

## FOLLOW-UP FILE: UIS proposal for 'campus living room' in limbo

University of Illinois Springfield students last spring defeated a proposal to increase student fees to build a student union that would serve as the "campus living room."

That vote leaves the idea in limbo, likely until students choose to bring it up again, UIS officials say.

### The plan

The student-driven proposal would have been funded with an increase in student fees of up to \$200 per semester for full-time students and \$100 per semester for part-timers. The cost of the project was estimated at \$17 million.

The project as proposed included a lounge, a ballroom or "great hall," recreation/entertainment space and a small convenience store. General sketches showed a 46,000-square-foot building on two levels.

Also considered were a "school spirit" store selling UIS apparel and other items, lockers where commuter students could keep their books and materials, space for student organizations, a grill and coffee shop and a game room that might contain billiards tables

and video games.

If students approved the fee increase, the proposal would have gone before the U of I board of trustees for various approvals, including OKs for financing, design and construction.

### The vote

Students voted in late April in conjunction with Student Government Association elections and shot down the plan by a nearly 3-to-1 margin.

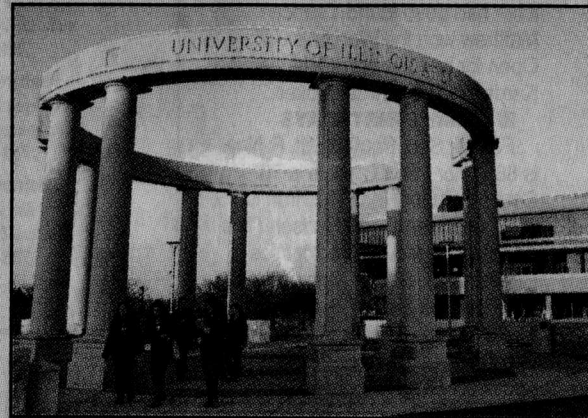
The official tally was 376 votes against the fee increase to pay for a student union and 167 for it, while another 44 abstained.

More than 4,800 students attended UIS last year.

### The future

Any future plans for a union, described by supporters as "the primary intersection and living room of a campus," lie with UIS students.

"It's on hold until we have some students who want to pick it up and push it," said Tim Barnett, UIS vice chancellor for student affairs. "There needs to be a student initiative since they're the ones who'll be paying for it through student fees."



University of Illinois Springfield students last year voted down a proposal to raise student fees to build a student union, leaving the idea of a "campus living room" in limbo

File/The State Journal-Register

The alternative is if a private donor would come forward to fund at least a significant part of the project.

Organizers of last spring's referendum said at the time that a five- or 10-year delay in starting the project would mean students would get less for their money due to rising costs.

"Right now, the referendum is tabled," said Charles Olivier, the Springfield student repre-

sentative to the U of I board of trustees. "That's not to say it couldn't come back in the spring."

But Olivier said the economy and students' financial situations were the main reasons the referendum failed in April.

"And the financial situation hasn't gotten any better since then," he said.

— Chris Dettro

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