is the University of Oregon, where Nike was invented. It was the combining of two great minds that came together and founded Nike. I think we all know what that meant for the University of Oregon. I came here to the United States, about two miles from my home the local university has had over 30 Nobel prizes and no sports teams. Athletics are not for everyone, we need to see beyond the direct benefits because great things can come. I want to reiterate that the University of Oregon invested in Hayward Field for track and field and Nike came out of that. What can soccer do for Oregon Tech? Soccer is the biggest sport in the world and the fastest growing sport in the United States. According to FIFA, over 3.3 billion people have seen at least one of the world cup games. Just think about what a soccer field can do for its school.

Scott Meredith, Basketball Coach: Professor Breedlove had a legitimate concern about community resources and how often we can go to our community to do something for us. I think

that is really important to consider. I think that going out to the community continually asking what they can do for us that the community will eventually ask, what we can do for ourselves. I think that we need to build this field to show our community that we are willing to help ourselves, and that we are willing to support ourselves before asking the community for additional support.

Nellie Stewart: I grew up here, I work here, and I am an Oregon Tech alumni. This is exciting and I wanted to go on record and say that it has been great to witness how much support has been for this project. This is a very exciting project that can happen for campus, and I am just as excited about this as I was for the Martha Anne Dow Center, and the Owens remodel, and I was a big supporter of the gym. I just want the board to know, that there are so many people here that are hoping that this project will happen.

Brandon Porter, Soccer coach: Oregon Tech is willing to be innovative, forward thinking, and cutting edge. It is in the fiber of our institution. Where I think we are missing the boat is this is an opportunity to practice what we preach. It is not athletics against everyone else. This project will benefit the university, athletics, and academics. We need to make progress so we will not fall behind. We are not bringing kids here that are borderline students, we recruit students that are 3.8 GPA and above. These are great students, and this is an opportunity to help athletics and academics grow. I have been here less than one year and I would not have taken this job if Oregon Tech was an average academic school, I want to coach the best student athletes and the best people. If there was an opportunity to improve the academic buildings, I would be all for it. We will not progress if we sit back and do nothing. We honestly need to practice what we preach. We preach innovation, let's do it. We preach people using new opportunities and ideas to grow, this is it. This is my stance and I am hopeful for the board meeting scheduled on February 23.

President Maples thanked everyone for taking the time to participate in these meetings.

Di Saunders reported that the notes from the first meeting will be provided at the Board's Finance and Facilities committee meeting tomorrow. The board will make a final decision regarding the soccer project at the board meeting scheduled on February 22-23.

Forum adjourned: 5:58 pm