



FRESNO CITY COLLEGE STUDENTS AND STAFF RAISE CONCERN ABOUT RATCLIFFE STADIUM NOT FULLY COMPLYING WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT. PHOTO TAKEN ON MAY 2, 2024 BY MICHAEL LIN.

IS RATCLIFFE STADIUM DANGEROUS?

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Faculty and staff have raised concerns about Ratcliffe Stadium not fully complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). They are concerned that steps are not being taken to make the stadium compliant with the law.

Currently, seating for wheelchair users is only available on the visitor's side of the stadium, not the home side.

Omar Gutierrez, FCC vice president of Administrative Services, said the college is aware that the stadium is not ADA compliant and that it will likely take a bond measure with voter support to generate the funds to make the needed improvements.

"We will definitely need community input and community assistance in order to do something like this. An input from the perspective of what does the community want from their stadium here," Gutierrez said.

The stadium was opened on Oct. 9, 1926. In 1942 it was renovated and seats were added.

Derrick Johnson, the associate dean of athletics, said he is used to athletic facilities being overlooked.

"In my opinion, athletic facilities are not just important to the athletic department but they are important to our institution too," Johnson said.

Johnson advocates that the stadium should be viewed as an extended classroom due to its widespread usage and importance in campus life.

"One can't argue that the athletic facilities aren't part of a focal point of this college because we utilize them so much and they are so over-utilized in some instances that some of our auxiliary services can't keep up with the usage," Johnson said.

Emily Rand, an athletic trainer at FCC, said that prior to COVID-19 there had been talks about addressing the ADA issue.

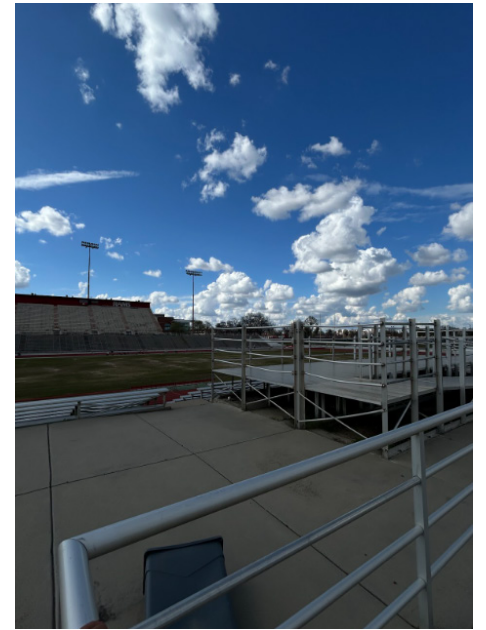
"If COVID-19 did not happen we might be further along in the process, but I know with redoing our stadium, it's going to cost a lot. Everyone wants it to happen," Rand said.

Rand explains that while the track and field facilities in the stadium are among several things requiring renewal, prioritizing ADA compliance may bring more attention as the stadium hosts events and classes.

"For someone who is handicapped, there's no wheelchair easy access and the track is atrocious," Rand said.

Gutierrez does understand that FCC uses athletic facilities and primarily the stadium to host events.

"Last year for example, we had the graduation, our main graduation last year. So, things of that nature in having that stadium be the home of something like this. I think that would be very impactful," Gutierrez said.



THE VISITOR-SIDE WHEELCHAIR-ACCESSIBLE UNIT AT RATCLIFFE STADIUM ON MARCH 6, 2024. PHOTO BY BRISA SERNA.

Johnson said he believes all athletic facilities should be accessible to everyone.

"All of our athletic facilities are considered classrooms because when we schedule classes, no matter what sport, PE, athletics, health, CPR, first aid, we use all of our athletic facilities in giving instruction for those particular sports, programs, and the police program," Johnson said.

STARTING OFF STRONG: GARZA'S FIRST SEASON AS HEAD COACH

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It's been 7 months since Fresno City College President Dr. Robert Pimentel and Associate Dean of Athletics Dr. Derek Johnson announced the hiring of Linda Garza as the new head coach of FCC's softball team.

The team took home first place in their conference for Garza's first season coaching. Garza is getting the team ready for playoffs and they are excited to be able to make it this far.

"It's been a great experience," Garza said.

She talks about how coaching softball has always been the same, it doesn't really change much regarding divisions. They still go out there and compete the same way.

Getting to know the team and seeing what they can do is something that Garza has enjoyed in her journey of coaching the Rams.

"We have strong personalities, we have a lot of fun while playing and we're super competitive," Garza said. "We just want to uphold that winning tradition so we do a lot of the hard work when we get the opportunity to."

Her favorite thing about coaching is getting the opportunity to see young people accomplish goals and be able to have a plan.

"They see something that they want to do and they get to work towards it and be able to see their faces when they actually reach their goals," Garza said.

She gave thanks to her colleagues for helping her with her move to FCC. With their help, Garza was able to help her team work hard and win the Central

Valley Championship game, 10-2.

Garza is looking forward to being able to win more conference championships and hopefully win a state title.

"That's our goal," Garza said.

Kylie Nunes, center fielder and right fielder shares her experience with Garza and the Rams. As they had a growing season, they came together as a team and pulled off a ton of success.

"Garza helped lead us through some hard patches through the season and helped us come together and unite as a team," Nunes said.

Having Garza as their leader works well for the team, she sets them up for success all season long.

Nunes also shares that the best quality of Garza is pushing the Rams to be the best people and players they can be.

"This season she has helped me grow into a better leader and player by constantly pushing me to achieve all my goals in softball and in life," Nunes said.

As the Rams had many memorable moments together, the one that stood out to Nunes this season was winning the CVC with her teammates for the 2nd year in a row.

"Focus and enjoy being in the know, show up everyday wanting to get better for yourself and your



FRESNO CITY COLLEGE WOMEN'S SOFTBALL HEAD COACH, LINDA GARZA (LEFT) AND HER PLAYERS STANDING FOR THE NATIONAL ANTHEM AT THEIR GAME ON MARCH 5. PHOTO BY MICHAEL LIN.

team," Nunes said. "Love and lean on your Ram fam, nothing is better than having something so special like this Ram fam."