BUILDING A BETTER MICHIGAN CAMPAIGN LETTER TO THE REGENTS

WHEREAS, the University of Michigan’s Division of Student Affairs created a “Building a Better Michigan Advisory Group” (BBM) to “mobilize students and give them a chance to have their voices heard regarding the future development of the University’s Unions and Recreation Centers”¹; AND

WHEREAS, the members of BBM have visited numerous peer campuses to better understand the breadth and scope of the recreational services and facilities that are provided; AND

WHEREAS, BBM has drafted a letter to the Regents asking for their support; AND

WHEREAS, a copy of this letter is attached to this sense of the board in appendix 1; AND

WHEREAS, the co-chair of BBM, Louis Mirante, has reached out to the Rackham Student Government to sign this letter on behalf of the graduate student body; AND

WHEREAS, numerous graduate students utilize the University’s Unions and exercise facilities; AND

WHEREAS, many graduate students have expressed their concerns about the services provided at the Central Campus and North Campus Recreation Buildings related to the services provided at their undergraduate institutions; AND

WHEREAS, many graduate students utilize the University’s union buildings and would benefit from any improvements made therein; NOW THEREFORE, ON BEHALF OF THE STUDENT BODY OF THE HORACE H. RACKHAM GRADUATE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND ARTICULATED BY ITS ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES, IT IS THE SENSE OF THE BOARD THAT IN THEIR NAME, THE FOLLOWING BE

¹ http://studentaffairs.umich.edu/buildingabettermichigan
RESOLVED, that the President Benson be authorized to sign the BBM letter to the regents on behalf of the Rackham Student Government and the Rackham Student Body; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, that the RSG Board voices is strong support for the BBM initiative; AND BE IT FINALLY

RESOLVED, that a copy of the BBM letter be emailed to the graduate student body and be posted on the RSG website.

AUTHORS

Phil Saccone  
Treasurer, Graduate Student Body

Kaitlin Flynn  
Vice President, Graduate Student Body

ATTEST

By Signing below, I certify the this resolution was dispatched by the RSG Board under the rules as prescribed in section IX of the bylaws and that the vote count appearing at the top of this resolution is accurate.

Kaitlin Flynn  
Vice President, Rackham Student Government

PRESIDENTIAL ACTION

I, Michael Benson, President of the Rackham Student Body, do hereby approve / veto this resolution on this the _______ day of _____, 2013.

Michael L. Benson  
President, Rackham Graduate Student Body
Dear Regents, President Coleman, and Executive Officers,

Almost 100 years ago, The University of Michigan constructed one of the first student Unions in the country. At about the same time, we founded the first recreational sports department and celebrated that achievement by building the Intramural Sport Building, one of the first of its kind.

Since then, University members have used these buildings to contribute to the progress of the State of Michigan, our country, and our world. To ensure Wolverines make the same positive contributions in the future, we must revisit these buildings and do renovations that should include all six of our unions and recreational buildings.

Unfortunately, all of these buildings are beginning to become obsolete. There is far too little space for student organizations to meet and far less space to store their materials. The recreational buildings are always overcrowded and equipment is often stuffed in random areas, such as unused squash courts. Despite the nature of our buildings, Wolverines accomplish amazing things on a daily basis, but this often despite the quality of our buildings.

We feel that separating these projects would be unfair to many students. Some students improve their social health and their communities in their student organizations. Others improve physical and social health on intramural and club teams. However, the vast majority of Michigan men and women stay healthy by participating in both, a strength that we should be proud of and facilitate.

The health of students is essential to the University's mission of encouraging education. Unhealthy students are more likely to fall behind in class and not participate to their fullest. We encourage you to think of the unions and recreational sports buildings as academic buildings for this reason.

We are ready to work with you and support this challenging project. We know that it may entail a student fee, but we are willing to support such a measure so long as the fee stays below $65 a semester. Our support is also conditional on the University's ability to offer financial aid to those students who would be unable to pay these fees. The University of Michigan is one of the only Universities in the country to not have a student fee for such projects and fees are normally around $350 per year.

We feel that these buildings need to be renovated in order to protect Michigan's rich history and enable the next generation of students. As students did one-hundred years ago, we ask that you think about the next one-hundred years of the Michigan student experience. We hope that these buildings come to the forefront of your mind when you consider how best to ensure the University remains the premier school for academic and student leadership.