

# Another Darton Building Dream Comes Alive

Olivia Taft

When construction on Darton College's expansive new addition to the student center commences in January of 2009, students may view it as another building project that has been long in coming. Yet, Dr. Gary Barnette, Darton's Vice President of Student Affairs and the brains behind the project, sees it as more than an "indoor funhouse."

To Dr. Barnette, this is a dream come true: "My dream has always been to have an area for student activities in which students can feel that they are in the middle of a bigger picture. Any chief of student affairs' dream is to create a place like this."

According to drawings of the floor plan, students will literally be able to see everything that is happening from the common area that will be in the center of the first floor. Everywhere a student turns in the new addition to the student center, there will be some activity to engage them.

Near the front of the new building will be the indoor climbing wall and the indoor bowling alleys. A common area with a computer station will be in the middle of the first floor, and behind the common area will be four indoor racquetball courts separated from the common area by floor-to-ceiling glass panels. The second floor will include a kitchen; dining area; large, multipurpose room for indoor sports; and a common area that will overlook the climbing wall. This exciting new 40,000 square foot addition still exists only on paper as of yet, but when construction does begin, it will encompass most of the student and faculty parking area that is now in front of the student center. However, Dr. Barnette said that Darton will ensure that construction does not obstruct traffic too much. For student affairs, the only obstruction left to this building project is the \$1 million cost.

That cost has already been transferred to the student body. At the beginning of this current semester, Darton's student activity fee was increased by \$100. According to Dr. Barnette, the decision was not arbitrary. The student government voted for it, and Darton's clubs and athletic department were

consulted as well.

Dr. Barnette believes the benefits that students will gain from this building will be worth the price, for he predicts the new student center will be the most popular place for students to hang out on campus, even on weekends, because of its safe, clean environment. The new addition to the student center is scheduled to be completed by Spring 2010.

