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Guns on Campus 10-12-2011

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Guns on Campus

Submitted by Michelle Haberland

10/13/2011

Discussion:

I respectfully request an open discussion about the construction of a shooting range on campus. As faculty, we consider the safety of our students and university community to be of the utmost importance. I ask that the following questions be considered at the next meeting of the Faculty Senate:

1. Was the Faculty Senate or any other body with faculty representation consulted or notified as the Department for Natural Resources grant was developed?
2. What safety measures were included as part of the Department of Natural Resources grant proposal?
3. How will the university avoid confusion among students, faculty and staff about the existing provision in the Student Conduct Code that prohibits weapons on campus?
4. Will members of the public be allowed to bring weapons on to campus in order to use the shooting range?
5. In March of this year during a meeting of the Faculty Senate, President Keel expressed his opposition to ongoing legislation which would allow individuals to carry concealed weapons on campus. He said, "We, of course, are adamantly opposed to that, the opportunity for anyone to carry a gun on campus. Those two things are just about as antithetical as you could possibly get." Has the administration's position on this point changed in the intervening months?
6. Where do the University and BOR stand on the House Bill 55, which has been carried over to the 2012 legislative session?
7. Who will be solicited to donate the additional \$750,000 in funding required beyond the \$3.2 million grant?

Rationale:

The administration and faculty agree that the safety of our university community is paramount. The construction of a shooting range and the resulting increase in the number of weapons brought onto our campus affects us all.

SEC Response:

10/12/2011: SEC action: The SEC decided to include this discussion as an agenda item at the October 24 meeting of the Faculty Senate. Members added an eighth question to the request:

8. What department/unit will bear responsibility for this range? The Senate Moderator will announce a time frame for this discussion at the meeting brought onto our campus affects us all.

Attachment: [Questions re gun safety](#)

Response:

From Teresa Thompson
October 24, 2011

Faculty-Senate Questions Regarding: The Development of a Shooting Sports Education Center.

1. **Question:** Was the Faculty Senate or any other body with faculty representation consulted or notified as the Department for Natural Resources grant was developed?

Response: It is why we are here today, the agreement for the partnership has not been signed as we have continued to do our research and due diligence.

Additional academic activities classes have been requested for many years by faculty and this additional space will allow GSU to offer archery classes.

2. **Question:** What safety measures were included as part of the Department of Natural Resources grant proposal?

Response: First and foremost, ALL CURRENT WEAPON LAWS RELATED TO GUNS ON CAMPUS REMAIN AND APPLY.

The proposed location of the facility of the indoor only firearms center is strategically adjacent to the recreational hub of Georgia Southern and at the extreme edge of the campus, directly off of Veterans Parkway / 301 By Pass. This strategic location allows for enhanced control of operation.

The facility will be appropriately secured by a continuous fenced environment, have an alarm system connected to Georgia Southern Public Safety, and have video surveillance.

Patrons of the Shooting Sports Education Center will be required to go through a gun safety orientation and a background check in order to be authorized to utilize the facility.

All laws referred to in Question 3 below will apply. In addition, patrons interested in utilizing the facility will be required to obtain authorization. Authorization will include the following:

1. An orientation session that will include range rules, basic safety, facility policies, Georgia law, and prior basic training/skill level assessment.

Note: Minors must be accompanied by an adult

2. All clients would have a GCIC (Georgia Crime Information Center) check of their criminal histories.

In addition, all ranges will be actively monitored by a range master to insure safety procedures are followed and an alarm system to include panic alerts would be installed along with security fencing and video cameras.

3. **Question:** How will the university avoid confusion among students, faculty and staff about the existing provision in the Student Conduct Code that prohibits weapons on campus?

Response: We will conduct an information campaign that will include specific information to the existing conduct code, information articles with *The George-Anne*, e-mails from the Dean of Students, and specific signage in the shooting complex.

Current law allows for an exception to the prohibition against guns on a college campus for:

- A. "participants in organized shooting events or firearm training courses"
- B. "persons participating in military training programs conducted by or on behalf of the armed forces of the United States or the Georgia Department of Defense."
- C. There is also an exception for any person "who has been authorized in writing by a duly authorized official of the school to have in such person's possession or use as part of any activity being conducted" on campus.

Note: These exceptions apply to any person, not just someone with a carry license.

