To: Service and Activities Fee Committee
From: Mike Campitelli, Director of Campus Recreation Programs
        David Early, University Recreation Facilities Director
        Dr. Alan Coelho, PEHR Dept. Chair
        Pam Parks, EWU Athletics Senior Women’s Administrator
        Richard Scott, EWU Club Sport Coordinator
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Committee Members,

After a recent meeting called by Director of University Recreational Facilities, David Early, regarding the condition and upcoming replacement of the Fieldhouse (FH) floor, many ideas came out of that meeting to help alleviate a problem we’ve been facing for a long time – finding a surface that serves the needs of all programs using the facility. One of those ideas, a recommendation to seek funding to cover the outdoor tennis courts with an air-supported structure, would allow for the resurfacing to be a more multi-sport surface. After much discussion and gathering of ideas, we decided as a group to submit a proposal for project funding from the Service and Activities Fee Committee.

Currently, there is approximately $100,000 to replace the current floor in the FH with the recommendation that we come up with plans for a surface that is more durable and usable by the main users of the building. Those groups are Physical Education, Health & Recreation classes (PEHR), NCAA Athletics, Intramural Sports (I.M.), Club Sport Federation (CSF) groups and open recreation and special events.

The current surface is a flooring product known as “Plexi-Pave”, a surface made specifically for tennis and one that is not very conducive to track & field or intramural basketball without causing many concerns. Those concerns range from the damage to the surface from normal non-tennis use of the facility, the unnecessary wear and tear of equipment due to the flooring (primarily basketballs) to the sandpaper nature of the floor which causes terrible abrasions to those unfortunate enough to fall. We feel the addition of an air structured facility over the outdoor tennis courts would solve most of these problems while opening the FH, the highest traffic facility in the Sports & Recreation Center (SRC), to more hours of availability to the programs that need it the most and at the same time providing all tennis programs with a year-round tennis facility.

Proposal:
Campus Recreation (CRec), in collaboration with EWU Athletics, and PEHR would like to submit a proposal for funding for a year-round air supported structure for the EWU outdoor tennis courts. The air-supported structure would cover four of our eight courts
throughout the year. The cost for this project would be approximately $480,000 - $500,000, based on options and installation costs. 1st year energy costs have been included in the cost of the project, with subsequent annual energy costs requested through the CRec, Athletics S & A budget process or via an annual supplemental request to the S & A Committee. Annual maintenance and repair not covered by warranty would be contracted out to the vendor so the work could be performed to specifications. These costs would have to be dealt with on an as-needed basis either through capital funding or S & A Fee requests, though the structural warranty would be in effect for most of the early years of use. David Early has made arrangements for an outside consultant to provide an estimate for a feasibility study for other structural options as well as thoughts on the issues surrounding site preparation and installation of such a project.

**General Benefits:**
If funding for such a project could be secured, all users of the FH such as EWU Athletics, PEHR classes, I.M. and CSF groups would benefit. Additionally general recreation and special events that cannot be hosted with our present playing surface or due to the usage of the facility could further extend the use of the FH. This project has one other major benefit that otherwise might be overlooked - the replacement surface on the FH floor could be one that is more useful to the EWU Track & Field program, summer camps, open recreation and the largest user of the facility, intramural basketball. Alone, I.M. Sports hosts hundreds of intramural basketball games every year in the building with over 500 quarterly active participants. Six to ten CSF groups use the building from late fall quarter through the early spring quarter placing hundreds of those athletes in the user group as well. Presently the floor in the FH is a tennis specific surface (Plexi-Pave) that is overdue for replacement has been damaged beyond repair by the other programs using the facility for non-tennis purposes such as track & field (spikes and equipment), club sports such as baseball and softball, and the many special events housed in the FH that bring equipment into the building that further puts wear & tear on the floor.

If an air-supported structure could be installed for the outside tennis courts moving all tennis programs to that facility, the replacement floor in the FH could then be a more appropriate surface for the facility’s other user groups. By placement in the FH of a more multi-purpose floor material, which can be provided by numerous companies, the true multi-purpose function of the building could be a huge gain to all programs involved in its’ use. We would not lose the use of the four indoor tennis courts as the new floor could still be used for tennis, just not at the intercollegiate level. Scheduling of the facility would be accomplished as all SRC facilities are currently done, through the SRC Office/ EWU Event Planning scheduling system.

