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Jerry L. Morrow
531-5711, Ext. 214

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A delay of at least two years in construction of the proposed \$3.5 million Performing Arts Center at The University of Toledo was announced today by Dr. William S. Carlson, TU president.

The decision to defer construction was based on excessive costs for Phase I of the center, Dr. Carlson said, and came after consultations with members of the TU Board of Directors and conversations with Dr. John D. Millett, chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents.

Originally, plans called for the center to be built in two phases, with Phase I work scheduled to begin in November, 1966. A total of \$1.5 million in state funds was allocated for Phase I work.

Cost estimates now indicate that Phase I construction, as planned, could cost as much as \$2.5 million, Dr. Carlson said. He added that the University had been unsuccessful in obtaining private contributions to make it possible to build the complete center at one time.

"Consequently, the first phase does not seem to be the best investment of the limited funds we now have, especially since cost estimates continue to increase," Dr. Carlson said. "However," he added, "we will continue to give a high priority to the performing arts in our requests for state funds for the next biennium."

In a special report reviewing the project, Willard W. Smith, TU vice president-treasurer, said: "The first phase, even though it provides only about half the square feet, accounts for about two-thirds of the total cost -- a fact which was not sufficiently brought out until work had proceeded fairly far on drawings."

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The design of the center was prepared by Hugh Hardy and Associates (New York), and was presented at public meetings held at TU on May 17. Mr. Hardy has been working on plans for the center with the Toledo firm of Hahn and Hayes.

Phase I of the center was to have included a 500 - seat open stage theater, a 500 - seat chamber music hall, studios and offices. Cost estimates now indicate that the \$1.5 million available for construction would be insufficient to complete all of Phase I.

"With currently escalating building costs, it appears that the Performing Arts Center, by the time it gets under construction, might consist of fine caissons, a sturdy foundation, a large mechanical equipment space, an attractive lobby, and little else," Mr. Smith reported. "The result," he said, "could be a project which would be a fine basis for future additions, but which would serve relatively little academic purpose at the present time."

The delay will hamper seriously the development of the University's humanities program, Dr. Carlson said. It means that the music department must continue to occupy cramped quarters, including remodeled attics, on the sixth level of University Hall. Doermann Theater will have to be shared with many other kinds of programs, including the theater and speech department, special events and class sections. Both the theater and speech department and the music department must use space in temporary buildings that are older than some of the students, Dr. Carlson said.

The temporary buildings, located on the proposed site of the Performing Arts Center -- between University Hall and the Student Union -- were built following World War II. One of the temporaries, Technical Hall, was to have been demolished in the fall to make way for construction. Now, Dr. Carlson said, it will be retained to provide badly needed space.