Student Recreation Center

- The discussion for the new student recreation center has been underway for some time, the proposed location/site for this major facility has not received due and objective consideration through the normal planning processes and with the engagement of key stakeholders. It is not entirely clear that physically linking this new facility with the already functionally convoluted Johnson Gym is either necessary or desired. Previous additions to Johnson Gym have contributed to an extraordinarily complicated pattern of circulation for the different venues - difficult for users and visitors as well as compromising control and security. One would expect that the anticipated future life and use of parts (or all) of Johnson Gym will be significantly fewer in years than the new Student Recreation Center. Regardless of functional limitations imposed by the site and unknown future of Johnson Gym, there is reason to question the rationale of locating this major facility at the NE corner of Stanford and Central Avenue. Specifically: 1. The site is a resides within the academic core of the main campus - where are relatively few options for expansion of classroom/research needs. With further anticipated student enrollment increases for the main UNM campus, this specific site should be reserved for a future academic use, not student recreation. 2. If the Student Recreation Center is located on this site, a significant number of critical parking places - serving visitors, staff and faculty will be permanently lost. Regardless of other site issues, if UNM is to proceed with this as the designated site, replacement (structures) parking must become an integral part of this project (and project cost). 3. The majority of students live off campus. These off-campus students will also be paying for this facility, and should have reasonable access. The highest demand for use of this type of facility can be anticipated to be in the evening hours. There will be a very high demand by students for parking within walking distance to this facility; there is none at this location. – Roger Schluntz, UNM Faculty; 8/31/2009

- A New Student-only Recreation Center: I considered many schools before coming to UNM and at first was not happy with my choice, but was forced into it for financial reasons. After a year on campus I appreciate the immense amount of opportunities and academic potential on our campus, but I recognize that it is difficult to attract high-achieving students. A recreation center would not only improve life on campus and build the student resident community exponentially, but it would also serve as a major selling point when students are comparing UNM to schools like NMSU, ASU, etc. The Johnson facilities are unacceptable and deserve better than that as a student body. With a new recreation center, students would stay on campus, get involved in student organizations, and have a much more meaningful educational and life experience while enrolled at UNM. I understand the process has come a long way (almost up to design and development stage if I remember correctly) and I hope that you are able to recognize the importance it serves to the University's primary constituent. – Jake Wellman, UNM Student; 9/7/2009

- The recreation center needs to be adjacent to Johnson Field and Central Avenue. The Honors Program needs to be located in Hokona Hall. Mesa Vista will be very costly to bring up to code and for it to be truly functional. – Walt Miller, UNM Staff; 9/9/2009

- With the hopes to add 2000+ beds, I think that with this addition of so many people, there has to be stuff for them to do on Campus. I know there has been talk of perhaps building a recreational center. I think that this would be a perfect addition to go along with the building of
Student Recreation Center (cont’d.)

new dorms. The facilities that we currently have (Johnson Center) are okay, but I don’t really feel that they are adequate enough for the student body. A lot of people have to schedule their lives around Johnson, so they can work out and use the facilities that their student dollars are going towards. I see a lot of students who will buy outside gym memberships because they’re schedule simply can’t work with that of Johnson’s. If we have a facility that is only for recreation, I truly believe that students will want to stay more on campus, and students will be more satisfied with their University Experience. —Monika Irene Roberts, UNM Student; 9/11/2009

• More students living on Campus, including both housing and better recreation/health facilities sounds like something students would be delighted to enjoy. Selling that to taxpayers seems a little trickier, perhaps; but, I would support the initiative. I believe more people are coming to understand the essential need to integrate various types of health into learning environments. Mostly, of course, most students need jobs. A really first-rate University would be able to offer lots of jobs to its students. I note that this point is no where a part of the master plan. – Whitney Durrell, Spruce Park Neighborhood Resident; 9/11/2009

• Athletic Facilities and the Recreation Center: Some grad students feel that the proposed investment in a new recreation center is way too much money that could be better spent elsewhere. We are concerned about losing parking. The priority should be housing first then entertainment. Many people believe these funds could be used better elsewhere. It’s for entertainment rather than having a direct academic benefit. Those that oppose don’t want to be forced into paying a mandatory tax for this. With respect to the athletic facilities expansion proposed in the Master Plan, many graduate students do not think athletic venues are a priority. Effective master plans must be built on community engagement and do not happen in a vacuum. This plan does not include enough implementation strategies including funding sources. We cannot provide recommendations on the ideas presented here if we do not know what the comparative cost/benefits are (e.g. who is going to pay for it, what will not be built if this is, etc.). – GPSA, Andrew Marcum, UNM Students; 9/11/2009