Major USL construction, planning projects on Board of Regents' list

Authement predicts Legislative approval of Dupré Library and Lee Hall projects

Brian Warren
Generic Position

Five USL construction and planning projects, including the expansion of Dupré Library, are on the Board of Regents' capital outlay list to be presented to the Legislature next year.

The four other projects include the renovation of Lee Hall, construction of a new physical plant, phase one construction of a new electrical system and a weight room expansion at Cajun Field.

USL President Ray Authement predicted that the Dupré Library and Lee Hall projects certainly will be approved, and he expects to learn the fate of all of the proposals by mid-July 1991.

Regarding the library, Authement said, "We received approximately $800,000 in planning money in this year's budget. That money will allow us to pay an architect to develop a program and construction plans for that addition. Next year we hope to get part or all of the construction money, which will be about $8 million."

This expansion will be toward the back of the edifice. "We will allow the parking to remain at the first level, somewhat like in Wharton Hall," Authement explained.

The library will also receive new materials for its extra space. "One of the reasons why we're building some more space is for shelving," he said. "The university has budgeted $940,000 for the library, and the state has given a supplement of $585,000, and so we will have a large number of books purchased between now and the end of the year."

Lee Hall will be renovated for classroom use for approximately $862,500. It needs tile work as well as air-conditioning and heating work. The building will be used to house departments which are outgrowing current facilities. "It's really a refurbishing of that building for classroom use," noted Authement, "and we have overflow of several departments in the quadrangle."

New physical plant facilities are in the works to replace current archaic buildings. "If you ride to the back of the campus," he said, "you will find that those buildings are old, metal, pre-World War II facilities that we were given after the war as surplus, and they've rusted out." Authement referred to the maintenance facility as "a blight on the campus." The design costs will be $279,540, and the construction and equipment will cost $2.9 million.

A $740,700 electrical system overhaul will also be implemented if the project is approved. Costs incurred will total $1.5 million. According to Authement, "Every winter, when there's a lot of demand for electricity, we experience some cable failures and blowouts, and we need to go in and change some cables and some switch-gear."

Finally, the weight room expansion will be an addition to the back of the current weight training facility at Cajun Field. According to Authement, that undertaking will be funded "primarily from athletic boosters and the athletic self-generated budget monies that they will create from income from tournaments and other activities."