Editorial: Master plan causes doubt

At November, students wondered if it could be done. President Mordechai Rozanski’s campus master plan, announced at a previous Town Hall Meeting, was definitely ambitious. Rozanski’s improvements did begin and are being worked on feverishly to this day.

On March 2, Rozanski held another Town Hall Meeting to keep the community informed about his actions. While he has made a great deal of progress on many of his initiatives, larger plans such as the construction of a Student Recreation Center (SRC) and hall renovations have yet to get underway.

The SRC is expected to be a 45,000 square foot facility complete with three basketball courts, a jogging track and locker rooms. Building this facility is a huge undertaking that will require a large amount of resources and time. Despite this, the job could conceivably be completed by Rozanski’s Spring 2005 deadline with the full efforts of the University at work on the project.

However, this task will not be the only project being worked on. Rozanski also plans to create what he called the “East Village” by linking the Ziegler and Hill residence halls. In addition to this, the University will be renovating the exterior of and constructing a new lobby for Ziegler Hall as well as converting hall lounges into three-story apartments, which Rozanski termed “pods.”

Again, with the full efforts of the University behind him, it is possible that this plan could be completed on time. However, the fact remains that construction will be split between two simultaneous projects. Due to this, the time needed to complete both initiatives will be doubled. If construction begins this summer, as Rozanski says, then it appears doubtful that the deadline will be met.

Furthermore, Rozanski has said that tuition will not be increased by an excessive margin as a result of these activities. The campus master plan, which was recently approved by the Board of Trustees, will cost the University $15 million. Since the school has procured enough money to complete the projects already, students do not need to worry about a dramatic tuition hike in the coming year.

The real problem comes with phase two of Rozanski’s plan. This second phase will require an additional $1.5 million to link the SRC and the Alumni Gym together. In addition to this undertaking, Rozanski plans to renovate the remaining residence halls, constructing “pods,” renovating exteriors and adding additional electrical outlets and air conditioning to each room.

After completing phase one of the campus master plan, the funds that Rozanski has collected will be quite low. While he has made it clear that he hopes to elicit donations from formerly “disconnected” alumni, more money will be needed.

Rozanski said at the Town Hall Meeting that tuition would be increased each successive year. Currently, however, the rate of increase for this year will be smaller than the rate of increase from the previous year. However, with so many expenses beginning to pile up, expect that rate of increase to steadily rise over the next several years until the plan is completed.

Rozanski’s campus master plan is ambitious and, if it all works out, stands to significantly increase the quality of Rider’s campus. However, students will still find themselves wondering whether these projects are too ambitious for their own good.

This weekly editorial expresses the majority opinion of The Rider News editorial board and is written by the Opinion editor.