

Sarratt renovations target student input

EMILY TORRES
STAFF REPORTER

A student planning committee, composed of four student representatives and various administration and faculty members, has identified the core goals for the renovation of Sarratt Student Center.

The committee responsible for organizing the renovations aims to address circulation and way-finding issues, address lunchtime seating issues and additional dining options, create space for inviting events. The committee also plans to explore providing office space for the Office of Active Citizenship and Service and Leadership Develop and Intercultural Affairs, review current underutilized student organization space, create efficient storage space for student organizations, and create a vibrant student center filled with light and energy.

"This is a huge opportunity for the university to continue to provide a state-of-the-art facility that caters to needs. We're currently trying to narrow down opinions," said Jack Davis, director of student centers.

The closing of the bookstore in Sarratt on Oct. 30 allows the student center to fluctuate in response to student needs.

"We want to open everything up and create one congruent facility," Davis said. "We want to continue to create a more vibrant student center that students will use twenty four hours a day for various needs."

A planning committee was created to attain these goals laid out for the Sarratt Student Center. Four student representatives — Maryclaire Maynard, Trevor Geller, Matthew Taylor and Whitney O'Connor — represent various prominent student organizations and interests in this process. Faculty members, administrators and architects are also a part of the planning committee.

Various student surveys were taken on the Sarratt Promenade and at the Commons Center over the past two weeks. The survey results will be made public after being compiled. 15 focus groups were also conducted, in which students conversed about Sarratt's future.

"We want to get students involved in conversations about making decisions and about options. We want to know why groups would choose one option over another," Davis said.

Students will be engaged throughout the entire process of renovation in phases, including preliminary design to furniture detail.

"Students are going to be the primary users of the space. Getting feedback from students allows the committee to see needs of all students in the event that there's a need no one had previously thought about. The perceived needs of students may be different than actual needs, and so this will help us see what is most important," said Matthew Taylor, student representative for the Office of Active Citizenship and Service.

Currently, there is no concrete design or timetable for completion. The committee aims to begin an initial project in spring 2012 to finish in August 2012. However, there is not a timeline because student response is still being gathered and the feasibility study is still ongoing.

"I hope the renovation will further exemplify 'Student Center' in Sarratt Student Center," Taylor said. "It will be a central space on campus that allows students greater flexibility and choice in where they eat, where they study, and where they relax."

The renovations are still in their preliminary stages, and students are still able to fill out the suggestion box on Sarratt's website so their voice can be heard. ★

Environmentalism Bill McKibben launches speaker series

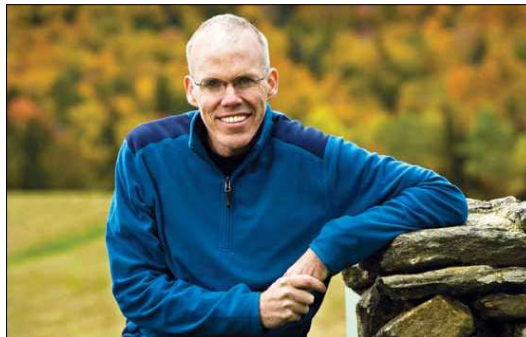


PHOTO BY NANCIE BATTAGLIA

LAUREN KOENIG
STAFF REPORTER

Bill McKibben, the internationally renowned environmentalist, author and journalist, will be speaking on campus Thursday as the first in a series of speakers invited to Vanderbilt by the American Studies Sustainability Project.

He will be presenting a lecture titled, "Global and Local: Reports from the Fight for a Working Planet" at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 22 in Ingram Hall at the Blair School of Music.

Derrick Spires, coordinator of the American Studies Sustainability Project, said, "We chose McKibben because he has been, for over 20 years, one of the most outspoken and crutite advocates of sustain-

ability in the world."

McKibben is the author of "The End of Nature," one of the first books on climate change for a general audience. He also founded 350.org, an activist group that seeks to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and solve the issues of global warming.

The presentation is timely in light of this Saturday's Moving Planet, an international call for action organized by 350.org in which people will be encouraged to ride bikes and use other forms of transportation that do not require fossil fuels.

"We at Vanderbilt have an opportunity to help kickoff a global weekend of sustainability activities," said Spires.

Plans for Moving Planet at Vanderbilt and in Nashville were organized

by SPEAR in cooperation with 350.org. The event will begin Saturday at 11 a.m. on Alumni Lawn and then travel to other locations around the city.

SPEAR co-presidents sophomore Katie Ullmann and junior Skyler Hutto were enthusiastic about McKibben's visit to campus.

"We encourage everyone to go and listen," said Hutto. "He's an amazing and convincing orator with an urgent message."

Ullmann, who spent the summer in the Pacific Islands volunteering with 350.org, also agreed:

"It's really incredible how McKibben's message has reached and inspired so many people around the world."

Both the lecture and Moving Planet are free and open to the public. ★

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