

# Hamel Scholars Opens Its Doors

Sunday, Sept. 29, Huddleston Hall, now known as the Hamel Honors and Scholars Building, opened its doors officially with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

## Madeline Randall, Contributing Writer

On Sunday, Sept. 29, 2024, Huddleston Hall held its renovation ribbon cutting at the new Hamel Honors and Scholars Building. The University of New Hampshire has been doing renovations on this building for several months, in hopes of welcoming the newly formed Honors College into its new home base.

The renovation of this building for the Hamel and Honors students would not have been possible without Dana Hamel, who donated \$20 million for the growth of the Hamel Scholar program, and the creation of this space. The ribbon-cutting event was part of a larger Hamel Scholars weekend, Hamel 43 (H43). This weekend-long event held workshops, alumni panels, and more for the current and recently inducted Hamel Scholars.



Emma Kostyun

Hamel Scholars College previously Huddleston Hall

At 1 p.m., Honors and Hamel students, Hamel Scholar alumni, and Honors and Hamel Scholar faculty members gathered outside Huddleston Hall in excitement for the building's official opening. Catherine Peebles, director of Hamel Honors and Scholars College opened the event by reflecting on the theme for the Hamel Weekend: Sustainability. President Elizabeth Chilton spoke briefly, as did benefactor Dana Hamel, and together they cut the ribbon to the building.

In recent years, the University of New Hampshire has put effort towards reflecting on sustainability as a community and a college campus. Emily Schoonmaker, the community coordinator for the Honors College and Hamel Scholar Program, spoke on the sustainability aspects of the renovation project, saying, "the decision to renovate this building, as opposed to building new, was a decision based in sustainability...There's a lot of sustainability features that we've integrated from the lighting to the heating and cooling system are all with UNH's priorities in mind, ensuring that everything the campus does is sustainability-minded."

Catherine Peebles, director of the Hamel Honors and Scholars College, emphasized the inclusive nature of the space, saying, "You don't have to be an honors student to come and use the building. I want people to know that." Huddleston Hall will have regular hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, but Honors Students and Hamel Scholars will get 24/7 access to the building by swiping their UNH IDs.

Huddleston Hall has a renovated ballroom with high ceilings, blue carpeting, and lots of natural light from its half-round windows. The hall is also home to many small study spaces with whiteboards on the second floor, along with several lounge-style study spaces and couches. The ballroom seems to be a favorite among those in the program.

Douglas Lafleur, a sophomore mechanical engineer major in the Hamel Scholar program, commented on his favorite aspect of the ballroom, saying that the natural light and the overall ambiance of the building made it feel cozy. The study spaces on the second floor are also perfect for small conferences or gatherings. Lafleur said he hopes to be able to meet with other students there this year.

The ribbon cutting this past Sunday marks the official opening of the building, but Huddleston Hall has been busy since the start of the semester with classes, Honors events, and students studying. There have been higher rates of honors students utilizing drop-in advising thus far, according to staff, and study spaces are becoming more frequently used throughout the day. Huddleston Hall, once an early dining hall in 1919, is now the new campus hub the Honors College has been dreaming of.