

UNH News Release: UNH Issues Statement on the Future of the Outdoor Pool



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UNH Issues Statement on the Future of the Outdoor Pool

DURHAM, N.H. -- The outdoor pool at UNH was built in 1938 through the Works Project Administration and has been a fixture in the Durham community for many years. In recent master planning sessions the community has expressed concern about preliminary plans to alter or replace the existing facility. However, planners believe now is the time to begin planning for the day when repairs will no longer be possible and health and safety are potentially compromised.

University officials do not know how much longer operation of the historic pool can be sustained. It does not meet modern health and safety standards for water circulation, filtration or basic construction. Nearly every summer, there are incidents that require UNH to close the pool for days at a time for health and safety reasons. The circulation systems are located under the pool, making it difficult to address deficiencies. The depth of water in the deep end and the darkness of the water at certain locations make it difficult for lifeguards to view the pool bottom clearly throughout the day. The pool does not meet current accessibility standards. At some point in the future, these deficiencies will no longer be tolerable to the community or public health officials. Regrettably, there is no funding source for a full renovation of the existing pool, nor does the university believe a renovation at such scale would be desirable or sustainable. UNH will be faced with decisions about the size and configuration for a replacement facility that meets community needs, addresses present day safety and health regulations, and can be funded.

University officials are proposing to establish a working group to include representatives of the town, UNH staff in Campus Recreation and Campus Planning, students, and others. This working group would make recommendations to the administrators who will decide the scope of a renovation or replacement project and how to raise the necessary funds.

The university's current draft master plan reflects a need for more indoor recreational space for students. While alternative locations will continue to be explored, the preferred option at this time is to expand the Hamel Recreation Center, directly adjacent to the outdoor pool. The outcome of this planning effort would need to cohere with any plan for an outdoor pool at the current location.

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