University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee leaders have been trying for several years to convince UW System leaders of the need for a basketball practice facility on its east side Milwaukee campus.

Let's hope a new proposal that would reduce the cost of the $14.5 million project by 50 percent and eliminate the need for state funding finally allows the much-needed project to move forward for the university's Division I NCAA men's and women's basketball teams.

The UWM men's team plays its home games at the UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena in downtown Milwaukee under a long-term lease with the arena's owner the Wisconsin Center District. The women's team plays its home games at the on-campus Klotsche Center.

UWM athletics has been formulating basketball-practice facility plans for several years to relieve crowding at the existing Klotsche Center and Pavilion buildings on the north end of the campus. Unlike most colleges where the basketball teams have their own practice facilities, the teams share the space with other teams, other student activities and physical education classes.

The UW System Board of Regents should approve the project because it would provide a needed boost to the basketball programs and help them compete for players against other schools who have much nicer facilities.