NIRSA Outstanding Sports Facilities Award Executive Summary

The University of Florida’s Southwest Recreation Center expansion/renovation is worthy of the NIRSA Outstanding Facilities Award. The design team, building contractor and UF staff worked closely together to provide the UF students with a technologically up-to-date, stunning, functional and green recreation center. The following provides you with detailed supporting information:

Correlation to the campus master plan and mission

Architects were successful in their efforts to meet the University of Florida 2005-2015 Campus Master Plan’s Open Space Element and Urban Design element, outlined below:

- New recreation facilities shall:
  o Be consistent with future land use element
  o Strive to locate in proximity to student housing
  o Strive to locate near the campus perimeter to be accessible to students living off-campus
  o Seek to take advantage of access provided by bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Major gateways shall be designed to enhance access for motor vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclist and include significant entry features
- New clusters of development shall create an urban orientation of building facades addressing the roadway

Intended and actual impact to your recreation program

The proposal to the Student Fee Funding Committee outlined specific programs and services that could be added and/or enhanced. The expansion/renovation met the following promises:

- Increased strength and cardio area
- Increased activity room area
- Indoor track
- Centralized administrative offices
- Dedicated athletic training area
- Improved fitness assessment area
• Dedicated area for personal training
• Massage therapy program
• Student lounge
• Computer kiosks for student use
• WiFi
• HD TVs

In addition to promises, the financial environment made it possible to renovate bathrooms, locker rooms, activity rooms, equipment room, weight room and various infrastructures that enabled us to provide a seamless look between existing and new areas.

**Unique aesthetic or architectural design features**

See and be seen was the core idea of the expansion of the Southwest Recreation Center. The exterior glass wall showcases user activity with transparent views into the facility, while providing outdoor views to sand volleyball courts, lacrosse and soccer fields, art features and the adjacent Cultural Plaza.

Vinyl wall graphics were incorporated into high traffic areas to provoke a sense of motion and energy. A translucent gator skin pattern was applied to the windows of the student lounge to achieve partial visual separation. The gator skin pattern was also incorporated in the lounge, lobby and hallway terrazzo floor.

The exterior materials of the facility meet University architectural standards. High performance glass with aluminum curtain-wall systems consisting of horizontal sunshades controls solar exposure. The new facility design has positioned the Southwest Recreation Center as a welcoming beacon and landmark to those entering the campus from the southwest.

**Facility functionality**

An upper level 1/9 mile jogging track unifies the open design of the expansion by overlooking the main cardio area, student lounge and entrance/lobby. A new activity room relieves scheduling pressure. Centralized office space was created to support a team environment.

Several areas were renovated to accommodate expanded programs. Other areas were repurposed as a Student Lounge, Marketing Suite and Training Center. The Lounge
provides a place to enjoy refreshments, relax and play games. The Training Center includes assessment, massage therapy, athletic and personal training.

**Relationship between facility design and staffing**

Two main ideas drove design discussions for the remodel/expansion. Maximize visibility through activity areas; minimize the need for additional staff. The use of glass, open ceilings and proximity of the access control desk to the cardio area made it possible to manage renovated and new areas without the need to increase staff. Therefore, an increase to the staffing budget was not necessary.

**Innovative construction materials or methods**

Bio-swales create an artful approach to storm-water management. Tight site constraints and necessary storm-water storage required creative planning. By moving the water from the roof through stone runnels, over stone weirs, to collect in bio-swales, allows rainwater to be cleansed on site gradually allowing for infiltration and delaying movement into the regional storm-water system.

**Sustainable/Green features**

A LEED designation of Gold was awarded. Below are a few intentional sustainable features:

- 78% of discarded construction material was recycled
- 28% savings of energy due to light harvesting
- 100% of water used for irrigation is reclaimed
- 100% of the plants used for landscaping are native
- 43% savings of potable water
- Near elimination of disposable water bottles due to ice/water dispensers
- Energy is returned to the grid via an energy harvesting system on 24 Precor elliptical machines
- Programmable shades reduce heat gain
- Ceiling fans increased air circulation and decreased strain on the HVAC systems
- LED lighting
**Use of technology and how it benefits the customer, staff and/or budget**

The Southwest Recreation Center expansion included the addition of 26 televisions to be used for digital signage. The digital signage has enhanced the department’s marketing efforts to include state of the art graphics that are dynamic and interactive along with reducing the amount of paper usage and clutter throughout the building. The digital signage has also opened up a new revenue stream, digital advertisements for external companies.

Fusion recreation management software combined with Schlage HandKeyIIIs, allows one employee to monitor three lanes of access traffic. This has shortened wait times, improved customer service and maintained staffing costs. Additionally the software’s online portal has facilitated several new revenue streams and improved the customer experience for online registrations in group fitness and intramural sports.

The installation of wireless internet throughout the facility has been very popular with students allowing them to study or stream music while waiting for activities. Wireless network access supports departmental iPads to collect feedback, monitor game stats, eliminate paper and improve the efficiency of data entry.

Security cameras make it possible to resolve fraudulent access cases. The University Police Department reported a dramatic drop in thefts, which can be attributed to improved access security and programmable locking mechanisms on day lockers.

Cardio equipment is outfitted with personal LCD displays for the user to select cable programming or connect a personal device. The personal devices coupled with the building’s Wi-Fi can stream lectures, music and other media content.