

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY  
Albany, New York 12203

DATE: 25 November, 1968

FROM: Walter M. Tisdale

TO: President Evan R. Collins

SUBJECT: Campus Progress Report - Performing Arts Center B  
No. 135

Sometime ago, the Drama and Music staffs made commitments for events which would have to be conducted in the new Performing Arts Center (PAC). These commitments were predicated on information then available during the summer of 1968. At that time, the forecast for the completion of the Center was December 1968. This constituted the turnover of the raw building, after which four to six weeks would be needed to furnish and equip the building for operations. In this light, commitments involving use of the building in April and May did not seem unreasonable. However, all were aware that takeover of the building involved no guarantees and we were aware that last minute difficulties, work stoppages, labor disputes, etc. could place even these dates in jeopardy. Owing to these risks, I continually emphasized the need to be flexible, resourceful, and to be prepared to adapt any commitments to any disappointments which might lie ahead.

Either I was not convincing enough, or the natural enthusiasm of the Theatre and Music staffs overrode my caution, for it now seems that an all-out effort, involving great numbers of performances of a wide variety, is proposed to be undertaken. I became aware of this only last week when I saw, for the first time, the tremendous undertakings which are proposed for April, 1969. Many of these events involve visiting groups from out of town colleges, such as Potsdam, Nassau, Fredonia and others. Every area in the PAC is slated for an activity, and additional activities are extended into the Art Gallery and the Campus Center.

Meanwhile, I was in receipt of fragmentary information from various sources which indicated that the proposed date of December turnover was clearly impossible, and which indicated a delay of some duration would be unavoidable. Noting the collision course which seemed to be impending, I asked for a special conference with the Construction Fund, the architect and the contractor, to secure their latest forecast, to examine all known areas of delay, and to attempt to accelerate wherever possible. As a last resort, I felt that it might be necessary, should the forecast be sufficiently disappointing, to advise the Performing Arts to make arrangements for activities to be conducted elsewhere. The meeting was held on Wednesday, 20 November, in the architect's field office. Following are the results of that meeting:

1. Classrooms, Seminar Rooms, Small Rehearsal Rooms, etc., including Offices - These will be the first to be ready. The first coat of paint has been completed generally, and most lights have been installed. There remains to be done final painting and electrical switches. Indications are that these may be ready in late December.

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2. Choral and Rehearsal Rooms - Again, practically completed, requiring only final painting and electrical switches. Could be ready in January, 1969.
3. Arena Theatre - Likely will be the third category finished. Currently needs cushions on seats, final painting and electrical switches; could be ready toward the end of January, 1969.
4. Lab. Theatres -
  - a. Theatre No. 2 - Essentially finished now except for painting and switches. This theatre will not require carpeting or fixed seating; requires only other minor completion items; could be ready by the end of January.
  - b. Theatre No. 1. - About the same state of completion as No. 2 except that it does require carpeting and fixed seating. This will delay the readying of this area, making it contingent upon the carpeting and seating. Here, the carpeting will be the delaying element for two reasons -

Bids were opened on 8 November, but no suppliers bid; rebidding will be necessary. This is now under way, but best estimates show that this carpet and seating cannot be installed in time to render this region operational for the April event. In all other respects, however, both Lab. Theatres could be turned over to us in early February, 1969.
5. Main Theatre - Required to be done in this area is ceiling, painting, erection of stage decorations, including curtain, etc., lighting fixtures, meshed ceiling, dimmer equipment, etc. It is unlikely that these can be completed prior to early March, after which we must install carpet and fixed seating. The likelihood is that the receipt of the carpet and later, the seating, will just about synchronize with the time when we get this region. It is quite certain that dimmer equipment and sound equipment cannot possibly be installed in the time allowed, and should the area be ready in all other respects, these features would have to be improvised. All in all, the prospects for the Main Theatre are fraught with so many contingencies that it would be extremely unwise to bank on holding a production here in April, even with improvisations.
6. Recital Hall - In all probability, this will be the very last region to be readied and turned over to the University. Problems remaining here are the plaster ceiling, the mesh ceiling under it, and lighting. The contractor feels that it may be April before this region can be turned

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6. (continued)

over to the University, allowing no time to carpet, install seats, etc., to prepare the region for the April events. Thus, it is certain that this region must be excluded from planned activities for April.

Furnishing and Equipment - Reviews were also brought up to date last week on the question of status of delivery of all equipment, apparatus, furniture, decorations, etc., which we have ordered and which will be installed in PAC. All elements here, including the carpet and seats, indicate that they probably will not introduce additional delays over and above those inherent in the construction turnover. However, time is required to install this equipment; the installation of the portable equipment is not a serious factor. However, carpet, draperies and permanent seating do constitute factors which involve promised performance on the part of three different types of suppliers. However, every effort is being made to synchronize the installation and arrival of all this equipment immediately after turnover of an area, or in some cases, before the area has officially been turned over to us. Agreements have been reached with the contractor to permit us to install carpet and seats as soon as this will not interfere with the completion of his work. This should give us a valuable head start for this phase of the work. Difficulties in placement of the sound system for the building already indicate that if the building is used in April or May, sound will have to be improvised.

In summary, it can now be clearly seen that the first areas to be made operational will be the Choral Rehearsal Room, the Band Rehearsal Room, Lab. Theatre No. 2, Arena Theatre, including of course practically all of the offices, seminar rooms, classrooms, and instrumental rehearsal rooms. Last to be finished and clearly in the area of doubt, are Lab. Theatre No. 1, Main Theatre and Recital Hall, in that order. It would seem that it would be most imprudent to plan on using any of these areas for productions in April or May, unless alternate plans are set in advance to switch to some other area in case of disappointment.

In closing, I put the question of postponement or transfer to other locations of these activities to the contractor, architect and the Construction Fund. They unanimously felt that we should continue with our plans, but emphasized the necessity to be flexible and to be prepared to conduct activities in other areas if need be. It would also seem most prudent if the April events were to be shifted to May and combined with those already scheduled for May. This would allow us an extremely valuable month as a safety factor and would give us further assurances that plans could go forward as scheduled.

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