



NEWS RELEASE

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USI Board approves \$4.1-million University Center addition

The University of Southern Indiana Board of Trustees at the May 5 meeting authorized USI President H. Ray Hoops to seek state approvals for construction of a \$4.1-million addition to the University Center, a facility opened in 1974. At the January Board meeting, the architectural firm of Veazey, Parrott, and Shoulders of Evansville presented schematic plans and cost estimates for the project.

"With student enrollment increases more than doubling since the mid-'70s, the University has stretched the University Center facilities to the maximum level," said Dr. Hoops. "This much-needed expansion will reinvigorate the University Center, which serves as a welcoming landmark to students and the community."

The expansion will add 44,600 square feet to the 52,000 square-foot-facility. It will feature an additional entrance on the south side and will provide a ballroom on the second level, a multipurpose area which will have the capacity to seat 530 people for dining and 750 for meetings. The addition increases space for student life staff offices, conference facilities, student publication and other student activity offices, and for student recreation and lounge areas. A computer lab, a small art gallery, and a formal meeting and dining area also will be incorporated into the expansion.

Approvals will be sought from the Commission for Higher Education, the State Budget Committee, and the governor. Non-academic buildings like the University Center are paid for by student fees and private contributions, with the project to be financed through bonds. Groundbreaking is expected next fall, with a one-year completion estimate. The University Center will remain open during construction.

In other business, the Board followed Finance Committee recommendation and approved a joint proposal of Smith/Barney, Inc. and Traub and Co. to provide investment banker services in financing the University Center expansion; named Skillman Corporation of Indianapolis to provide construction manager services for a general purpose classroom building, the new building recently authorized by the Legislature; and agreed to accept Old National Bank to handle the custodial account for the Voluntary Employee Benefits (VEBA) Trust for post-retirement benefits. Services on two subaccounts in the trust will be provided by Old National Bank and NBD Bank.