

University Student Union Expansion/Renovation

Briefing Memo

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The University Student Union (USU) was built in the late 1960s and opened in 1972. It was designed by renowned architect Edward Killingsworth. From its onset, students voted to assess themselves a fee to construct, and govern, the USU. In 1995, students later approved a fee increase in order to expand the USU with the addition of a west wing to the second floor and enclosing the third floor, while also addressing necessary seismic improvements. In 2010, after the opening of the Student Recreation & Wellness Center, student leaders began discussing the needs of the aging USU facility and the need for significant infrastructure improvements, to include heating/air, plumbing, drainage, electrical, internet systems, and programmatic space.

In 2011, the USU Board of Trustees completed a formal assessment of CSULB students' needs and desires for the USU. This assessment included numerous focus groups, intercept interviews, and an online survey of the entire student body. The assessment received 12,350 responses (37% of enrollment) and recommendations for improving the students' understanding of the facility. The findings of the survey determined that the USU was primarily a food destination, a place to eat and hang out between classes, and a location for student events and organizations. Students reported limited seating areas, electrical outlets, and internet connectivity. The facility challenges included difficult way finding, technology, ADA path of travel, and mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) assets are at the end of lifespan. The results indicated a need for expanded services and spaces. Overall, students said they would use the USU more frequently if improvements were made to the facility.

In Spring 2014, the USU Board of Trustees completed a second assessment of CSULB students' needs. This assessment resulted in 8,124 responses (24% of enrollment) and included the examination of facility improvement options, corresponding student fee tolerance, and financial plans. Students responded that the USU is the focal point of the campus. Students no longer consider the USU as only a food destination. They were staying longer and would like more lounge, study areas, informal gathering locations, and dining space. Student feedback demonstrated a need for more student organization space, student resource center(s), and a Sustainability Resource Center. The majority (59%) of students said they were likely to support the expansion and renovation of the USU.

Based on the assessments completed over the past four years, the USUBOT, ASI Board of Directors and the Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC) approved a referendum concept to let students decide on the future of the USU. The proposal includes 130,000 renovated square feet and the following improvements/modifications:

- Increased, informal student lounge space
- More study space, to include group study rooms
- Expanded food service seating
- Centralized Student Resource Center(s) (e.g. cultural groups, AB 540, LGBTIQ, religious, etc.)
- Increased student organization office/meeting space
- Sustainability Resource Center
- Expanded conference, ballroom and meeting facilities
- Improved Beach Auditorium

The SFAC approved the referendum in May of 2014, which is scheduled to be held in February of 2015. It will be conducted electronically like previous referenda and student body elections.