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PRESS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA FACULTY ASSOCIATION NEWS UPDATE

**INVESTIGATIVE REPORT FINDS HUGE COST OVER-RUNS
AT SONOMA STATE MUSIC CENTER ARE PUTTING PRESSURE
ON TEACHING; HAS FACULTY FUMING**

The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported July 10 on Sonoma State campus president Ruben Armiñana's dream-project to build a world-class music center that is so deep in the red, faculty argue it is undermining their ability to provide needed classes and facilities for students.

It was to cost \$22 million, is now tagged at \$100 million, and the search for money continues.

Meantime, students need housing and classes, the faculty need more colleagues to teach the growing numbers of students. The faculty are furious; demands are cropping up for Armiñana to resign.

The Green Music Center is just one of many development projects underway at the CSU's 23 campuses.

For more information, contact CFA Sonoma State chapter president Andy Merrifield at 707-664-3946 or CFA Communication Director Alice Sunshine at 510-384-1967.

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<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/07/10/BAGPTQTOJS1.DTL>

**SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY Costly musical dream
Faculty angry with president over music center -- price has spiraled to \$100 million**

Tanya Schevitz, Chronicle Staff Writer
Tuesday, July 10, 2007

Sonoma State University's longtime president is under attack by faculty members for his seemingly single-minded quest to build a world-class music center, a dream critics say is siphoning money and staff time away from the campus' day-to-day academic needs.

The Green Music Center at Sonoma State was first proposed as a small choral hall to serve students. But after campus President Ruben Armiñana visited the famed Tanglewood concert hall in Massachusetts in 1996, he was inspired to think big for his small campus in Rohnert Park.

Now, a decade later, the initial \$22 million price tag has ballooned to an estimated \$100 million and the 105,436-square-foot building is barely a quarter built. With fundraising for the project falling behind the growing need, the university is short of money to even pay for things like the 1,400 concert hall seats and bathroom fixtures. But Armiñana has

decided to go ahead with constructing the center while he searches for money to finish the buildings.

The long-range plans for the project include three components -- the concert hall, a hospitality center with meeting rooms and a restaurant, and a music education building that will house the arts programs and accommodate community groups.

So far about \$43 million has been raised through private donations. Another \$18.1 million has come from state construction bonds and \$25 million from the state capital program for the music faculty offices and instructional equipment in the academic building. The campus will use taxpayer funds to cover the approximately \$934,054 it will cost each year to operate the center.

The project has stirred up opposition and resentment among many of the campus's 450 professors and lecturers, who think Armiñana's priorities are not in line with the university's academic mission. They recently overwhelmingly passed a resolution of no confidence in Armiñana.

"Things have gotten worse in the classroom. The demand by students for access to professors and classes has increased, and we don't get much money to do things to build our careers," said associate political science Professor David McCuan, who was a student at Sonoma State and has been teaching at the campus for four years.

Art history Professor Susan Moulton said classroom equipment has deteriorated so badly that she had to use duct tape to repair desks. And sociology Professor Noel Byrne said he had to buy his own copy machine to make handouts for students.

Other critics note that Sonoma State's enrollment has grown by 2,000 students over the past 10 years and now totals 7,585. During the same period, the faculty has not grown to match the student body increase, they say, and academic programs have been lost. Some student services have been cut and others are stretched thin.

And staff time and resources that critics believe should go toward improving academics at the school, which touts itself as offering a small, liberal arts experience, are being used on the music center, Moulton said.

University managers have worked the equivalent of \$2 million in hours on the Green Music Center, according to Susan Kashack, a campus spokeswoman.

"We were concerned that this realignment of money to nonacademic purposes was compromising what we are able to do," Moulton said.

She and other critics believe campus administrators have used a financial shell game to mask some center funding that could be used for academic purposes.

Armiñana was traveling Monday and was not available for comment.

But university officials say the faculty critics are confusing concerns about the Green Center with the larger problem of the state underfunding higher education.

The music center "is just a temporary icon for what mistakenly appears to some faculty as a misdirection of funding," said Kashack. "The reality is that the funding for the center could not be used for instructional or other initiatives."

The center, conceived as a West Coast version of the Boston Symphony Orchestra's summer home, Seiji Ozawa Hall at Tanglewood in Lenox, Mass., will be the home of the Santa Rosa Symphony on 50 acres on the northeastern side of the campus.

But another \$12 million to \$22 million is needed for such basics as the concert hall seats for the planned opening late next year. That amount doesn't include the cost of the outside greens, a signature feature of the project, which will allow the rear wall of the hall to be opened to lawns accommodating up to 10,000 additional concert-goers.

Donors, including North Bay telecommunications entrepreneur Donald Green, who with his wife, Maureen, contributed the first \$10 million to the center, are paying \$300,000 a year to a fundraising consultant to bring in the needed cash.

Green said he is not frustrated by the delays.

He believes it is vital for future generations to build the infrastructure for cultural activities.

While the university has 114 music majors, 81 theater arts majors and several dozen other students who take music and theater classes, the Green Center is expected to attract more students to those majors.

"It is kind of the 'If you build it, they will come' approach," Green said. "My first thought was of a relatively small hall, relatively simple, for choral music. That ran into Ruben Armiñana's vision for a Tanglewood-style hall."

The hall went from a \$10 million idea presented to Green to a \$22 million proposal for the larger concert hall in 1998 and just kept growing from there, reaching \$100 million by 2006 when construction began.

The costs rose as the project was expanded and the construction industry faced higher prices, campus officials said.

While the issues driving the vote of no confidence in Armiñana's leadership range from the president's autocratic style to a goal of re-establishing the priority of teaching and learning, the Green Music Center was pivotal, McCuan said.

Of the approximately 300 faculty who voted, roughly 73 percent gave a thumbs-down to the campus president.

"I had no choice but to support it," McCuan said of the resolution. "The Green Music Center has become so identified with his leadership of the institution ... that it has become who he is and how he manages the institution."

Byrne and Moulton, who helped spearhead the no-confidence vote, point to Armiñana's frequent trips to Tanglewood with other university officials as examples of too much energy and too many resources being spent on the music center. Over the years, there have been nine trips.

In 2006, for example, Armiñana went with donors and 10 campus executives. The university paid \$20,000 for catering, supplies and concert tickets and \$27,000 for hotel and travel expenses for university employees. The donors paid their own travel expenses, and Kashack said that the trips have resulted in about \$10 million in donations for the Green Music Center.

"Our mission is fundamentally the learning and instruction of our students, and those resources have been seriously undermined," said Byrne, the sociology professor. Whitney Diver, a senior at Sonoma State and president of the student body, called the Green Center a "very exciting building" and praised Armiñana's vision, but other students share the faculty's concerns.

"The development office used to raise money to improve and support the instruction of students, but now the development office is almost exclusively focused on trying to raise funds for the Green Music Center," said senior David Abbott, editor of the student newspaper. "If they are going to build buildings, they need to build buildings that can house students. They are building the wrong kinds of buildings."

Lynne Morrow, an associate professor of music and director of the voice program and the opera and music theater program, supports the efforts to build the center.

"The Green Music Center is the lab for music students. No one argues when the biology lab needs to be built (or) revamped," Morrow said. "Music is one of the few professions that is still based upon apprenticeship. Seeing, hearing and having individual lessons with professionals is essential to the art."

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