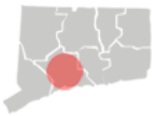


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Wednesday, February 13, 2008

Posted on Tue, Feb 12, 2008

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UNH cuts the ribbon on its new \$15 million recreation center

By Eliza Hallabek, Special to the Register

WEST HAVEN — The ribbon was cut Monday on the new University of New Haven recreation center that students have been using since December in large numbers.

The indoor basketball court swarmed with students, faculty, alumni and friends of UNH just after 10 a.m. for the ceremonial ribbon cutting at the \$15.5 million David A. Beckerman Recreation Center.

"This has provided the outlet that hasn't yet been available for students," said Mike Schneider, director of campus recreation.

The floor-to-ceiling glass windows of the center are visible from the Boston Post Road.

"I would say the fitness centers have really been the most popular (part of the center)," Schneider said, "but it's really been a mix of things."

Oren Corridon, a sophomore on campus from Long Island, N.Y., said he uses the facility three to four times a week.

"I like it a lot," Corridon said, "because it's better than going to the gym. Everything is right here."

State Rep. Louis Esposito, D-West Haven, said he was impressed by the architecture of the center.

"Now that I'm here, it's a beautiful building," said Esposito. "It will serve the university for years to come."

The center features state-of-the-art exercise equipment, a gymnasium with courts for sports including rollerblading, roller hockey, volleyball, basketball and indoor soccer. The fitness centers include rooms for Pilates and yoga, racquetball courts, lounges, locker rooms and a juice bar that will open April 4, according to UNH.

The center is the beginning piece of a \$90 million plan to upgrade the campus through new buildings, a new dormitory and upgraded classrooms. The next part of the campus to see construction will be a 120,000-square-foot, 400-bed student housing complex in May of this year.

UNH President Steven H. Kaplan said the center owes thanks to many people, most importantly the man it was named for, David A. Beckerman, a former member of the university's Board of Directors, who provided \$4 million toward construction. Beckerman flew in from Florida with his wife to be in New Haven for the event.

"I'd really like to say that this really was a pleasure," said Beckerman. "Too often, people think they can't help."

Beckerman said every step of the process of creating the center had the university's students in mind.

Kaplan said the first day the center opened, more than 900 students used it, and that made him excited for the future prospects of the facility.

According to Kaplan, the glass structure of the building was not in the original plans, but was decided on after considering many other options. He added that he is particularly proud of the "classy" design of the lockers in the locker rooms.

"It really is a billboard for this university to the outside world," and Kaplan, "and it's working."

Eliza Hallabek is a New Haven Register intern.



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