

Campus Recreation Advisory Committee (CRAC)

AGENDA

February 9, 2023

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Review / Approve November 2022 meeting minutes
3. Old Business
 - a. SFAC result
4. New Business
 - a. Ice Arena Referendum
 - b. Outdoor Fitness Court
 - c. Wellness Lounge
5. Questions, comments, and concerns

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Minutes from February 9 meeting:

Attendees: Jen Carson, Dementro Powell, Michael Raycraft, Alana Harris, Diane Dean, Jeanette Weider

Marcus Jackson

I believe you all have gotten the November 2022 meeting minutes that were sent. So I will let you review those. Because we have quite a few items in our new business, though, if I can start to go through our agenda.

First, for our old business. In November, we had shared that we were still waiting on the results from the Student Finance Advisory Committee, Campus Recreation had it had requested a \$2.45 cent increase to the service fees. And this was to cover the minimum wage increase, as well as the increase for the SEIU workers. This represents fees not just for our departments, but for other departments as well. Again, it's all public information. I'm not telling you any secrets that you wouldn't be able to find out otherwise, there are still there is still a board of trustees decision that has to be made. So, I don't think that they'll

widely publicize it yet. But we were granted at least the two \$2.41, I think of the \$2.45 that we requested to help cover the expenses that I shared before the minimum wage and the wage increase for the SEIU workers. This is just kind of a visual, again, that sort of shows how the fees are represented and provided to students. And you can see for the summer of 2023. And then going forward, what the fees will look like for the next semester. Questions on that? Okay, again, if things come up, just let me know. I can go ahead and close that.

Moving into our new business, we have three items today, the Ice Arena referendum, the Outdoor Fitness court, and the Wellness Lounge. Starting with the Ice Arena referendum, again, we mentioned that we were putting out a survey for the students in the November meeting. And at that we had already gotten the results of the survey back but were analyzing and tabulating the results. I do have some of that information to share with you today. So hopefully you can still see that screen that has the survey results. And I will kind of walk you through the information that we gained from this survey and then I can talk about where the process is as of today. First, I think obviously campus recreation facility survey that was put together by the folks in our department led by Alana Harris, who's on our call, and handles the assessment for our group as well as Beth Hoag who's in Student Affairs the administration dates for the survey were October 24 through November 4. We had a total of 335 respondents, or a 6.7 percent response rate. And the respondents were a random sample of 5000 students who were all registered for six or more credit hours. That way we would only be asking folks who would have access to campus recreation facilities. In terms of the percentage of respondents who visited campus recreation, we asked, both during their time at college as a whole, and also during the fall of 2022. You can see from this slide and the different facilities or properties that are owned by Campus Recreation, the results were similar across the board, specifically to the ice arena, you can see during college career 35%, 29% of those during fall 2022 semester, and then so on and so forth for the other results here. In terms of folks who indicated that they had visited the campus recreation facilities, we asked for their overall level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with each facility. Generally, students indicated high levels of satisfaction with campus recreation facilities. In terms of the ice arena, again, which we were trying to get information about, you can see 84% So tied with the ARC, and then the numbers they're a lot smaller. But within that for the Ice Arena 109 respondents to that particular question and then 285 For ARC we asked the respondents if they were aware that we had a university Ice Arena 88% said yes, and only 12% No.

In terms of the future of the ice arena, we share the information that I hope you can see there that we're seeking to continually improve the facilities and services. Looking for their input, we shared information about the history of the ice arena that it was built in 1931. And as the only Ice Arena in the Champaign Urbana community. Due to the age of the facility, renovations are needed to keep the facility operational. We're exploring a variety of options. And then we share the options that we were looking at. Renovating the existing Ice Arena for continued use of ice skating, building a multipurpose court or facility for recreation activities, and using the current lobby area for E-sports lounge. And then building an indoor turf field to be used for field sports. Again, also using the lobby for Esports lounge. The fourth choice was none of the above. The reason we did not include the E-sport lounge in renovating the existing Ice Arena is because that area is currently utilized for again, preparation. Also, the locker rooms and restrooms are located there. So, if the space continues to be used as an Ice Arena, that wouldn't be a feasible option to have an E-sports lounge. Wanted to make sure that we pointed that out to you all. We asked the respondents which option they would support for the University of

Illinois. So, these 317 respondents ranked a number one choice. And you can see starting with the multipurpose 35%, Ice Arena 29%, turf field 26%.

