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Improvement to UC Dining, Access Sought

Students voice concerns to renovation planners who will then develop survey

By Dominic Dames

Plans to redeem the status of the University Center and make it more accommodating to the lifestyles of UH students are under way, Brailsford and Dunlavey Assistant Project Manager Hakim Chambers said.

Facility planners listened to students Monday in the UC San Antonio Room to get an idea of how to meet the needs of the UH community.

"This time we are still asking questions. The next time we're here, we will have some early opinions," Debbi Waters, planner/programmer from Holzman Moss Architecture said. "In May and June, we'll find options and in July we'll present the final presentation."

Chambers and Waters took notes while students expressed concerns.

Waters said she could not comment on the budget of the project but mentioned the group has to figure out whether it is renovating or adding on, which may lead to different costs.

"This building is over 40 years old," Waters said. "There may be a lot of money spent just making this a more contemporary place."

Chambers and Waters said they are developing a survey that will be dispersed to the student body at the end of March in order to get a broader scope of student opinions.

"The survey will allow us to test what we think we heard. We need to test the whole University on a much broader scale and not just the students who showed up at the study," Waters said.

Brailsford and Dunlavey has also done work at Texas A&M University and Baylor University.

"My firm worked on the (Campus Recreation and Wellness) Center, which you have now. We've worked in over 300 colleges across the country," Chambers said.



Media Credit: Mauricio Lazo/The Daily Cougar

(from left) Rob White, a representative of Envision Strategies Food, listens to consumer science graduate student Karl Hearne talk about potential improvements to be made to the University Center along with Hakim Chambers, an assistant project manager with Brailsford and Dunlavey.

President of the Disabled Student's Association and consumer science graduate student Karl Hearne said he hopes the outcome of the survey will lead to making the UC shine again.

"When I first got here I thought this was the coolest place to hang out," Hearne said. "It's great to have student input. I'm hoping with the success of the survey that we can build the best University Center possible."

Better ramps need to be built at the UC as well as the UC Satellite with appropriate signage to help students with disabilities better navigate their way around campus, Hearne said.

"I think this is a great university and it can be an even greater university when it is made more accessible to disabled students," Hearne said.

Business administration freshman Andrew Michael said he wants UH to offer more options to the students living on campus.

"Spring break is coming up next week. I don't have money to go out of town and the cafeteria is going to be closed," Michael said. "You can starve and stay here or you can go somewhere else. Now I have to go back to my parents place and stay there for a week."

Diverse food choices would be a good change to have on campus, social work graduate student Josephine Tittsworth said.

"Some better food establishments would be nice. I can't eat hamburgers (because) I have a heart disease," Tittsworth said.