Travel to the facility:

- A. If a person falls within one of these exceptions, then transit to and from the locale would be implicit.**
- B. This does not mean, however, that the person could wander around campus for a couple of hours with his/her gun.**

4. **Question:** Will members of the public be allowed to bring weapons on to campus in order to use the shooting range?

Response: Per grant requirements, the Shooting Sports Education Center will be open to the public. ALL CURRENT WEAPON LAWS RELATED TO GUNS ON CAMPUS REMAIN AND APPLY.

All laws referred to in Question 3 above would apply.

This is a partnership with the Department of Natural Resources where the emphasis will be on firearm safety training and youth training for archery. In addition, we will be working with many private foundations to build an Olympic Archery Training Center.

5. **Question:** In March of this year during a meeting of the Faculty Senate, President Keel expressed his opposition to ongoing legislation which would allow individuals to carry concealed weapons on campus. He said, "We, of course, are adamantly opposed to that, the opportunity for anyone to carry a gun on campus. Those two things are just about as antithetical as you could possibly get." Has the administration's position on this point changed in the intervening months?

Response: NO, ALL CURRENT WEAPON LAWS RELATED TO GUNS ON CAMPUS REMAIN AND APPLY.

6. **Question:** Where do the University and BOR stand on the House Bill 55, which has been carried over to the 2012 legislative session?

The BOR and Georgia Southern continue to support current processes banning carrying guns on campus. ALL CURRENT WEAPON LAWS RELATED TO GUNS ON CAMPUS REMAIN AND APPLY.

The indoor shooting range location was carefully chosen as to minimize contact with main campus.

7. **Question:** Who will be solicited to donate the additional \$750,000 in funding required beyond the \$3.2 million grant?

Response: The total project budget is \$4,125,000. It is comprised of a \$3.3 million grant from the DNR, \$500,000 from the Easton Sports Development Foundation, and \$325,000 from Recreation Reserves, dollars that can only be spent on recreational activities.

In addition, the project has a commitment of \$200,000 for operating funds from the Archery Trade Association (ATA) and a request has been submitted to the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) for financial support of the project.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

-Georgia Southern University-
CAMPUS RECREATION AND INTRAMURALS
Shooting Sports Education Center

Campus Recreation and Intramurals – Mission Statement

The Office of Campus Recreation and Intramurals, an integral and active service of the diverse University community, supports and strengthens the mission of Georgia Southern University. Our purpose is to provide growth opportunities and educational experiences, which will enhance the quality of life and maximize the learning potential of each student. Through the provision of high quality, safe and enriching programs and facilities, we strive to promote and develop healthy life-style choices that will contribute positively to the overall wellness of the students, faculty and staff at Georgia Southern.

Campus Recreation and Intramurals – Goals

1. Recruit and educate/train undergraduate & graduate student workers to ensure a safe, student-centered campus resource & programming.
2. Continue to develop and diversify the recreational program & activity offerings to meet the needs of an ever-diversifying student culture.
3. Maintain safe, clean, sustainable, and efficient facilities and services.
4. Promote the positive outcomes from CRI programs, services, and facilities to the University community, state, and region.

Why develop a Shooting Sports Education Center?

- National research clearly supports the notion that engaged students are significantly more likely to be retained, progress, and graduate. We have documented success rates of students that participate in Campus Recreation and Intramurals that are higher than those students that do not participate.
- Archery is one of the most inclusive recreational activities. Traditional physical attributes of size & speed do not apply. It not only increases and diversifies our recreational programming it is a significant enhancement to our recreational offerings for persons with disabilities.
- There is a strong need to provide firearm education and training. We fear what we do not know and we believe that there is an inherent responsibility to provide this education when the opportunity presents itself.
- Our location in southeast Georgia makes Georgia Southern University a perfect location to represent the Shooting Sports. Our ability and infrastructure to provide the highest quality of education and training assures that this facility and its programs will be administered at the highest standard. Shooting Sports are not foreign to this area.
- An estimated 950,000 target shooters live in Georgia. One popular program that is contributing to the number of target shooters in Georgia is the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP).
- This center is a significant opportunity to serve our region as stated by the mission of Georgia Southern University.
- As a public facility, the Shooting Sports Education Center will serve as an asset to the Statesboro community and all of Georgia by being a regional office and training facility for the Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Division (WRD), Shooting Sports and Hunter Education programs.
- Operationally in order to increase recreational offerings we most often need space to provide the activity. Currently, one of the only ways to increase recreational space for students would be to significantly increase student fees. The partnership with the Department of Natural Resources and the Easton Sports Development Foundation allows us to offer this opportunity to students without making them bear the significant portion of the cost. In fact, depending upon the center's success, it offers the opportunity for the recreational offering to be completely funded by public and private funds.

