

Bigger and Better

Expanded Hamel Rec center emphasizes fitness and wellbeing

Tuesday, April 4, 2017



It's the Friday afternoon before spring break, and Caleb Cejka '17, '18G has a small corner of the [Hamel Recreation Center](#) to himself. That's a plus. His intense workout—he just followed up a set of ropes exercises with a run between the rec center's first and second floors—requires the sort of room that just wasn't available in the building until this year.

"It was packed all the time," Cejka says. "People were always fighting for space before."

Though the rec center hums with activity—a four-on-four

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basketball game is in progress on one court, a pair of students are tackling the bouldering wall and solo exercisers are stationed at various machines—there's plenty of room for everyone. After almost two years of work, the Hamel Rec Center's expansion officially debuted in January, with an additional 12,000-square feet of space, a large multi-activity court, an expanded bouldering wall and a one-tenth-of-a-mile suspended track, among other improvements.

“The goal for the project was, depending on the type of workout someone wants to do each day, they'll find a place to feel comfortable in,” says Stacey Hall, director of campus recreation. “It's a very accessible space.”



The expansion features a dedicated stationary cycling room, more fitness areas and a dedicated space for the university's Health Services department, including a demonstration kitchen/classroom area. Hall says students have been asking for expanded rec facilities since the Hamel Rec Center first opened in 1995.

According to Hall, a survey of the Class of 2014 conducted by Campus Recreation found that with every visit a student makes to the Rec Center, the odds that they would return to campus the following year, and graduate within four years, increased. “It allows us to look at the overall wellness component of everyone's life, not just physical fitness,” she says.

For Cejka, the improvements are already apparent. “Before, (the facility) was kind of rudimentary,” he says. “But now it's much more dynamic. Whatever you're looking for, you can get it all here.”

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