

SFA Student Recreation Center Brief History of the Project

- September 2003 - SFA student leaders form the Student Recreation Center Committee (SRCC) to review the lack of a dedicated Student Recreation Center.
- January 2004 - At the January meeting of the SFA Board of Regents, Student Body President Chad Harrison updates Regents regarding the status of the student committee's work. Indicates he would present a final report at the Board's April meeting.
- April 2004 - The SRCC concludes:
1. SFA should take steps to address areas where student life programs and services are lacking.
 2. Fitness and recreation have become such a part of people's lives today, especially those of students.
 3. Facilities at SFA for the health, physical fitness and recreation of students and faculty/staff significantly lag behind current lifestyles. The way this should be addressed is to allow the student body to decide by referendum if they would support the fee necessary to build and operate a new dedicated Student Recreation Center and operate the programs and services affiliated with it.
- April 2004 - The SFA Student Government Association passed a resolution (S04-R3) asking the Board of Regents to move forward with a new Student Recreation Center by supporting the need to develop feasibility plans for students to review.
- April 2004 - The conclusions of the Student Recreation Center committee and the Student Government resolution were presented to the Board of Regents during the Student Body President's report at the April quarterly meeting.
- The Board responded by asking the administration to move forward as quickly as possible to identify and hire architects for the potential project to consult with students and develop basic plans, cost estimates and timelines so students could consider the fee that would be required to construct and operate a Student Recreation Center.
- Summer 2004 - Students and University staff visited Student Recreation Centers at numerous universities in Texas, viewed their facilities and interviewed their directors, staffs and students. SRCs were visited at the following universities:
- Texas A&M
 - Texas State at San Marcos
 - University of Texas at San Antonio
 - University of North Texas
 - Texas A&M at Commerce

- Texas Christian University
- Texas Tech
- Southern Methodist University

July 2004 - The SFA Board of Regents requested that staff request qualifications of architectural firms that would be interested in planning and design of a potential new SFA Student Recreation Center.

August 2004 - Regents select F&S Partners, a Dallas-based firm, to work with the university in planning, design and construction of a new dedicated student recreation center. F&S had recently worked with the University of North Texas, University of Texas, Baylor and Texas A&M at Commerce on their student recreation centers.

Fall 2004 - Architects from F&S, along with planning consultants from Brailsford and Dunlavy (B&D) visited campus numerous times to research student needs and wants.

More than 1,600 SFA students were involved in providing input to the planning process that generated the proposal that students would consider in a referendum.

November 2004 - Research had progressed to a point that the parties involved were comfortable that the major elements included in the project were what students indicated were wanted and the fee could be set based on the revenue needed to construct and operate the facility necessary to support these needs.

The Office of Student Affairs formed a student Referendum Advisory Committee (RAC) to assist with publicizing the upcoming student referendum, to assist in making sure the information presented was clear and correct and to assist in education of the student body on the particulars of the issue. This committee met weekly beginning September 30, 2004.

The fee to be proposed to students was \$120 per semester, \$60 per each six-week or shorter term with a reduced fee of \$50 for students enrolled for 6 hours or less.

A referendum date was set for November 16, 2004.

Referendum Publicity

Group Presentations:

Student members of the RAC conducted almost 50 presentations to student groups regarding the project between Nov. 1-15.

Newspaper Ads:

¼ page ads were placed in the Pine Log on Nov. 8, 10 and 15.

Newspaper Inserts:

7,000 inserts announcing the referendum with information about the issue were placed in the Nov. 15 issue of the Pine Log.

mySFA:

Announcements regarding the referendum were placed on the front page of the mySFA intranet portal and on the myEvents page.

Dedicated Website:

A website was established with information about the project and referendum, including important dates and FAQs. The site will remain live as a project update site at www.reccenter.sfasu.edu.

Open Forums:

The SFA circle of Omega Delta Kappa (ODK) sponsored two open forums for students who wanted to come ask questions about the referendum and the project. These forums were conducted at both noon and 6 p.m. on November 11. Representatives from SFA Student Government, ODK, F&S and B&D were present to answer questions.

Pizza with the President:

The day prior to the open forums President Guerrero conducted his once a semester "Pizza with the President" forum; open to students, faculty and staff this two-hour forum fields questions about all aspects of campus-life. Several questions were asked related to the Recreation Center project.

Media:

The Pine Log student newspaper presented an editorial in its November 11 issue urging students to participate in the open forums regarding the project. That issue also contained a front page headline article about the forums.

The Pine Log's November 15 issue, the day prior to the referendum, contained two articles about the project, both covering the open forums conducted the week before and the referendum scheduled for the next day. The issue also contained an editorial, urging students to support the referendum. This is the same issue that contained a ¼ ad and the full-color insert.

FAQ Guide:

A guide to frequently asked questions was prepared and made available to students through the presentations, on the website and at information tables prior to the referendum.

Large-Format Posters:

Large posters (36"x30") were posted with information about the project and the referendum at East College Cafeteria, the Murphy Wellness Center, the HPE Building, the Birdwell Student Affairs Building and the University Center. On referendum day large-format "Vote Today" posters were posted at these same areas.

Table-Tents:

Table-tents encouraging students to vote were placed on the tables in the UC cafeterias and East College cafeteria.

Handbills:

Handbills encouraging students to vote were distributed throughout the day on Nov. 12 across campus.

November 2004 - Students Approve Fee by Large Majority:
On November 16, 2004, students turned out to the polls in record numbers for a fee referendum at SFA to show support for the Student Recreation Center project.

Here are some referendum facts:

Election Date: March 16, 2004

Poll Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Poll Location: University Center

Ballot wording:

“Stephen F. Austin State University will collect from each student enrolled at Stephen F. Austin State University a student recreation fee not to exceed \$120 per regular semester or \$60 for each six-week or shorter term of the summer session. This fee may only be used for constructing, operating, maintaining, improving, and equipping a dedicated student recreational facility and recreation sports program at the university. This fee will not be collected until the Spring 2006 semester.”

Headcount Enrollment for Fall 2004: 11,287

Students Voting in Election: 1,501

Percentage of Headcount Enrollment Voting: 13.3%

Students voting for the fee: 1,237 (82.5%)

Students voting against the fee: 263 (17.5%)

Ballots illegible: 1

Voters by Classification:

Graduate:	37	(2.5% of vote; 2.1% of class)
Senior:	205	(13.6% of vote; 8.6% of class)
Junior:	246	(16.4% of vote; 10.5% of class)
Sophomore:	349	(23.3% of vote; 17.6% of class)
Freshman:	664	(44.2% of vote; 23.3% of class)

November 2004 - Student Body President Amanda Williams updated the Board of Regents regarding the results of the campus-wide referendum and asked that the Board take necessary action to authorize the submittal of legislation to authorize collection of the fee the students had overwhelmingly approved.

The Board authorized the Administration to work on the legislation needed.

Spring 2005 - Senate Bill 283 and House Bill 598 regarding the authorization of the fee were introduced by Senator Todd Staples and Representative Roy Blake.