

Faculty Staff Gathering Place Task Force

Executive Summary

I. The Charge:

Establish a gathering place for use by faculty and staff that provides dining and meeting options.

II. Approach to Task:

- A. Determine the elements of a faculty/staff gathering place.
 - a. Review UNI history of University luncheon and Royal Oak Room costs and program.
 - b. Determine what other institutions have for programs, services, and costs.
- B. Determine faculty and staff interest in supporting the concept via survey, focus group, and Web feedback.
- C. Prepare cost estimates to reflect campus vision and format of the club.

III. Findings & Recommendations:

A. History

A review of the history of the University Club luncheons, the Royal Oak Room, and other University clubs indicates that this proposal is not likely to be self-supporting financially

- 1. Daily average participation was less than 100 persons.
- 2. To meet annual operating expenses, membership dues, University subsidy, external funding sources, or a combination of these will be required.

B. Key Survey Results

- 1. A total of 26% reported that a university club should be created even if membership fees (15 %) or University subsidy is required (11%).
- 2. A total of 46% reported that a university club should be created only if members do not need to pay a fee to join (21%) or the University does not need to subsidize (25%).
- 3. 24% reported that UNI should not pursue a university club.

C. Campus Responses

(16 persons attended four group sessions and 1 person provided feedback via email to the Web report):

- 1. There was general acceptance that a gathering place would connect the University community, facilitate exchange of ideas, and increase communication.
- 2. The financial viability of this proposal generated concern. Suggestions to create opportunities within existing facilities for more private dining were given.

- D. Cost Estimates
1. A rough estimate based on approximate square footage and food service construction costs to renovate the Continuing Education Services building to a university club is \$645,000. This does not include dollars to create outdoor dining/gathering areas.
 2. Annual operational costs not covered by payment for services are estimated to be approximately \$210,000 for an academic year only operation.
 3. A member dues rate of approximately \$830/year for 255 members would cover the deficit. This could be reduced by revenues from catering, departmental memberships, social events, public access during certain hours, and University subsidy.
- E. Recommendation
1. A University gathering place can play a vital role on campus in providing opportunities for faculty and staff to communicate, collaborate, and build collegiality and community.
 2. Providing a great experience will build support, enthusiasm, and patronage.
 3. The Campus Advisory Group should give strong consideration to supporting this concept.

Members of the Faculty/Staff Gathering Place Task Force

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