

Open Forum Proposed Soccer Project
January 29, 2016
Wilsonville Campus Room # 209
Video-conference to Mt. Thielsen Room, Klamath Falls, Oregon

Open forum began at 4:04 pm

Introduction

Di Saunders called the forum to order and thanked everyone for participating. These meetings are for informational sharing and listening to receive your input, questions, and concerns regarding the project.

President Maples provided a brief overview of the proposed soccer field and funding for the project. Oregon Tech received the bonding for athletic facilities from the state; the likelihood of receiving this type of funding for auxiliary projects down the line is extremely low. The funding for this project was approved by the former State Board of Higher Education to renovate the football field into soccer and include the track and field renovations, the initial bids came in extremely over budget. The project was scaled down and redesigned; in the meantime the new Oregon Tech Board of Trustees came on board and we presented the project at a special board meeting in December. As part of the new process, we are receiving feedback from various groups on campus. This is the second of three forums, information was presented to FOAC and the Facilities Advisory Committee. A presentation will be provided to the Facilities and Finance Committee of the Board and to the entire Oregon Tech Board of Trustees in February.

Athletic Director Michael Schell provided a short summary regarding the project. The Board of Trustees approved for design of the project to continue. In the project plan Oregon Tech will need to substantially complete the soccer field by June 2, 2017 to utilize the bonds. It leaves one summer construction window to complete the project. We are proceeding with the design process, and a design engineer is on contract. A preliminary site meeting has been held to discuss the project details and we are currently ready to start with the construction bid documents.

Mike reported that he reached out to the Klamath Falls City Parks to request potential use of Moore Park to set up a rugby field. The city is very much interested in utilizing Moore Park but a decision could not be made at this time. Mike is scheduled to present a proposal for a rugby field on March 3 to the City of Klamath Falls; if the Board of Trustees cancels the soccer project, the presentation to the city will be cancelled. The soccer project would displace rugby but it would not cancel their season all together.

Q&A and Comments

1. Faculty member: Are the soccer and rugby team switching locations?

Mike Schell: The soccer teams are currently using Steen Sports Park. Essentially there would be a flip in locations with soccer coming to campus and rugby would then be

displaced and potentially moved to Moore Park. There are intercollegiate athletics which are athletics designated by the institution and recognized by the NAIA and the Cascade Collegiate Conference. Intercollegiate athletes are highly recruited athletes and are part of a funding program within the conference. Rugby is an extramural sport meaning that it does compete against teams outside of the institution but it is not at the same level as intercollegiate sports. Extramural sports do not provide scholarships, the seasons run shorter, and the academic standards between extramural and intercollegiate athletics are also significantly different.

2. Faculty member: For those that may not be familiar with the way the project is being funded, the bonds are not found money, correct? This is money that has to be repaid?

Mike Schell: The bond funding is coming from the state and it has to be repaid. The first payment is estimated at \$90,000 and then payment for the remaining 19 years will be at \$131,000 which includes principal and interest.

3. Faculty member: Are you in a position to speak in a little more detail about how that money will be repaid by Oregon Tech and where that money would come from?

Mike Schell: The athletics department is charged with the repayment. We have developed a budget around having that repayment moving forward. We are not targeting budgeting operations, we are not targeting incidental fees. We are looking at advertising revenues and camp funds. We will be running soccer camps and we will be aggressively seeking those type of funds. It is a departmental project not just a soccer project so our department is committing to this facility and we will be raising funds through donations, advertisements, camps, concessions and any other place we can find it as well.

4. Faculty member: In the event there was a short fall, where would the funds come from at that point?

Mike Schell: It is on the athletics department to make this work. Internally, within the department we would make the necessary adjustments to make this work. Whether it is a staffing change, travel change, transportation change, where we go, it is those sorts of decisions we will have to make.

Faculty member: Soccer sounds like a lot of fun to me but I am really concerned about the liability of the finances. Borrowing money just because we have the chance to borrow it seems like a dangerous thing to me when we don't have sports in our strategic goal. We have had to raise tuition for students, we have had to forego faculty salary raises because we are in a tight spot. Taking on additional debt, especially with the pro forma kind of things we have seen that are not very accurate or well done, but our debt service keeps increasing and our ability to pay back that debt has to come from somewhere. Mike, I appreciate your thinking that this is going to come out of your wallet but frankly the school has to pay that debt. I would really like to see a more responsible job in the finance pro forma to show where the money is really coming from. To say that you are going to sell cookies and do bake sales to cover that much debt service just does not seem practical. Yes, it is a cool thing, but it just feels like it is a tough time for us to

borrow such a large amount of money knowing that we will have additional costs down the line. I just feel like we have not done an adequate job of showing our stakeholders where the money is coming from, how we are going to pay it back, and how we can justify taking on additional debt service for a project that does not serve the whole school. This just does not feel like a very good business decision for our organization, I think we really need to be responsible for our stakeholders.

Chris Maples: Mike just attended the FOAC meeting where he provided additional pro forma information. We are about enrollment, about getting students enrolled and getting students graduated. Student life is one of those things that keeps students connected. This is a student life issue and the idea of having the campus lit up at night with lights on campus will be a beacon for Oregon Tech. The Klamath Falls campus is a lot more of a connection with the community. We have a lot of support from Steen Park and Basin United as part of building a soccer culture. Soccer is probably one of the more diverse groups of student athletes that we have. Again, we are trying to strengthen and build our own culture, get students graduated and get students connected and feel like part of our university. It is not so much about campus and soccer, it is more about a student body and the growth of a student body. Students are why we are here.

