

NEWS

Friday, March 26, 2004

The Behrend Beacon

New student offices, Commons renovation slated for summer

by Dan Stasiewski
managing editor

Students looking to play pool or pingpong will have to start searching for somewhere other than the Back Room starting Monday.

The recreational room is scheduled to close in order to prepare for summer renovations. The scheduled improvements will result in an expanded mailroom and seven additional club and organization office spaces.

The Back Room, however, isn't the only part of the Reed Union Building to get a face-lift. The McGarvey Commons is also scheduled to undergo renovations.

All equipment from the Back Room will be put out for open-bid with all funds from the sale going to supply furniture for the new student offices.

Officials said the cost of the summer renovation could reach \$280,000, more than half of which is expected to come out of the Student Activity Fee budget. The college is expected to pick up the rest of the tab, specifically for the mailroom expansion.

Chris Rizzo, director of Student Activities, said he expects the Reed Union Building renovations to "transform student organization life."

According to Rizzo, the design of a new student office loop, with the mailroom and mailboxes as the nucleus, creates "a circulation and a flow" that makes the student organizations more visible.

"The way that the design is set-up, it actually creates sort of a funnel look so as you're walking by you can look into the office space," said Rizzo. "You can see that it is a vibrant active place."

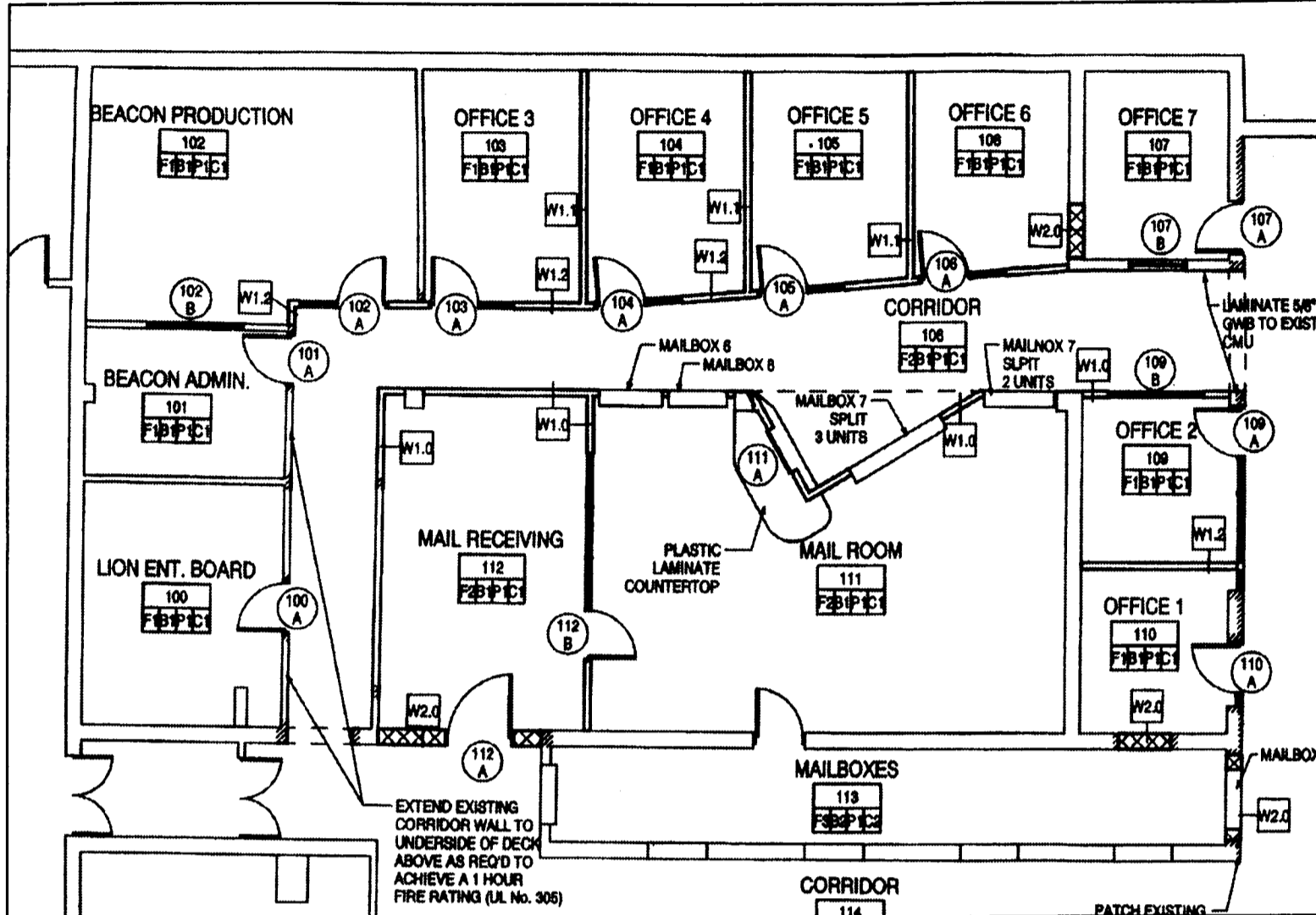
Rizzo is referring to the now nonexistent hallway that will connect the student organization office suite B with the vending and computer area on the other side of the Reed Union Building. The outside wall of the future offices will not be parallel with the building's rear wall, allowing students to see the door and windows of each office without having to be directly in front of them.

Jennifer Sutter, vice president of SGA and the chair of the Office Space Advisory Committee, also made note of the funnel of the new offices, but wanted to make sure clubs were aware of the potential for new offices.