Facility Overview

- **Indoor space will include:**

- 22,000-24,000 square feet
 - Indoor Archery Range
 - Indoor Firing Range
 - Classroom Space
 - Pro Shop (*no guns will be sold*)
 - Operations Support Spaces
- **Outdoor space will include:**
- 20-Lane Olympic Archery Range
 - 20-Lane Beginner Archery Range
 - 10-Lane Broadhead Archery Range
 - 3-D Archery Range
 - Control Center for range supervision and event support space.

Safety Issues

- All current weapon laws related to guns on campus remain and apply.
- The location of the facility is conveniently located adjacent to the recreational hub of Georgia Southern and at the extreme edge of the campus, directly off of Veterans Parkway / 301 By Pass.
- The facility and surrounding area will be appropriately secured by a continuous fenced environment, have an alarm system connected to Georgia Southern Public Safety, and have video surveillance.
- Campus Recreation and Intramurals currently maintains the highest standards of risk management throughout their operation. Campus Recreation and Intramurals currently realizes over 560,000 participations annually in a highly active environment.
- Patrons of the Shooting Sports Education Center will be required to go through a gun safety orientation and a background check in order to be authorized to utilize the facility.

NSSF Offers Colleges \$300,000 in Grants for Shooting Programs

NEWTOWN, Conn. -- In just two years, the Collegiate Shooting Sports Initiative (CSSI) developed by the National Shooting Sports Foundation has awarded more than \$300,000 to 40 colleges to help establish, expand and sustain shooting clubs and teams. NSSF wants to add to that support. This school year

NSSF will make a total of \$300,000 in funding available to colleges. Grant applications are available at www.nssf.org/CSSI/grants.

"We're seeing that college students are eager to participate in the shooting sports if given the opportunity," said Zach Snow, NSSF manager of shooting promotions. "NSSF grants are stimulating interest in collegiate target shooting and firearms safety programs across the country."

Schools that have received CSSI grants include Harvard, Yale, Clemson, Colorado State, University of Arkansas-Fort Smith, Fort Hayes State, Stetson College, Jacksonville University and the University of Vermont.

CSSI grant-supported programs have helped double participation at the ACUI Intercollegiate Clay Target Championship over the last three years. The 2011 championships featured 439 students representing 50 schools.

These are avid competitive target shooters. The majority of participants shoot three or more events, with 88 percent taking aim in trapshooting, the tournament's top event. Participation in sporting clays, another shotgun clay target sport, rose by 42 percent over last year. Snow reports that the ACUI office receives an average of ten inquiries per month from parents, students and coaches asking how to start a college team and get involved with the ACUI tournament.

While competition attracts one type of student, recreational target shooting draws students who want an introduction to the shooting sports and firearms safety. NSSF grants are helping to establish these campus-organized clubs. Such widespread interest prompted NSSF to develop its "[How to Start a Club](#)" resource guide. The document is filled with helpful advice on starting both competitive teams and recreational shooting clubs, and includes samples of membership forms and club bylaws.

NSSF's Collegiate Shooting Sports Initiative is closely allied with the Scholastic Clay Target Program that was founded by NSSF and is now administered by the Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation. SCTP is a nationwide program for youth target shooters that provides competition, championships and scholarship opportunities. SCTP, a feeder program for many college shooting teams, recently added a collegiate division.

"Students coming out of SCTP and other youth programs want to continue participating when they get to college and also share these lifelong sports with their new friends," said Snow.

Anyone interested in starting or strengthening a college shotgun, rifle or pistol team or club can find resources and grant opportunities at www.nssf.org/college.