Dementro Powell

I would have thought of it the other way with I mean, it's close but the turf and the ice arena for some reason. I feel like more people don't know, obviously could be wrong, but do use the turf field and Ice Arena. But maybe not.

Marcus Jackson

Hold that thought because it will be interesting to see what you think when you see the rest of it. When we introduced the topic of fees, we asked a series of questions related to that. But first sharing that converting the existing facility to an indoor turf field would result in a \$4.50 cent increase in student fees. Multipurpose courts would result in a \$5 increase. And these were based on benchmarking similar size facilities and our general area. So, Soccer Planet, which many of you may be familiar with, as well as some of the facilities at Illinois State University, which has an E-sports lounge, and some of our colleagues as well in the Big 10 that have turf fields, so we didn't do a full feasibility study for these options. But these numbers were pretty close estimates with some additional money as a buffer, so that we be sure to be representing this in the most transparent way possible. And then the third option, renovating the existing Ice Arena, resulting in \$21 million, and a \$13 increase in student fees each semester. I will also point out that, in the feasibility study for the Ice Arena, the original and the revised one that was just recently looked at, there were multiple options that were presented to campus for an Ice Arena. For this survey, we went with the least expensive option, which is still utilizing the current site with no additions. Other options included, building an addition on to the existing lobby area, building a second level, and then there's another option that said, getting rid of that one and build a new one on the parking lot next to the current ARC. So, we didn't present that option, we presented the least expensive option. Once we provided the estimated costs needed to pay for the project, we asked if the students would support each option. So out of 314 316 respondents, you're seeing the percentage of those who said yes, the multipurpose court 47%, turf field 41%, Ice Arena 25%. Then considering the estimated costs and projected student fee increases, we asked which they would prefer and ask them to select one. Out of 314 respondents, 32% for the multipurpose court, 28% For none, 26% for turf field, and 14% for Ice Arena. So some of these start to get a little closer, I think to what you were talking about Dementro. And to help with comparison purposes, we put this slide so that you can see pre- and post-the introduction of student fees. So again, these numbers because they may be small, the ice arena at the top 29% pre fee, number one choice and 14% as a final, but the multipurpose court went from 35% prefer up to 32%. The turf field stayed even at about 26%. And then none went from nine to 28%.

So in general, 35% of the students are using the Ice Arena during their time, high level of satisfaction 88% of students who were aware, the preference for changing the ice arena to a multipurpose court. That being the preferred option before the introduction of student fees and after the student fee increase. And then the 28% of respondents not interested in any options after the introduction of fee increases. That's kind of the presentation in a nutshell. I will share more information about the Ice Arena process but I want to pause first to invite any questions that you all may have or comments about the survey itself.

Michael Raycraft

I thought you'd have more support for the Ice Arena from the students.

Dementro Powell

This is pretty much what I thought when the money came up and that sort of thing. And only because I just feel like if you if you look at the grand scheme of things, the ice arena, although it's not meant just for like to play hockey and that sort of stuff, but more people seem to utilize those fields versus it feels more open I guess than the Ice Arena itself. The Ice Arena just feels like its own like kind of entity and you know, and it's for this and for that only. And so originally, I was really shocked, but then seeing how the fees made a difference I wasn't surprised by that at all.

Michael Raycraft

I agree with you Dementro on all those points. Yeah, I really thought that the field would be much more popular. So much is timing, you know, had you done this three years ago, when the when the Blackhawks were just busted out. And I mean, and they've just tanked. I mean, they've tanked in the terms of their popularity in hockey, as you know, in terms of kids watching it on TV and engaging with it. It's gone through a rough patch. I think the data will look completely different.

Dementro Powell

Yeah, and I can see that for sure.

