Kalamazoo College Strategic Plan Priority 2: 
*Create an inclusive, student-focused environment*

Angell Field Renovation and the Student Fitness Center – Q&A

Q: Will the renovation of the Angell Field Complex displace the construction of a new fitness center?

A: The College will renovate Angell Field **and** build a new fitness center. **Both** projects are vital to our second strategic priority: create an inclusive, student-focused environment. This is a “both-and” proposition.

Q: Isn’t it too risky for the College to undertake capital projects of such magnitude given current economic uncertainty?

A: **We can** afford to do this because we cannot afford not to! Both projects will positively affect the recruitment of students as well as student-athletes. Both will improve retention of students. Both will help us reach our goal of growing intramural and club sport participation to 80 percent of our student body. Both projects will help us raise our enrollment to 1,500 students, one of our strategic goals. A total enrollment of that level will create a more vibrant campus environment with sufficient numbers of students to fill leadership positions, productions, and ensembles. And enrollment of 1,500 students also will enhance our ability to field competitive athletic teams.

Q: How will the College pay for these projects?

A: **Through a combination of fundraising and borrowing.** The College is in a sound financial position to do the latter. Careful analysis has been done to ensure the College’s capacity for additional debt. Funds to be borrowed will be through a low interest rate bond issue. We will not raise tuition to fund these projects; nor will we make staffing cuts to fund them.

Q: When will construction begin and end?

A: The Angell Field renovation will require approval by the Board in October. Pending final approval, the college will submit a request to the City for the required permits and zoning variance, culminating in securing the bond issue. The College anticipates receiving the proceeds of the bond issuance by no later than spring 2011, with construction starting soon after. The project is expected to be completed within 13 months, in time for the start of the 2012 school year.

The fitness center, which must be constructed to accommodate advances in fitness and physical education for the next three decades at least, is a far more complex design challenge. The building’s scale and the scarceness of suitable campus locations adds to the challenge—as does the desirability of getting as much capability under one roof in order to
gain efficiencies. The fitness center will house an approximately 10,000 square foot weight and cardio room, dance studio, multipurpose classrooms, and additional gymnasium court space. We’re even hoping for a climbing wall. All of these factors—as well as ensuring that the building fits with our long term plans for the College’s physical plant—make this project much more difficult than the Angell Fields renovation. We hope to have a concept designed for the fitness center by the end of this academic year. The timetable for the fitness center follows that of the Angell Field Complex, but they do not compete against each other. The College will do both!

Q: How long have these projects been under consideration?

A: For a considerable time. The Board of Trustees began discussing various aspects of the athletic program several years ago, following the NCAA Self-Study (Spring 2006) and an external review (Spring 2007) of our athletic programs and facilities conducted by two athletic directors from peer institutions. In the Fall of 2007, athletic department staff began preliminary work with design and construction experts to create a vision for the athletic fields complex. In 2008, the Board of Trustees created a subcommittee to identify issues related to athletics at “K” and to visit other colleges to ascertain their work in this area. The Board took that step because board members recognized athletics as a significant area of student life and involvement. Students were consulted informally early in the planning process. They were formally included into the planning process—as were faculty—in Fall 2009. It’s time to address the quality of our athletic facilities. No major improvements have occurred since the 1988 construction of the Markin Racquet Center, and it’s been much longer than that for the Angell Field Complex.

Q: How many student-athletes does “K” have?

A: One of every four “K” students participates in intercollegiate athletics. Even more play intramural or club sports. Every student is required to complete five physical education classes to graduate. Both of these projects will benefit all of our students and help us reach our strategic goals. Both the renovation of the Angell Field Complex and the construction of a new fitness center are about putting enough of the right students in Kalamazoo College classrooms.

Q: Will the fitness center project include a replacement for our current natatorium?

A: The current natatorium needs infrastructure and architectural upgrades. And the pool itself is obsolete from a competition standpoint, failing to meet several NCAA standards. The size of the pool fails to satisfy the practice and programming needs of our highly competitive intercollegiate swimming teams. Any major investment in the natatorium that retains the current pool configuration would be a waste of College resources. Therefore, the planning now underway includes the construction of a new natatorium as part of the fitness center project. The effort to combine the space required for the various components of the fitness center into an affordable concept and make them fit well into the very few potential building
sites that are available on campus has extended the planning process beyond what was originally anticipated.

Q: Is the College planning to build a natatorium with an Olympic size (50-meter) pool?

A: An aquatic center that includes a 50-meter pool is one of several options under consideration for the fitness center/ natatorium project. It would not only meet all the current needs of the swimming program but also greatly expand recreational opportunities for the College community. Unlike the other options, it presents a number of revenue-producing possibilities in the form of state and national level competitions and enhanced community programs. On the down side, a 50-meter pool will be very costly to build and operate. There will be pressure to maximize revenue to meet the operating costs of the facility and that may compromise its prime purpose of serving the athletic and fitness needs of the College. A considerable amount of the planning has centered on the issue of pool size. In the end, the College will decide on a pool size that it can afford to build and operate AND one that will not, in any way, detract from the other components of the Fitness Center.

Q: Did the planning committees for these projects include students?

A: The Fitness Center Planning Committee met regularly during the Winter and Spring Quarters of the 2009-10 academic year. With the help of a consultant they studied various programming and site location options for the new facility and reported their initial findings to the Board of Trustees in March 2010. The Board requested that more work be done regarding site planning, design options and consideration of the long term needs of such a facility. The committee included faculty (both current and emeriti), staff and two students, Joe Unger ’10 and Phoebe Solomon ’13. The Fields Planning Committee met regularly over the last academic year as well as the start of the 2010-11 year. Student representatives included Chelsea Smith ’11 and Michael McCann ’11, in addition to faculty and staff representatives. The Committee was asked to evaluate and recommend a final concept design, pricing, and public accessibility to the fields.

Q: What measures ensure the projects proceed in a sustainable manner?

A: The new field house that is included in the Angell Field project will be constructed in a manner that will make it LEED certifiable. The College has not decided about incurring the cost of the additional documentation required for official certification. The field house will be the first campus building project required to comply with College’s new energy efficiency standard. This standard was adopted as part of the College’s participation in the Presidents Climate Commitment. Applying the standard to the field house will make the new building the most energy efficient facility on campus, easily surpassing the LEED Silver certified Hicks Student Center.