Faculty member: But saying that soccer is the magical key for students being interested in coming to campus is a false goal.

Chris Maples: I appreciate that. There is a school not far from here that is very proud of not having sports at all and they have half of the enrollment they used to have.

Faculty member: I am not saying that we should not have sports at all. I came from Linfield College, where they pump a ton of money into sports. It was a joke among students that the schools priorities were not in line with academics.

Mike Schell: the Men's Soccer program combined for a 3.2 GPA and the Women's Soccer program combined for a 3.41 GPA with the overall athletics GPA averaging 3.31; we have very good students and academics is a priority.

5. Staff member: I have heard the first and the second forums, I have heard a lot about the budget. My questions is, how else do we do it if it is not through a loan?

Chris Maples: In the university as a culture, it is hard to raise money as a small school and the loan is the only way to proceed at this time.

Women's basketball player: It is already evident from our combined GPA's that academics are important. Being a part of the women's soccer and basketball, I just want to say that every coach that I have experience with on this campus has always put academics before sports. It is definitely not a problem that we have here and I don't think it will ever be.

Faculty member: I am a department chair and I was surprised to hear about this project, how is this project going to affect student life, and residence halls? (Due to poor quality of the audio recording and intermittent video connection, this section is unable to be transcribed)

6. Faculty member: What is the process for moving future projects forward for approval?

Di Saunders: The Executive Staff is working on a process that includes transparency and an opportunity for input to be gathered before taking to the board for approval.

Student: These players deserve the support of their campus community. Klamath Falls does have a very strong soccer culture. Steen Park is beginning to outgrow our facility, this project will help Oregon Tech, it will help Steen Park and the community to grow soccer in the entire community and bring in more events and campus exposure. Purvine will not be an empty field as it is now but it will be a field full of people.

7. Faculty member: Were there multiple proposals received for the combined soccer project?

Mike Schell: Oregon Tech received 4 proposals for the combined soccer and track field project. The lowest bid was significantly higher than the funds we had available so it was prudent of the institution to suspend the project at the point and look for alternative scoping.

(Due to poor quality of the audio recording and intermittent video connection, this section is unable to be transcribed)

8. Student: It was mentioned earlier about other events taking place on the soccer field. Can you go into detail about what type of events you would have?

Mike Schell: We would continue to host intramural softball in the spring, we have not traditionally had intramural soccer, and there are other student related events that could still continue on that field. What we would do differently from now is that whatever we do does not harm the turf. We would use it to the extent possible, if we could move forward with lights that can extend the operating hours and expand even more.

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Student: When I was growing up, one of the best memories that I have was going to the University of Portland Campus and watching the women and men soccer teams. I went with my family, my friends, my rec team, and my club team. To me that is what Klamath Falls needs, a place to go watch soccer not to go watch them where they practice.

Diane Saunders recapped the last question that was not audible. The comment was related to doing more to develop campus life in Wilsonville and have additional conversations in the future.

Faculty member: I really appreciate the commentary and I want you to know that the faculty at Wilsonville are in support of all things good for OIT. My concern is that we are buying a bigger car than we can afford and in my opinion we are not doing the kind of due diligence that we need

to do to show that we can afford taking on more debt service. It does not mean that it is not true and does not mean that it is not the right thing to do, it is just that in a vacuum all we can do is be critical and believe the worst. We does make sense to develop our culture but it we need to know how we are going to pay for this.

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President Maples asked Mike Schell to provide a copy of the pro forma for campus review. It was agreed that a copy will be made available to faculty and staff prior to the board meeting.

9. Soccer player: Are there going to be measures put in place to maintain the field and prevent students from walking across the field, spitting out their gum, and leaving garbage on the field?

Mike Schell: One of the bid alternates includes a fencing plan, but we have to make a decision on how to allocate the resources. We have not made that decision and will not make that decision until we receive the hard number on the bid alternate. That is certainly something that we are looking at, we are just deciding how to allocate the resources.

10. Faculty member: What were the other projects considered in looking at this project and the bonding?

Mike Schell: This has been one of the top goals of the department for many years and one of the first projects that I spoke with Dr. Maples about when he came on as president. Within the scope of things it is one of our highest priorities. Of course if we were talking about 60 million for a state of the art recreation center that would be a game changer for us as well. But obviously that type of money is not on the table. We tried to go about this project in more of an in-kind fashion but we failed miserably.

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11. Student: Could we receive revenue by renting out field space for tournaments and such?

Mike Schell: Certainly we can seek that revenue but the priority for access would be for our own campus first. If the schedule was available and someone wanted to rent it, we would certainly rent it and target those dollars. I want to make sure that we give priority to on campus first.

12. Faculty member: Have you looked at using different materials such as Nike Grind?

Mike Schell: We talked with our engineer about various products, basically if we go with Nike Grind it increases the expense by about \$100,000.

Di Saunders announced the next forum will take place on Monday, February 1 at 5pm in the Mt. Mazama Room of the College Union in Klamath Falls.

Forum adjourned: 5:01 pm