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YSU NEWS

YSU News

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Kresge awards \$600K challenge grant to YSU

The Kresge Foundation, an independent, private foundation that provides grants to nonprofit institutions worldwide, has awarded a \$600,000 challenge grant to Youngstown State University's campaign for a \$12 million student recreation and wellness center.

The campaign is nearing the \$10.2 million mark, leaving \$1.8 million to be raised. If YSU raises \$1.2 million more, Kresge has agreed to provide \$600,000 to put the campaign over the \$12 million goal. YSU plans to meet the Kresge challenge by June 30, 2004, with support from alumni, friends, students, businesses and organizations. "This grant will help give us the push needed to put the fundraising campaign for the new rec center over the top," YSU President David C. Sweet said.

"But, most importantly, this grant represents the endorsement of a respected, world renowned foundation for the university. It's a mark of support that is sought by thousands of universities and colleges across the nation, yet received by few. It puts YSU in some very select company."

The Kresge Foundation's board voted last week to approve YSU's grant request, and the university was notified this week. This is the first Kresge award in the history of the university. YSU is the first Ohio public university in three years to receive a Kresge award.

"Kresge endorses not only the fundraising campaign to which their gift is designated, but through intense review of the organization and the project, Kresge endorses the institution itself," said Paul McFadden, YSU chief development officer.

"YSU's original application was more than 80 pages and reported on every facet and constituency of the university."

"Kresge is not interested in grant-making only, but in assisting organizations to increase their development capacity by acquiring new donors motivated by the challenge and encouraging current donors to increase their levels of support," McFadden said.

Competition for the grants is fierce. In 2002, for instance, the foundation received 565 applications and issued 158 grants in 33 states, the District of Columbia, Canada and England. Of those, 27 were given to educational institutions, according to the foundation's annual report. In 2003, the Kresge Foundation awarded 138 grants totaling \$104.64 million.

Sebastian Kresge founded the S.S. Kresge Co. in 1899 and started the foundation 25 years later from his personal funds. Since then, the foundation has awarded nearly 8,100 grants totaling \$1.8 billion to nonprofit organizations involved in education, health care, human services, arts and humanities, and science, nature and environment. It is not connected to any other organization or corporation.

The 65,000-square-foot recreation and wellness center will be the first building on the YSU campus constructed entirely with private funds since Ward Beecher Science Hall in 1967.

YSU will be the only public university in Ohio with a rec center built entirely with private funds.

The center will feature a fitness center, climbing wall, weight room, jogging track, racquetball courts and a spiritual meditation room. It will be attached to the west end of YSU's Kilcawley Center.

Groundbreaking is expected in the spring, and the facility should be open in fall 2005.

The John S. and Doris M. Andrews Trust, named after the late financier and his wife, has pledged \$2 million to the project. Other major contributions include \$1.5 million from John and Denise York, \$1 million from the Ward and Florence Simon Beecher Foundation, \$750,000 from Anthony and Mary Lariccia and \$500,000 from D.D. and Velma Davis.

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