Senate Response: 10/24/2011:

Discussion of Guns on Campus (Michelle Haberland, CLASS): Krug noted that as submitted by Haberland, this had seven questions, to which the Senate Executive Committee added an eighth. What department/unit will bear responsibility for this range? Vice President Thompson answered questions one through seven, provided additional information about Campus Recreation and Intramurals Shooting Sports Education Center, and provided information about the National Shooting Sports Foundation's offering colleges \$300,000 in grants to shooting programs. Krug limited discussion to 20 minutes and would recognize Senators first, then participants from the Gallery.

Greg Brock (COBA) noted that VP Thompson's reply said in part, "There is a strong need to provide firearm education and training. We fear what we do not know and we believe that there is an inherent responsibility to provide this education when the opportunity presents itself." The American Academy of Pediatrics website says, "The

absence of guns from children's homes and communities is the most reliable and effective measure to prevent firearm related injuries in children in adolescence." He asked if we shouldn't be promoting the absence of guns as the Academy says because they seem to contradict some elements of VP Thompson's reply.

Lockwood (COBA) agreed with the Academy of Pediatrics, but felt that was an ideal, that there are guns in the home, and she would like to see people who have been schooled on when and how to use a gun, how to store a gun, how to keep guns away from children, and more particularly when they are legally privileged to use that gun. And if this is what this particular facility does then she will support it.

Nevertheless, Brock (COBA) urged that we check this out with data.

Cyr (CLASS) noted that because of the potential for NCAA Shooting Sports, he was not in principle opposed to the gun range and archery range, but wished it were at the golf course so that it would be farther away from the main campus and he would be less likely to get hit by a stray. But if it is going to be in the elbow of 301 and the Bypass so that classes can more reasonably get to it, he had a number of suggestions for security that he had already given to Teresa Thompson. He felt that the way the proposal is set up would allow all and sundry very easily to be walking across campus with arms and with the Georgia Southern police unable to identify who is and who is not excepted to do that. He read into the record four suggestions (go to the link above). He was further concerned that as currently proposed the ranged could well serve as the wedge to open up the whole campus to gun carrying all the time, and felt we had to make absolutely sure that the guns aren't anywhere but right there and secured.

VP Thompson noted that Cyr's proposals were already in the process and by state law everything he proposed has to occur. Students, if they do bring guns, have to be checked there at the range and cannot carry guns across campus. We do not know now if a person has a gun on campus unless we do a body check. We will make it very clear with all the rules that all state laws for guns on campus apply. One of the reasons that we strategically placed it on that elbow was so we could have greater control:

- it will be totally fenced in
- there also will be video
- people will have to do background checks, but
- students will not be allowed to have guns on campus. That is the only facility that they will be allowed. At any point if they are caught with guns, they will be expelled. We will make sure that that information is put out to everyone on campus and clearly understood. We have done a large amount of research. We've check with other institutions across the United States and there has been no reported incidence of increase in guns on campus with all of these shooting facilities.

Schille (CLASS) directed attention to VP Thompson's reply, page 1 of 7, under question 1, paragraph 2: "Additional academic activities classes have been requested for many years by faculty and this additional space will allow GSU to offer archery

classes.” Also on page 3 of 7, she pointed out the mission statement of Campus Recreation and Intramurals, and on page 4 of 7, at the top, an attempt to link Academic Success and apparently Recreation and Intramurals, which she called vague at best. She suggested that if faculty have been asking for space devoted to academics, they didn’t mean a shooting range or an archery range, and this doesn’t satisfy faculty desires nor does it satisfy the University primary mission which is to educate students.

VP Thompson noted the archery classes have been requested for many years from the Activities classes, and we did not have the room we’ve had to take the soccer fields away so that we could add the archery fields. We have had students approach us and they have created an archery club through Intramurals. Faculty are asking for additional activity classes. Activity classes take a lot of space and archery is a growing sport across Georgia and across the country. Whether they offer shooting classes would totally be up to the faculty, but current emphasis is on archery. We now have the opportunity without using any university dollars to be able to have a very elite shooting type of sport facility for archery, and also indoor shooting.

Krug (CLASS) asked if Thompson was referring to faculty members in the Department of Health and Kinesiology when she mentioned faculty members. VP Thompson did not answer but added that we offer over 40 classes right now in the RAC and that is at capacity.

Haberland (CLASS) had concerns regarding the process. First was rumor over this summer, then an AAUP member happened to come across the Augusta Chronicle’s August 20 article which discussed that Georgia Southern was planning this gun range and that one week prior the Board of Regents had authorized the school to move forward with the project. And so she was concerned that this hadn’t been discussed and considered in a thoughtful way up until this October 24th Senate meeting, and that was a long time for no faculty input and no SGA input to have been solicited.

