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Coliseum project may ease recreation space shortage

By Chuck Beck

The Coliseum will not serve as a basketball arena after this summer.

A \$3 million remodeling project, however, would help accommodate expansion in the Department of Physical Education and Recreation (PER), department chairwoman Madge Phillips said Friday.

The Coliseum remodeling project, proposed in the 1975-76 Capital Construction request to the University of Nebraska administration, calls for the addition of gymnasiums, laboratories and classrooms.

A 1973 Capital Construction Request proposal called for the construction of a physical education building on the site of the Men's Physical Education Building. The PER administration has since advocated renovating the Coliseum, which would save the University \$1.6 million, Phillips said.

In addition to saving the university money, renovating the Coliseum would help alleviate the space shortage PER is experiencing, Phillips said.

Space deficit

To meet program space requirements, 191,440 square feet of building space are needed for PER programs. There is currently 127,297 square feet of building space contained in the women's and men's physical education buildings and Henzlik Hall. A deficit of 5,297 square feet of space would still exist if the Coliseum were to be renovated.

Phillips said no proposals have been made to decide how the deficit of building space would be alleviated.

Enrollment in the department has increased from 10,900 student credit hours taken in 1973-74 to 12,462 student credit hours taken this year. Enrollment is determined by the number of credit hours taken by students to judge how programs in the department are to be implemented with department staff, Phillips said.

As enrollment has increased, a number of new programs have begun, Phillips said. New activity classes, which are open to all UNL students, were offered for the first time this semester and 351 students enrolled in these classes. The new classes

were riflery, aerobics, skin and scuba diving, backpacking, parachuting and intermediate karate.

100 recreation majors

Also adding to the department's expansion is the growth of the recreation program, Phillips said. The program, which began four years ago, now has over 100 recreation majors, she said.

"The recreation major has increased in popularity because recreation is now recognized as a profession instead of a frill or fad," Phillips explained. "As society has had more discretionary time, leisure services for recreation have become increasingly important," she said.

A recreation major can earn his degree through the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) or Teachers College.

Phillips said jobs are available to recreation graduates as program leaders or administrators in municipal recreation departments.

Phillips said the possibility of a student earning his recreation degree through the College of Agriculture will be explored next year. She said William Murphy, coordinator of the recreation program, will explore the joint degree when he returns from Indiana University where he is completing his doctorate degree in recreation.

Agriculture and recreation

Students earning a degree in recreation through the agriculture college could become park and wildlife managers or work in the field of forestry, Phillips said.

Other programs have been expanded as a result of the merger of the men and women's physical education programs last June, Phillips said. There is now one coaching endorsement for men and women, she said.

"The coaching endorsement for women was caused by the current interest in women's athletic programs in high schools," she said.

In addition to the popularity of new PER programs, older programs are also experiencing much student interest, she said.

Her department could offer more tennis classes, but a space shortage has resulted in the closing of these classes, Phillips said. There are 16 tennis classes being offered this semester.

Post-secondary schools

Varner favors unification

Editor's note: This is the third of three articles examining proposals to merge the technical community college system with the state colleges and/or NU.

By Jim Zalewski

A unification of Nebraska's post-secondary schools under one controlling board is favored by NU President D.B. Varner.

Varner said he has proposed the idea to the Legislature's Education Committee and the 1202 Commission (appointed by Governor J. James Exon to study post-secondary education). Not many agree with his proposal, Varner said.

However, he said he is "satisfied it would benefit the state."

The legality of such a merger, not financial problems, could pose the biggest problem, Varner added.

Comply with constitution

"There would be no financial ramifications that I know of since the state colleges are also state-funded. However, a merger bill would have to be passed in order to comply with the state constitution."

Varner said he does not know of any bill being introduced this session that would attempt to merge the state college and NU systems. Former Sen. Terry Carpenter of Scottsbluff introduced such a bill last session.

The merger with Omaha University, now the

University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) was different because it was a municipal, not state university, Varner said.

"The UNO merger has not been without its problems," he said. "But now I'd say we have as smooth a system as any in the country."

The state legislature now allots money for UNL and UNO, he said, which differs from UNO's former municipal support.

Varner and Hansen

The money used by state colleges is channeled through the state Board of Trustees. Varner said both he and Regent Kermit Hansen advocated a single controlling board for all post-secondary schools in the state.

"I made a statement three years ago in favor of establishing a controlling board," Varner said. "The 1202 Commission decided that was not the best solution."

Varner said he is prepared to present his plan if it is requested, but has no plans to actively seek its adoption.

"When or if people ask for it, I'll explain it to them," he said.

Two bills in the Unicameral concern post-secondary education in Nebraska. One, LB128, seeks to merge the technical and state college systems. The other, LB344, is an attempt to change the financing of area-based technical schools. Varner said neither bill will affect the NU system.

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