**Specific Benefits:**
*Campus Recreation* – Both CRec programs that utilize the FH, I.M. & CSF, would benefit greatly from the combination of an air structure over the outside t-courts and replacing the current FH floor with a more multi-purpose floor. In I.M. Sports, basketball is the most popular activity throughout the course of the year with 25-40 teams playing each quarter. The FH is a main venue for those hundreds of games played annually. When the Plexi-Pave surface was installed, our I.M. BB leagues suffered a decline in
student participation as many students were worried about the results of a fall on that surface – it has a definite sand paper texture to it – and the resulting skin abrasions suffered in those falls. Many injuries go unreported but the familiar “strawberry abrasion” suffered by most is all too apparent. Due to the lack of availability of the courts, the FH is one of the highest volume traffic areas in the SRC, we do not have the opportunity to offer many tennis events and we would love to have that option. In the CSF program, the Tennis Club is one of our largest and fastest growth areas and due to the traffic and needs the FH sees, they are limited to once or twice a week practice times, generally squeezing 30-40 players on the four indoor courts. The placement of a “tennis dome” would allow for both needs and open the FH up for more I.M. basketball use or other CSF groups that are severely cut back on practice times due to lack of availability of the building.

EWU Athletics – (NCAA Tennis) Due to the poor conditions of the FH floor, our NCAA Tennis Men’s & Women’s teams cannot draw opponents to play them in our facility causing them to either play (and pay) for another Spokane location or play their matches on the road. This puts them at an obvious disadvantage in their quest for a competitive edge as the home team. EWU replaced our severely outdated and dangerous outdoor tennis courts five years ago with an 8-court complex that is vastly underused due to the seasonal weather patterns in our area, another factor to be considered. If the air-supported structure could be utilized, we would be able to use that beautiful facility to maximum impact. The placement of an air-supported structure over the outdoor courts would allow them to play on the same courts year-round, giving them a true home-court advantage over their opponents. It would give them a place to host matches and tournaments (right now they could not host the Big Sky Championships even when they win the league title due to the FH floor), extend practice times, host tennis camps and give EWU a facility to bring in other tennis events throughout the year. (NCAA Track & Field) By replacing the current tennis surface with one more suited for the sport, that program can become higher profile as well and host more indoor meets throughout the indoor season. The cleats worn by track athletes as well as the equipment and setup materials needed for an indoor meet heavily damage the current floor. Both Tennis and Track & Field are Big Sky Conference core sports, which makes them a requirement for our athletic program so strengthening those sports is good for us institutionally. (NCAA Softball) With EWU voting to bring in Women’s Softball as the next intercollegiate sport due to our Title IX mandate, opening up hours in the FH would give that program an indoor facility that would be absolutely necessary to its’ success as a university program. There are indoor batting cages already in the FH and with the new floor surface, the facility could be easily used by the softball team as well as our CSF Fastpitch group.

PEHR – The nature of the FH makes it one that is critical to the class scheduling of the PEHR program. Along with the tennis classes offered in the building, the department can offer golf classes, track & field and running/jogging classes, sport coaching classes, ROTC sessions and numerous other academic options. By moving the tennis classes, teams and certain club sport groups out of the facility, it would allow for the addition of many classes that PEHR currently has to refrain from offering or put them in an inappropriate facility.
Open Recreation & Other Programming Options – Current special events held in the building include summer sport camps, Science Olympiad, wrestling camps and events, CRec tournaments such as the Fall/Spring Shootout 3 x 3 tournaments, robotics competition, Special Olympics, cheerleading camps, CRec’s The BLITZ end of the year event, police officer’s fitness training, CRec Laser Tag and many other events and activities throughout the year.

Also, if the FH were open on Saturdays in the fall, we could see pre-game football functions happen as they do at WSU, increased revenue-generating opportunities for both the FH and the tennis dome (tying in with the Board of Trustees goals to secure and increase revenue sources) and other university events and activities in both areas. Current institutions in our region with a sport dome are Whitworth, Boise State and Lewis Clark College in Portland (tennis) and WSU (football). One company alone, The Farley Group, has put up over 900 of these structures around the world.

Facility Maintenance & Energy Costs – The structure would cover four of the eight outdoor courts, stay up year-round and would have heating system but no air conditioning as the only two months it would be needed are in the summer when the players might circulate to the four outdoor courts. On hot days, large fans could be brought in to circulate the air, much like we do in the Phase gyms now.

We all realize budgets are tight and funding for such a project is scarce, but by the installation of an air structured facility on the outdoor courts, all users of the facility would benefit greatly, this would add the equivalent of another facility to the Sports & Recreation Center at a relatively low cost, strengthen all the main programs using the current building and allow for the resurfacing of the floor to better accommodate the remaining users of the facility. Rarely does a win-win situation like this come around and if funding cold be secured, the upside to our university programs is huge.

