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*Cover photo courtesy of Cary Edmondson, University Photographer:  
 CSUS President Hamid Shirvani stands with Student Body  
 President Diana Heredia at the new Warrior Stadium.*

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# Long awaited Student Recreation Complex brings university, community together

BY ALEX CANTATORE  
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At 4 p.m. on Friday afternoon three years of hard work will come to its completion, much to the joy of California State University, Stanislaus students.

The new \$16.1 million, 24-acre Student Recreation Complex will formally open its gates to the public on that day, inaugurating the facility with an event that invites the community and the university to join together and celebrate what CSU Stan president Ham Shirvani has called, "a great addition to our campus."

"I am really proud of our students for the vision and leadership they demonstrated in seeing this student-funded project through to completion," Shirvani said. "The Complex will not only enhance our recreation and athletic programs, but it will also be a place where students can work on their personal wellness and conditioning."

The facility, which is financed through student fees approved in a landslide May 2006 vote, features a 2,300-seat lighted soccer stadium, the Al Brenda all-weather track, and lighted intramural sports fields. Students will also have access to the new fitness center, which includes a workout room with new equipment, a multi-purpose gymnasium with wall scoreboard, aerobics studio, and locker rooms.

Friday's grand opening celebration will include tours of the student fitness center, as well as free food and face painting, booths from student groups, and a VIP area for community leaders. Conference matches for the CSU Stan men's and women's soccer teams against the University of California, San Diego, beginning at 4:30 p.m., will serve as the highlight of the celebration.

The University will also look to involve the community in the soccer games, as during halftime of the men's game Turlock Youth Cheer will perform, and during the women's halftime Turlock Youth Soccer players will hold a brief scrimmage.

"We'll be able to get kids out on the field and get a glimpse of what they might experience as a college student one day," said CSU Stan Asst. Vice President for Communications & Public Affairs Kristen Olsen.

For those college students who are out

playing on the fields right now, the SRC comes as nothing but an improvement from the old fields that CSU Stan women's soccer head coach Gabriel Bolton described as "brutal."

"We now have hands down the best facility in the country," Bolton said. "... Every coach that comes here wants a tour. One school even brought a sports information director, who took pictures to show their president.

"We are extremely lucky. And the players on our team are so grateful, we're just kind of living a dream right now with this facility."

Bolton said the new field is already having an impact on recruiting classes, not to mention the crowds and community enthusiasm for CSU Stan soccer. Even members of the general public are beginning to recognize him, Bolton said, and offer up praise for the stadium and team.

Diana Heredia, Associated Students Inc. president, has seen the project through from start to finish, sitting on the advisory board for two years and helping to pick out everything from furniture to fixtures. While she's heard a bit of grumbling about the added costs to students, given the recent school budget cuts, she says she's gone to the SRC every day since the fitness center opened to students on Sept. 9 and seen it busy at all times of day.

Heredia said she's gotten a hands-on experience of what it's like to work on a project and see it through. And now that the SRC is here, she hopes students embrace it.

"The grand opening of the Student Recreation Complex brings the campus a great opportunity for expansion and growth from the perspective of the University, the community, and students," Heredia said. "Students have been anticipating the opening for a year now, and given the recent fall of our budget, the complex will be a great location for our University and the community to come together."

The Student Recreation Complex is located on the California State University, Stanislaus, on the corner of Geer Road and Christoffersen Parkway.

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