VP Thompson said we could not move forward unless we had Board of Regents approval because they are the only ones that can authorize us to have a designated area that would have some type of shooting facility. SGA were approached last year re: the lack of recreational facilities for the increased enrollment. We have not signed the grant, however, though we have had the proposal from DNR and they would love for us to sign the grant, but until we could do all of our due diligence then we were not going to do that, and part of that was having this discussion with the Faculty Senate.

Alton Standifer (SGA) confirmed having those conversations and added that one of the reasons that it was not announced previously was that they did not want to tell students that we had this opportunity to bring something and then it get to Board of Regents level and not be approved.

Ed Mondor (COST) noted that it said on page 3 of 7, “\$325,000 from Recreation Reserves.” Were the students asked in a very systematic fashion, such as taking some sort of vote, if they are in favor of their money supporting a shooting range on campus?

Standifer (SGA) noted the SGA commonly preaches to the students that the monies from recreation activity reserves left over at the end of the year are then to be used for additional recreation, and the Recreation Activity Center is busting at the seams, so we needed additional spaces, and that's where we were able to move forward with the multipurpose facilities that will be at the golf course, and this opportunity. Also, this will free up some of the fields that are currently being used for archery. Last spring the students had an archery event that had around 300 students there, so a decent number of students are interested.

Mondor (COST) thought there is a big difference between something like a soccer field or a climbing wall versus a shooting range where people are learning how to kill something more efficiently. He wondered whether students would support that or not, and would like to see something formal to see if students really would be in favor of supporting something like a shooting range.

Standifer (SGA) offered to forward to Krug the minutes from a previous SGA meeting where they had a vote of the student representatives on that issue.

Costomiris (CLASS) remained perplexed at how uninformed the faculty has been about this. We got it through the Augusta paper, nothing locally, nothing from the administration here, that this is coming, yet this is something that is going to impact all of us. He was adamantly opposed to having any weaponry on campus, especially firearms. He objected strongly to faculty being kept in the dark. He did not see any openness in this process until it's so far along that possibly it can't be stopped. And he would like to see it stopped.

Krug (CLASS) called for gallery input, but received none. A motion to extend discussion for five more minutes was Approved.

Cyr (CLASS) noted that he and other AAUP members had discussed the private funding of the range, that Easton has been involved in Olympic archery and sports archery for a long time, but the National Sports Shooting Foundation is the number one trade organization for gun manufacturers, and basically they oppose anything that might restrict anybody's right to carry or use any kind of firearms anywhere. He would be very leary of NSSF being involved in this.

Bruce McLean (COST) wanted clarification on how the RAC has been maxed out.

Gene Sherry (Campus Recreation and Intramurals) responded that currently there are 64 academic activity classes per semester and they are allocated time between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Additional spaces that are available are outdoor fields, and they certainly are not in use 24/7 so it may be somewhat figurative to say maxed out, but our participation rates and the hourly usage of spaces within the RAC 8-5 are. We would begin to displace the general student recreation which the facility was designed for.

Haberland (CLASS) followed up on Cyr's assessment of the NSSF by noting that the NSSF has recently taken the ATF, the federal law enforcement agency that oversees the sale of guns in our country, to court because the ATF is now requiring in certain parts of the country that when you sell multiple semi-automatic weapons there be a report associated with that. The NSSF says that is not a good idea. She then noted that the news report suggests that the range will be open to the public, and so we will be encouraging members of the public to bring their guns from home to our campus.

VP Thompson said the grant is a partnership with the Department of Natural Resources, which does gun education, and they were looking for a partner for South Georgia. Regardless of whether this is put on our campus at the wedge where we have control, the DNR will have one near our campus because they want the location of students because of the National Archery Program. Here we have an opportunity to partner with DNR and we have greater access and control over this than if they find a piece of property right next to us and build the project. They are looking for a place in South Georgia because there are so many hunters, and they want the partnership with a university.

Krug (CLASS) noted that the time extension for discussion had run out. Another motion to extend discussion was defeated, so Krug closed discussion. She noted this did not preclude further requests of motions or discussions at a later meeting.