



Focus Group Addresses Student Concerns

Davies Center main topic discussed

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By speaking with about 40 to 50 UW-Eau Claire students and faculty Wednesday and today, program manager and facility planner for Brailsford & Dunlavey Bart Hall said he hopes to provide university officials a better picture of what students are looking for in campus facilities.

Specifically, the firm, based in Washington, D.C., has been working with the university to explore whether there is a need to expand or improve Davies Center.

Two years ago, a referendum to build a new student center was overwhelmingly voted down by a 4-to-1 ratio.

"This process ... is the step that should have come before the referendum," Hall said.

Hall and his facilities planning firm will take their data and develop a survey to be distributed to all Eau Claire students in the upcoming months.

"We are simply here to collect data and report it back to the university," he said.

The results of the survey will then be forwarded to the Exploratory Committee, chaired by Student Senate Vice President Meredith Marx.

Marx said the committee will distribute the data and make recommendations to the administration and Student Senate.

Hall said he and his firm have worked with over 200 universities and colleges.

Sophomore Jason Johnson said more social room and a less crowded Davies Center would make the building more efficiently used by students.

Johnson also said the prices of the food service, along with the limited and unhealthy choices, were a major part of his decision to move off campus.

The group also addressed the parking situation, pointing out continued problems in the Third Ward as well as near the residence halls.

Despite spending the hour and a half hashing out numerous concerns, most attendees said they were still satisfied with their decision to attend the university, citing relatively low tuition.

"Why did you come to Eau Claire?" junior Brady Zeiefelhofer said. "You're paying for what you get. This is a small-town campus. If I wanted to see concerts, I would have gone to the Twin Cities or Madison."