

**APPROVED**

**JUNE 29, 2022**

Item #G-1  
June 29, 2022

**CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF NON-INSTRUCTIONAL CAPITAL  
PROJECT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023**

**Submitted for:** Approval.

**Summary:** This item recommends approving non-instructional capital projects for the following Public Universities:

**Illinois State University:**

Athletics Practice Facility  
eSports Renovation

**Action Requested:** That the Illinois Board of Higher Education approve the projects listed in this item.



STATE OF ILLINOIS  
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF NON-INSTRUCTIONAL CAPITAL  
PROJECT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023**

The Board of Higher Education Act outlines procedures for annual budget and capital development and approvals.

Each State university must submit its plan for capital improvements of non-instructional facilities to the Board for approval before final recommendations are made if the total cost of the project as approved by the institution's board is in excess of \$2 million. Non-instructional uses are, for example, dormitories, student union buildings, field houses, stadium, other recreational facilities, and parking lots.

The Board is charged with determining whether each project submitted for approval is consistent with the strategic plan for higher education.

This item requests Board approval for Illinois State University's (ISU) Athletics Indoor Practice Facility and renovation to the eSports Facility.

**Athletics Indoor Practice Facility  
Project Scope**

The Athletics Indoor Practice Facility will be an air supported structure and will be situated on the current ISU football practice field north of ISU's Athletic Horton Fieldhouse. The planned project will be 69' high x 393' long x 201' wide, with 78,993 GSF total area. The facility will include a 100-yard practice football field with a single end zone and run off areas. The facility will be finished with artificial turf and retractable/removable netting for dividing field into smaller practice areas for other sports.

**Project Rationale**

As a fully funded National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Division 1 program, the ISU Redbirds compete at a high level in the Missouri Valley Conference. Over 400 student athletes compete in 19 sports. The current Missouri Valley Football Conference landscape consists of 5 of the 11 schools operating with an indoor space of some magnitude. The construction of the Athletics Indoor Practice Facility on our campus will provide our student athletes with the level of physical protection and care expected. This Athletics Indoor Practice Facility is more than a football practice facility. There will be plenty of opportunity for onsite Kinesiology student training and practice opportunities for other ISU athletes. All men's and women's team will have access to use it. Women's soccer will be a major user of indoor space.

The facility will provide necessary athletic activity coverage during inclement weather for football, baseball, softball, and soccer. The addition of this facility will not only provide our student athletes with a first-class practice facility, but it will also help relieve the scheduling



As a program area within Campus Recreation at Illinois State University, Redbird Esports is aligned with Campus Recreation value of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity. The Redbird Esports program aims to enhance the diversity of staff and student populations across the inclusion spectrum through targeted programming and outreach initiatives.

As an internationally recognized brand and esports team, Redbird Esports continues to lead the way in competition and recruitment of underrepresented populations. To date, Redbird Esports has sent 7 students to the professional leagues, three of whom come from underrepresented populations. For Fall 2021-Spring 2022, intentional recruitment efforts led to 33% of Redbird Esports students coming from underrepresented groups in Fall 2021, climbing to 38% for Spring 2022. Redbird Esports is proud to be one of the first varsity programs in the country to have a woman head coach. Additionally, the team had the only female student coach and one of only a handful of female players in the entire United States, while finishing the season ranked #20 in 2021. That commitment to recruitment of coaches and players continues today in both the competitive and club environments.

Redbird Esports has researched, created, and implemented trainings for varsity Esport players at Illinois State University as an orientation expectation. The training detailed issues of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and social justice, and how they show up in esports and gaming. Specific skills for addressing inequality and negative behavior were shared and practiced during competition. Redbird Esports, as a program, is committed to AnyKey.org's "GLHF Pledge". This pledge outlines an individual or program's commitment to upholding good digital citizenship and equips one to speak up against hate, harassment, and abuse. Elements of the pledge show up in program training, discord agreements, and in locations throughout the facility. Additional connections and intentional efforts involve connecting with major organizations surrounding EDIA, such as theGameHers and Queer Women of Esports. Redbird Esports also implemented several ways to help ensure online communities were safe and inclusive. A diverse team of moderators and specific rules (adopted from AnyKey.org) were implemented on our streaming platform, Twitch.tv. Pronouns were made available for those who wished to self-identify in our online community, Discord. Redbird Esports program leadership is recognized nationally for their research and presentations addressing inequity in gaming and diversity/inclusion initiatives.

Campus Recreation is committed to removing barriers to provide easier access to esports and gaming, particularly for students who come from socio-economic diverse backgrounds. Research shows students from underrepresented groups engage in console gaming at a higher rate than PC gaming due to economic barriers. The new facility will be outfitted with the latest generation of consoles in order to recruit more diverse students into the program to get them connected with campus community.

This commitment to eliminate barriers is achieved through facility enhancements including 2 all-gender restrooms, accessible ramps to spaces, and modified doorways with ADA support. Furniture has been purchased that allows for multiple adjustments for abilities and physical attributes, giving each person the opportunity to feel welcome. Bumpers, ball guides, and accessible lanes are a few of the sport additions for accessibility. Access to gaming computers will start with a review of the expectations around gaming and a commitment to creating a supportive gaming environment. Those entering the facility will be trained by student and professional team members that have participated in OUCH! Training, giving them a powerful diversity and inclusion toolkit for addressing bias and stereotypes, which equips our students with the necessary skills to navigate a diverse community of gamers. The facility is open to the ISU community, giving

opportunities for individuals of all ages to experience gaming with a lens of inclusion and connection.

**Project Financing:** Initial project funding from ISU Auxiliary Facility System (AFS) Bond Reserves with plans for new ISU Auxiliary Facility System (AFS) Debt, financed through Tax-Exempt Debt within 1 year of project approval.

**Estimated Project Total:** **\$5,950,000**

**ISU Board of Trustee Approval:** **October 2021**

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff has reviewed the projects presented in this item and found them to be in accordance with the Board's Non-Instructional Capital Project Guidelines, approved by the Illinois Board of Higher Education in August 2002, and administrative rules. The project, with its elements focused on equity, is consistent with the higher education strategic plan and the mission and scope of the institution; provides needed additional, replacement, or more efficiently utilized space; and is economically feasible, as required by administrative rules.

*The Illinois Board of Higher Education hereby approves the Public University Non-Instructional Capital Projects included in this item.*