Petition not likely to save McNaspy Stadium

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A petition that received approximately 1,800 students' signatures is unlikely to save McNaspy Stadium, according to Dean of Students Edward Pratt and SGA President Chris Gradney.

Pratt said that he believes the administration will proceed with plans to tear down the stadium. Currently, there is no set date for the demolition, Pratt said. Bids are being taken and once a contractor is selected, a date will be set for McNaspy to be razed.

According to Pratt, the main reason behind the decision to demolish McNaspy is that there is "no use for it anymore."

"The stadium has remained unused by the university for approximately 25 years, he estimated. Because it no longer serves the purpose it was created for it would not be practical, he maintained, for the university to spend money to renovate the structure.

"We've got to do something," he stressed.

Amanda Rivera, a junior in architecture, is one of four students who started the petition. In addition to the student petition, Rivera said there is a faculty petition and an alumni petition, although the two have garnered less support than the student petition. She added that she and her colleagues hope to present the petitions to USL President Ray Authement in the near future. Rivera said she believes McNaspy should be preserved because students continue to use the stadium.

"It would be a waste just to tear it down," she said, "because it's one of the oldest buildings on campus and it can be renovated, just like all of the other ones have been."

Gradney said that SGA is concerned with making students' voices heard, not with taking sides. He commended the efforts of the students who started the petition.

"I think it's great that students are actually standing up for something," he said, "and not letting things just pass by."

However, he added, he recognizes the logic behind the decision to demolish McNaspy and said he supports that decision.

"It's going to be more of an asset, it being torn down than it remaining," Gradney said.

Jean Pierre Monclin, an architecture student and another member of the group that started the petition, said McNaspy should be saved because it is a part of USL's heritage and could easily be renovated.

"The university is trying to expand right now so instead of spending the money and actually build something from scratch," he observed. "Why not use what you already have?"

Pratt said that he sympathizes with those who would like to see the building preserved because he played football there. But he concluded that emotions should not take precedence over what is practical.

There are no immediate plans for the land McNaspy sits on after it is gone. The track in front of the stadium will, however, be left in place. Pratt pointed out that the university is currently carrying out renovations on other campus buildings. The expansion of Dupré Library is one example. As a result of these projects, the university will not have the funds needed to begin immediate construction on the new site.

Gradney also stressed that renovations to the stadium would cost money and that money, he added, would probably come from more student-assessed fees. He dismissed the notion that the land McNaspy currently occupies would be used as a parking lot once the building is gone. If anything, he said, more academic facilities would be built on the site.

Gradney also met with Authement to convey the students' feelings about saving the stadium and according to Gradney, the petition will not have a "major impact" or the fate of McNaspy.

"The students' voices have been heard," Gradney maintained.