Sutter said the Office Space Advisory Committee, which makes office space allocation recommendations to Rizzo, sent out a questionnaire last year asking clubs that didn't have office space for how they would use it and clubs that did have space how they are using it.

"It's very beneficial not only to have an office, but a computer to use, a telephone line to use," said Sutter.

The questionnaire resulted in only four more office space requests than the number of spaces currently available, fewer than the seven that will be available come next fall. Sutter believes



Over the summer, the back half of Reed Union Building will be renovated to accommodate seven new student offices, as well as a renovation of the mailroom area. Pictured above are the plans for the building upon completion of the project, set for August.

organizations that didn't make a request didn't know about the upcoming renovations.

Despite the additional office spaces, clubs and organizations still have the potential to be turned down for an office space request.

"I think that there are some clubs that can operate completely fine without an office," said Sutter.

Both Rizzo and Sutter still encourage clubs to apply for office space. The Office of Student Activities will be sending each student club and organization an office space application in the next two weeks. Complete applications can be returned to the Office of Student Activities at a date that is still to be determined.

In addition to creating new office space, the McGarvey Commons will also see significant improvements including new carpeting, a permanent stage, retractable curtains and improved acoustics.

Rizzo described the improved Commons as having the look and feel of "a hotel ballroom."

"We'll be able to keep the beauty of the room in terms of the arches," said Rizzo. "But (the

renovation) should resolve all of the sound issues that we've had in the room before."

With major technical and aesthetic improvements, Rizzo expects more student clubs and organizations to utilize the facility. He expects more speakers, concerts and possibly even club conferences.

The Commons has, in the past, also been used for large parties and dances, and Rizzo said he is trying to obtain funding for a portable dance floor.

The summer renovation will be the second major improvement to the Reed Union Building in the past decade. In 1994, the former library area was converted into what is now known as the McGarvey Commons.

The project, which is currently in the pre-bid phase, is expected to begin major construction the week after finals.

Between six and eight potential contractors were touring the Reed Union Building with Lucien Lawson, Physical Plant manager, on Wednesday.

Representatives from Sesler Inc., an Erie-based company, said they had worked with colleges before

and called the May to August construction schedule "ambitious."

Bids are due April 6, and that is when Behrend officials will know exactly how much of the Student Activity Fee and other college funds will be needed to complete the project.

Ken Miller, director of Student Affairs and co-chair of the SAF Committee, said that last year's SAF Committee approved the project funding.

Approximately \$50,000 will be set aside from the SAF budget each year for three years, starting with last year's budget, in order to pay for the improvements to club space.

No SAF money will be used for the mailroom improvements, as Penn State University's SAF Handbook only allows for renovation to student life space.

But Miller makes the necessity to use SAF funds for the project quite clear.

When asked if the project would have happened without tapping into SAF funds, Miller responded with a quick and simple "no."

Students gather insight from alumni

by Sam Cibula
contributing writer

A common saying in the business world is it's not just what you know, it's not just who you know, but it's both. The Career Development Center is giving students the opportunity to learn how to make connections with professional contacts and colleagues through networking and to practice their skills with Penn State alumni.

"Once an individual enters their chosen profession, networking will likely play an important role. In my profession, for example, networking is vital to attracting new clients," said Penn State alumna Melissa Hayes Shirey. "I never realized that networking would be so prevalent in my profession, and I wish that I had taken the opportunity to cultivate my networking skills at an earlier age."

The event will be a two-part series where you are required to go to the first event in order to attend the second event. The first event will be held April 6 in Reed 114 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. The interactive training session will focus on teaching students proper skills needed in order to network. How to enter conversations, how to prepare for a networking event and how to exit conversations will be some of the topic areas covered.

The second session will be held April 13 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Logan House. At this event students can practice what they learned in session one through a mock networking event with Penn State alumni. The session will conclude with an open discussion where alumni can critique student skills and can exchange questions and answers. Last semester's networking event included alumni in banking, law, information technology and manufacturing. These and other industries may be represented at this semester's event.

"Penn State Behrend students, by participating in this practice networking event, will get the opportunity to practice networking so that they will be more comfortable with it in the future," said Shirey.

Participating in these two events will qualify students to attend the annual Alumni Business Reception and Dinner on April 20 at 5:30 p.m. Dr. Robert Gray, assistant professor of engineering, will be speaking at the event on Future Navigation and Wireless Technology.

Students must sign up prior to the events. To sign up or to receive further information please contact the Career Development Center at 898-6164 or stop in their office on the first row of the Reed Union Building.



DOMINO'S PIZZA CAMPUS SPECIAL!

1 LARGE PIZZA W/CHEESE AND 1 TOPPING ONLY \$6.99 OR
GET 2 FOR JUST \$12.99. ADD AN ORDER OF DOMINO'S
DELICIOUS BREADSTICKS FOR ONLY \$0.99*! ADD A 10 PIECE
WINGS OR KICKERS AND A 2-LITER COKE FOR ONLY \$5.99.

*Limit 1 \$0.99 Breadsticks per order.

- Offer valid all week long!
 - You must ask for the Behrend Special when ordering.
 - Domino's Pizza is open for lunch every day at 11 am and is open late everyday.
 - Domino's Pizza guarantees delivery of a hot fresh pizza in almost any weather.
 - Why go out? Call Domino's TODAY!
- OFFER GOOD FOR CARRYOUT OR ON-CAMPUS DELIVERY ONLY.