

UC regents approve Cal stadium retrofit

Matt Krupnick, Bay Area News Group, 1-20-10

A University of California panel has approved a \$320 million renovation of UC Berkeley's Memorial Stadium.

A Board of Regents committee on Tuesday approved the retrofit of the 87-year-old bowl, which straddles the Hayward fault. Seismologists have predicted a major earthquake on the fault in the next 20 to 30 years.

The full board will vote on the proposal Thursday. If approved, the university could start preliminary work on the long-planned retrofit as early as June.

University leaders have said no public money will be spent on the project. Some of the funding will be raised through seat licenses for Cal football fans.

The project will reduce the stadium's capacity from 71,799 to 62,717. Major construction would start at the end of the 2010 football season, and plans call for the stadium to reopen in time for the 2012 season. The football team would play elsewhere during the 2011 season.

Plans for the Memorial Stadium retrofit have met with legal challenges. The university in 2008 settled a lawsuit with fans who were worried the project would block views of football games from so-called Tightwad Hill.