In closing, it is our hope that the S & A Committee will consider this request for funding and allow us the opportunity to bring our group over to answer all questions. Rarely does any group nowadays have $500,000 burning a hole in their pocket so we truly understand the big picture. If there were funding available, what better way to use it than on a situation with many programs benefitting from the purchase of such a structure. We truly appreciate your consideration and hope that we talk again.
Kaleb,

Good questions all. I'll do my best to answer them completely, but some items would just need to be estimates based on a number of factors. Again, all of our thanks just for considering this project and hopefully giving us the chance to come in as a group and talk more. Rarely do projects come along where everyone benefits equally and while we understand the S&A fee group is not necessarily the right option, it might be our only option. Also, if this project were to go unfunded, the world won't stop spinning on its axis! We've existed for years as is and can continue to do so. The reason this might be different is that with the timing of FH floor replacement, we thought it would be the best time to look at how we can parlay that into a giant facility upgrade - if funding could be secured - that would take us into the next 15 years of use. Thanks again.

MC

1. What is the projected energy costs associated with something like this?

According to two different vendors, the estimated energy costs (electricity & heating, no AC) would range in the low to mid $20,000 annually.

2. You state that "EWU" replaced the outdoor tennis courts in the past. What part of EWU paid for it?

To my knowledge, the newer outdoor courts were a capital funded project

3. Generally where does the money for sport related venues come from and has that source of funding been pursued for this project in the past?

In the past, sport venues have been paid for out of capital funding requests, much like the academic buildings on campus. However, with shrinking cap funding available, many projects are built with a variety of funding sources. Recent examples on our campus would be the URC (student referendum & university funds jointly), Roos Field (private donation campaign), the current Plexi-Pave FH floor (private donor) and though it's not a facility, the two Campus Rec shuttle buses to transport our athletic club teams were purchased through S&A fees.

4. How many years of renting a facility for the NCAA tournaments would it take to make this cost effective?

I do think the entire cost of the facility, if it were funded from this source, would not have the expectation of recovering the funds in the near future, but the benefit would come from the facility upgrade and what it would mean to all our student programs. Rental of university facilities is not my area so please understand this is something I cannot answer with any degree of certainty. I would say that the main benefit for this project is more of a wide ranging one to the many programs that could directly benefit and that the revenue recovery is only a part of the bigger picture.

5. This has a substantial benefit for the PEHR department. Are they contributing to the overall cost?

The reason we came to the S&A committee is there is no other hope for funding in the near future from any other source. We realize the implications of funding coming from one source (S&A Fees), but we really have no other options and thought we should explore this one.
As you know better than most, the enrolled students in PEHR classes and intercollegiate athletes that use these facilities are students first and also pay into the S&A system, a gray area for sure, but it is the real reason we come to your committee.

6. How many student participants does Tennis have year to year?

NCAA tennis has 20-30, Club Sport tennis has 40+, tennis classes have 36-54 (winter qtr only, class space is limited due to FH availability), recreational tennis is only a guess as there is little time left on the courts after the above uses so they play mostly on weekends when the FH is sometimes open for play. These numbers are close estimates of the numbers during the winter, but remember that for most of the fall and much of the early spring quarters, the outdoor courts are still not available.

7. I imagine that a more permanent building costs more to construct but would the presumably higher energy costs of a dome make a more permanent building more cost effective in the long run?

I thought about changing the request to a more permanent structure - a steel frame-fabric sided building would be the popular choice as a permanent structure is not financially feasible due to costs - but the costs of the two we looked into were in the $900,000 to $1,000,000 range and probably not an option. If your group was interested in taking on a long term project (financing over a period of years), this could be an option. I just felt you wouldn't want to saddle future committees with debt they had no say in taking on. The other benefit to the steel sided-fabric covered "building" is they have a much lower energy cost annually as they are not blowing air 24-7 and the argument could be made they might be structurally more "permanent", though the new air-supported structures have life expectancies of 15-20 years, making them a much more cost-effective option (again, my opinion).

1. Has the idea of purchasing temporary flooring for the Field House been looked into? Maybe something that could go over the Plexi-Pave in between Tennis tournaments.

In a perfect world that would be a great option. With the lack of personnel available and the number of times the floor would need to be switched out, it would be an impossibility. For example, when the PNQ (Pac. NW VB Qualifier) comes to campus over spring break, they have to take one full day to put temp flooring over the FH floor so they can play VB (and another to take it out), making the FH unusable during that time. Just the number of times it would need to be switched from tennis to track that would be necessary many times each year makes it impractical. Good thought however