Marcus Jackson

Well, what I can share, so you all are the know in terms of the folks who've seen this presentation, the Campus Recreation staff have seen it and campus leadership. And then you are the fourth, as SFAC has seen it as well. And I share that because in those conversations, some of the anecdotal feedback has been similar to what you just shared, Dr. Raycraft, the mention of timing. It's the appetite for fees. We have to admit \$5 to \$13 is a pretty significant jump, you know, if you're talking about having to pay that, so those that was also a factor. But the third one is that the students at least in SFAC, and again, small representation of students, they shared that not being able to say or state that we would be able to provide them with a D-1 hockey program influence their answers.

Michael Raycraft

That makes perfect sense. Because they've come out and they said that varsity hockey is not in the cards in the near future. I guess the question I would have for you, Marcus is like, how does this put us nationally? In terms of what you guys are in terms of, of a campus, BigTen, other universities, okay, because sometimes I am seeing the data, but sometimes you guys know more than that. You guys know more than the students as the people who are the professionals in the room and you have to say, you know, Campus Rec exists to attract students to the campus. Athletics and Campus Rec, it's that's part of the part of the investment to attract students. I mean, what does it look like nationally if we don't offer this type of thing if we're going to compete and attract students. Does that come up?

Marcus Jackson

Sometimes it does. Yes. And I would say that there's not a significant number of campus recreation departments that actually manage an Ice Arena. There are a few models that are similar to ours. In many cases, it's managed similar to how our State Farm Center is here on campus. And / or it's a combination which it is in Bloomington where it's the campus and the city. There's only a few that I actually have it fall under the Campus Recreation umbrella. I don't know if that's coming close to answering the question you're asked.

Michael Raycraft

And in a lot of places these in Bloomington is one example it is a significant financial drain on the city.

Marcus Jackson

I would say it costs a lot for us here, which brought us to this survey, and obviously it's been around since 1931. And it's time to do something with it or make a decision to do something because we're at the point, where we're putting good money on top of bad. So, you know, it's old. And there's a lot of reoccurring expenses that are going along with that. I would say, water operations as a whole are always the drains on the budget. They're sizable ones. So for us, that's, pools, saunas, ice arenas, those sorts of things, for departments like ours, that's operating those sorts of things. Those tend to be the things that eat up a lot of dollars on an annual basis.

Dementro Powell

Um, so what happened when the information came out regarding the Ice Arena going downtown? Was there any pushback or discussion about that from the student side? I can't see them be like, "oh yeah, I'm on board with this," because half of them don't even know anything past Green Street, let alone going to downtown Champaign it exists outside of, you know, the campus grounds. So, I didn't know if there was any discussion around that or what their feelings were.

Marcus Jackson

Yeah, there was certainly discussion, the conversations at that time, and I would even say where this one is going, because the conversation since then is very similar to what happened when this Downtown Project was there in some ways. But to answer your question, we never got far enough, I think to truly get the student buy-in. The administrators who were involved, one of them raised that issue. That was also I would say, part of why MTD was pretty invested in that project in that concept at that time to help with that piece. As well as I think the benefit overall to the city of Champaign, and what it would do downtown, but I'm sure, that certainly came up about the distance and I would say it still plays into it.

Michael Raycraft

Is there ever any discussion about the State Farm Center, and how the students are funding that building? And all the events in the State Farm Center, so many of them are for the community and not for the student population.

Marcus Jackson

Yes. Let me come back to that, I'm sorry. After we presented this to campus administration, we then met with the city of Champaign city planners office, and we pulled department of intercollegiate athletics back into the conversation as well, to share with them these results. And, you know, to really, I think our intention was and still is, to be very careful about how we proceeded with this. The city of Champaign, expressed rightful concern of this being the only Ice Arena operation and that if we took this down, there'd be nothing. And years ago, when this ice arena was built, conversations between the university and the city of Champaign were that if the university was providing this service, the city would then not need to use resources to provide it as well. Right. So with that, this became quickly political. And also, with DIA being in the conversation, the decision to not field a D-1 hockey team at this point in time, I think while they're still pretty firmly in that camp was not as steadfast. So it was one of those, we're saying "no" for now, but we don't want that "no" to sound like "never."

