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NEWS RELEASE

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USI Board of Trustees reviews current, future campus construction

Construction projects, both on-going and future development, were top agenda items at the regular meeting of the University of Southern Indiana Board of Trustees on Thursday, November 7. Reports included progress on the renovation of the University Center, addition of apartments in University Housing, an addition to the Physical Activities Center (PAC), and construction of a new general purpose classroom building.

Renovation of the University Center, expected to be completed in January 1997, will double the size of the building that serves as a central gathering site for students and the community.

Trustees reviewed Finance Committee reports on four proposed student apartment buildings, plus a general purpose building that will include office space for the housing staff. The Student Housing Construction Committee, appointed at an earlier board meeting and charged with securing bids and awarding a contract, reported that Maken Corporation was the successful bidder for the project. Construction is expected to be completed by fall 1997 and will add 256 more beds, to bring total occupancy to 2,071 in campus housing. The cost is expected to be \$4.3 million. The new apartments will be located in the McDonald West complex adjacent to apartment buildings completed this fall.

A steel-framed structure that will enclose the area between the swimming pool and the gymnastics area on the second level of the PAC could allow for the addition of two classrooms, a reception area, and rest rooms. Design of the space, which will be used for credit and non-credit classes, meetings, and special activities, will take into consideration the possibility of future expansion needs in the PAC. The timetable calls for obtaining bids in spring 1997 and completing the work before the end of the year. Cost is estimated at \$500,000.

Christopher Chivetta of Hastings & Chivetta Architects, Inc., of St. Louis, project consultants, presented architectural renderings of the new classroom building that will provide essential classroom, laboratory, faculty, and service areas for the largest academic unit on campus -- the School of Liberal Arts. Flexibility will be a key component of the building, offering classrooms that respond to a variety of teaching styles, computer labs that support classroom instruction, and an infrastructure that supports high technology requirements, multimedia, and computer networks with everchanging needs.

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In addition to faculty offices, a 150-seat lecture hall, and four 60-seat lecture halls, the new building will have electronic classrooms and laboratories, music studio and practice rooms, a theatre classroom with costume storage, dressing and make-up rooms, radio/television laboratory facilities, psychology laboratory and therapy rooms, sociology/anthropology classrooms, foreign language laboratory with language carrels connected to a central control booth, distance learning classrooms wired for videoconferencing and Indiana Higher Education Telecommunications System (IHETS) programming, offices for the Center for Communal Studies, and a campus multimedia control center. Bonding authorization for the building is set at \$15.2 million.

Construction is expected to begin in the summer of 1997 with completion scheduled for fall 1999.

In other business, John Byrd, vice president for Student Affairs, reported that the University administered 9,547 awards for a total of \$14.4 million in student financial assistance for the 1995-96 academic year. Student financial aid is categorized by aid type into grants, loans, and on-campus employment. Two new institutional programs -- the Academic Excellence Award and the Academic Honors Diploma Grant, awarded to students who rank in the top 10 percent of their graduating class -- were developed in 1995-96 and will be implemented in the next two years.