

Thursday, Mar. 20, 2014

## Break out the Shovels



Groundbreaking attendees dig in at the ceremonial groundbreaking for the Student Recreation and Wellness Center on Wednesday. The center is slated to be open for the fall 2015 semester. (Ryan Costanzo photo from the Utah Statesman Online)

The Student Life section of *Utah State Today* highlights work written by the talented student journalists at Utah State University. Each week, the editor selects a story that has been published in *The Utah Statesman* or the *Hard News Café* or both for inclusion in *Utah State Today*.

### Break out the Shovels

By [David Berg](#), staff writer, *The Utah Statesman*, Thursday, March 20, 2014

Construction on what will become the Student Recreation and Wellness Center kicked off with a groundbreaking ceremony on Wednesday [March 19, 2014].

“This kicks off the project that has been in the works for five years. It’s finally going to be a reality,” said James Morales, vice president for Student Services.

The SRWC will include new basketball courts, a MAC gym, a weight room, an indoor track and a fitness studio. It will also include offices for Campus Recreation. There is space set aside for a climbing wall, which will be included in the design as more funds open up. Construction begins this April, and it is slated to open for the fall 2015 semester.

The groundbreaking was attended by more than 80 people, both students and dignitaries, including representatives from the architectural firms and construction companies overseeing the project.

Invitations to the groundbreaking were sent to many local politicians, including Logan Mayor Craig Petersen, members of the Utah Legislature and the USU Board of Trustees. The chief student services advisors were also invited.

Morales opened the ceremony with a brief history of the project. He discussed the various steps the project went through to get approval, including how the project was attempted 10 years ago.

USU President Stan Albrecht spoke next. He discussed how this project is unique in conception than any other current project.

“This project is driven by students for students,” Albrecht said. “Important projects like this take time ... take effort.”

Doug Fiefia, the USU Student Association president, spoke next. He discussed how important the SRWC will be in creating a legacy at USU. He said he is excited that his 1-year-old daughter will, as a future USU student, be able to enjoy the legacy that current students established.

“Every day is a great day to be an Aggie, but today this is especially true,” Fiefia said.

After the ceremony’s conclusion, the George Nelson Fieldhouse was opened up for a recreation celebration. Students and visitors could visit the various stations manned by different parts of Campus Recreation. Visitors who visited each station were entered into a raffle to win various recreation-themed prizes.

Some of the most popular stations were the dunk tank sponsored by Aquatics, the raft rope toss sponsored by Outdoor Recreation and the snack table catered by University Catering.

It is intended that the SRWC will join the Taggart Student Center and the Merrill-Cazier Library as important focal points for student life on campus.

“It will be one of those key pieces to continue that vibrancy,” Morales said.

According to Morales, the project is still on budget. However, like any project, small changes to the design and budget will continue as construction occurs.

Plans for the project began in 2009 when Tyler Johnson, the student body president for the 2009-2010 school year, used the project as part of his campaign for election. The student body voted on and approved the construction of the Recreation Center, along with the Aggie Legacy Fields, in the March 2012 election.

This vote included a vote on an increase in student fees. Starting fall 2014, student fees for the project will increase by \$75 a semester to pay for the recreation center.

For those interested in learning more about the project, a link to the project is available on myUSU or at <http://www.usu.edu/camprec/htm/facilities/aggi>  
<http://www.usu.edu/camprec/htm/facilities/aggierec>.

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