Michael Raycraft

Their TV money jumped a lot after they made their initial decision. California coming in to the big 10 and the TV money, that was not money they probably necessarily were banking on was my two cents.

Marcus Jackson

Well, the other piece to that, I think they have to consider is if they add a hockey team, they would have to add another women's sport as well. They also had to look at all the things that they are trying to anticipate continuing to be somewhat challenging but necessary things like the name, image, likeness stuff, I mean, everything that you can think of came out of this conversation. In order to give ourselves more time to collect more student feedback, to think this through to really determine what the best plan going forward was for this. Now we, in combination with the city of Champaign, still has money that they had planned to provide for the Downtown Project, sitting there trying to decide what they can do with that. The two parties, the University and the city of Champaign made the decision that we were going to defer this decision for at least another year. So that's where we are in terms of the entire project itself. Again, I want to open the floor and let you all ask whatever you like about this thing in particular, but I wanted you all to have the information.

Michael Raycraft

I think you answered my question, but one is that I walked by that facility every day, and there's so much youth and kids walking in there for leagues and what percentage of the of the use currently, would you say is done by the community? Youth hockey leagues as opposed to student usage?

Marcus Jackson

That's a great question.

Alana Harris

I would say it's significant.

Marcus Jackson

It is significant. I would say more so than a lot of our other properties.

Alana Harris

Absolutely. It is.

Marcus Jackson

Because, you know, aside from club practice, and of course, we have open skate and those sorts of things we do open that facility to a lot of organizations.

Michael Raycraft

That goes to what I was getting at before. It's always, "the community of Champaign gets off so cheap. The students are paying for the State Farm Center to host Sesame Street Live and Broadway, for the community but not for them." It's not that they're unable to have events for the kids, but they have a lot more events for the community and people don't want the Ice Arena to be like that too. Is that accurate?

Marcus Jackson

I think so.

Jeanette Weider

I think that that's part of it. He's in the midst of the political struggle that you're talking about. And I mean, I can agree with you. I think that there is a plethora of things that the University does for Champaign and Urbana, that are absolutely subsidized by students. And I think that is a challenge. In my world, in family graduate housing, we actually have some agreements where we pay some money to the cities for some things so you know, there's a lot of different relationships politically, but this has been a difficult political battle for a long time. And I think your surveys are excellent for gathering that information and demonstrating in real tangible ways how students responded when there's no fees. And when there are fees. That's an excellent strategy.

Alana Harris

I'm not in the same position as Marcus, but I can always share data about our spaces and how the Ice Arena is open and available to our students much higher than the usage. 73% of our usage is from the community and that includes kinesiology scheduled classes for the space.

Michael Raycraft

I think that says a lot. When you see the young kids walking in, you know that the city needs to be involved in this.

Marcus Jackson

When I'm at liberty to share more, I absolutely will do so.

Michael Raycraft

Is the conversation going the correct direction? Are you surprised at all?

Marcus Jackson

Surprised? No, not at all. I'm being further educated, but not at all surprised.

The next item on the agenda is the Outdoor Fitness Court. For a couple months now we have been exploring opportunities to re-envision our spaces and provide things to our users and the community that are not available or not as accessible in our community. In the past couple months, we have been in discussions about securing a functional fitness court that will be located at one of our basketball courts near our Bike Center near the corner of Gregory and Oak. We have been in touch with NFC – National Fitness Campaign – and we have been awarded a \$50,000 grant to assist with the construction of this project. We are currently working with F&S to determine a better timeline for this endeavor.

Jeanette Weider

Is the \$50K going to cover the construction?

Marcus Jackson

No. That's only part of the cost. Campus Rec will be pursuing sponsors, and that's where Mindy Spencer's role comes into play to hopefully solicit more donors and sponsorships toward the project.

Jeanette Weider

Apartment dwellers at Orchard Downs have frequently asked for outdoor fitness on the walking paths and such. There are a quite a few people from Urbana who also walk through our neighborhoods there. This is quite extensive and I don't know that we could do that, but if there was some opportunity to see a smaller version of it for Housing, I'd be interested in learning more. What is the full cost?

Alana Harris

If we went with the full court / best option that they offer that has all of the resistance items as well as space for outdoor classes, they estimate that it's around \$200,000 for the top-of-the-line version. Since we're working with an existing space and we're hoping that we can repurpose or reuse some of the court, we are hoping that if we go with the most significant version that we can bring that cost down somewhat. But they do offer three different iterations of the court at different prices.

Jeanette Weider

I will say that the pulls made me nervous without supervision in an outdoor location.

Alana Harris

Just think about playgrounds. They have everything this has and more.

Dementro Powell

Has there been thought of the financial viability of this investment since it's only warm in Illinois for a portion of the year?

Marcus Jackson

We have thought about that and one of the people that was on the video from Oakland University in Michigan and they have utilized the court extensively and they're arguably colder than we are in the winter months. We hope that the downside can hopefully be outweighed by the benefits offered during the better weather. We face a similar situation with our outdoor pool, as well. The good news is that this can be 24/7 access vs. having to have staff to support it.

Michael Raycraft

Look at all the DIA summer camps and this could be an instant part of their curriculum. You should ask them to contribute to the costs!

Jen Carson

I do love the idea and I think it will be extremely popular. Do you think we can ever have some of those apparatus spread across campus that we could tie in to existing walking programs?

Marcus Jackson

We talked about playgrounds a bit earlier and one of the things I talked with Alana about when this first started was that one of my favorite things in California was at a community college where my high school football team practiced. They had a bar course around campus and I just thought that was the neatest thing and hoped there'd come a day where I could do something similar. Maybe that can be something further down the road. Maybe there can be a future Housing collaboration where you need to fix up some playgrounds and this can come into fruition. The only difference with the concentrated space is that it allows us to do more coordinated programs, which is more consistent with our small group fitness classes.

Michael Raycraft

I like the idea of the fitness trail. So many people after the pandemic are relying on walking as an exercise and this would be great where you start at one end of campus like Huff Hall and you do this, and you walk a bit further to Mumford and you do that. And that wouldn't require a 200K facility. Your challenge is to complete this five times a week and here's the path. That way it's more of a challenge than just a physical location.

Jen Carson

This might encourage those who don't go to ARC or CRCE to try those types of things.

Michael Raycraft

It's much more private. We have people on campus who just want to do something over the lunch hour and they can work out their intensity without having to go into a building. This can help to get more people engaged. "Finish it 25 times and we can incentivize you with a T-shirt."

Jeanette Weider

We have the local cross-country hill on Orchard Downs property, so those students are running our hills all the time. We can't get the local cities to pay for much involved with the University, but there may be

some sort of partnership available. Even the Police Training Institute stays with us and even the ROTC students run up and down those hills as well.

Marcus Jackson

So there are potential collaborations and opportunities across campus and our communities. Any last comments on the Fitness Court? Hearing none, I just have one final agenda item.

You may find yourself in our Winter Garden and wonder why there are no places to sit or hang out, we are working on replacing all of the furniture throughout the building and converting that Winter Garden space into more of a Wellness Lounge. We hope people can come in and study, hang out, we are exploring some options to reinvigorate the Courtside Café space as well. More information to come about that hopefully in the next couple times that we meet.

Jen Carson

With the Wellness Lounge, is there programming planned to take place in this space or just more of a social setting for patrons?

Marcus Jackson

We have had conversations about what we can do with that space and hopefully the revamp of the café, but we are certainly open to all ideas. But until we get the furniture and see how that part is received we'll know better how that space will start to fill out.

Thank you so much for attending, and if you have any further agenda items, please let us know.

Last minute notice – The Tony Clements Scholarship opportunity is still open for student applications. Qualifications are that they must work for Campus Rec and be an RST major and have some academic career left. It's \$1000. They just fill out the application online and have a letter of recommendation.

Thanks so much everyone.