Falcon Center – a new era in education, health and wellness at UW-River Falls.

What is the Falcon Center?

The Falcon Center for Health, Education, and Wellness will encompass 162,300 gross square feet, including four new classrooms (one an active learning classroom), an exercise physiology lab, athletic training rooms, a competition gymnasium and an auxiliary gym. In addition to replacing the 1959 Karges Center for Health & Human Performance, Recreation and Athletics and renovating the existing W.H. Hunt Hockey Arena (built in 1972) and Robert P. Knowles Center field house (1986), this multipurpose facility will support academics, athletics and student recreation and wellness in several ways. A new fitness center and group fitness rooms and a new outdoor adventure rental center will become available to the campus. Health screenings, personal training, group fitness classes, towel, locker and equipment check outs will also be offered.

The Falcon Center represents a long-awaited improvements to the facilities at UW-River Falls which currently house Health and Human Performance education, Athletics and Campus Recreation spaces. In 1994, a comprehensive analysis determined that both the quality and quantity of the main instructional and indoor athletic facilities were substandard. Planning for a replacement facility occurred in 1999, then for the next five biennia, the proposed Health and Human Performance Building project was included in the university's capital budget requests. Finally, in 2011, the Falcon Center project was enumerated in Wisconsin Act 32. Since then, the timeline for the new facility has progressed steadily, with the new facility on schedule to open in late 2017:

- October 16, 2013: authority to construct granted by the Building Commission
- May 2, 2014: Groundbreaking Ceremony
- May 27, 2014: Bid Date (Phase I)
- July 14, 2014: Start Construction
- Early 2015: Bids Due (Phase II)
- Spring 2015: Anticipated construction start to Phase II
- Summer, 2015: Phase I wrap up
- August, 2017: Substantial completion
- Fall, 2017: Occupancy
- tbd: Deconstruction of obsolete facilities (Phase III)

Based on the goals collaboratively set for the Falcon Center by the Health and Human Performance Department, Campus Recreation and Athletics, the new facility will be a state-of-the-art destination and point of pride on campus. It has been configured to meet current and future needs of its stakeholders such as: adequately dedicated spaces for fitness; improved safety and security; optimized organization and distribution of faculty and staff office spaces; expanded spaces for research activities; improved access to the building and events; and heightened athlete and spectator experiences. Several less tangible, although nonetheless meaningful, impacts are also anticipated, such as the development of opportunities for students to learn in unique and novel ways as instructors creatively harness the potential of the new building. New programs and educational initiatives will likely be inspired in and by the Falcon Center. The facility will also provide several chances for events to catalyze positive communication of the mission and values of UW-River Falls for both internal and external audiences.
**Why is the Falcon Center important for UW-River Falls?**

**High Demand Learning and Recreational Spaces:** Based on current use, calculations indicate that usage of the Falcon Center recreational facilities by students participating in varsity, club and intramural sports, will equal approximately 95,000 visits in an academic year. Other visits to the fitness facilities by classes, informal student users and external users could reach as many as 81,000. Over 69% of full-time students are reported to participate in some sort of campus recreation program. In 2013-14, there were 367 different students involved in intercollegiate athletics, with an estimated average usage of the training/athletics facilities of 132 visits/season (total participants were 454, including those students involved in more than one sport). Ten sport clubs, with an average roster of 22 participants each, also use the facilities an average of 39 times/year.

Furthermore, as of Fall 2014, there are 340 declared majors and minors in Health and Human Performance (HHP) programs at UWRF (this number refers to unique majors or minors and does not include students who both major and minor in HHP disciplines). There are currently 223 students using classroom space in Rodli Hall (HHP classes), Karges Center and the Emogene Nelson Center.

Based on current use and data from peer institutions, it is estimated that between 5% -10% of UWRF faculty and staff will utilize the new facility for their own health and wellness pursuits, not counting attendance of sporting events, which could include an additional 10-15%. (Opportunities for promoting employee fitness programs and incentivizing facility memberships to enhance the wellbeing of the UW-River Falls workforce are also being considered.) Recreational use of the Falcon Center by the greater River Falls and St. Croix Valley community members, UWRF alumni, and fans is also foreseen.

**Recruitment and Retention:** Aside from replacing substandard facilities, a vibrantly operational Falcon Center will contribute to other key objectives of the campus. In a recent survey of 33,522 students by the NIRSA/NASPA Consortium, a strong case was put forth regarding the contributions made by recreational facilities and programs to student recruitment and retention. Around two thirds of the students surveyed indicated that the quality of the recreational facilities are important when deciding which university to attend. Nearly three-quarters stated that a campus’s recreational facilities are an important factor in deciding to continue at their university. The survey also demonstrated that providing opportunities to promote student health and wellness is crucial to students. While 83% of the students surveyed indicated that recreation, sports and fitness were important to them prior to enrolling, 90% indicated that those things were important to them after leaving their institution, implying that opportunities for physical activity can actually contribute to creating healthier long-term habits and lifestyles.

**How much will the Falcon Center cost to build and who is paying for it?**

The total cost calculated for the new construction and renovation of existing spaces is $62,412,000. The majority of this, over $50 million, will be covered by the State of Wisconsin. Just over $6 million was committed by the students of UW-River Falls in March 2008 with a dedicated seg fee. $4.2 million is being covered by revenue from Parking, and $2 million in private donations to the project, made through the UWRF Foundation.
Falcon Center Construction Budget:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Enumerated 2011</th>
<th>Approved by Building Commission Oct 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Fund Supported Borrowing</td>
<td>$50,491,000</td>
<td>$50,491,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Revenue Supported Borrowing – seg fee</td>
<td>$6,037,000</td>
<td>$6,037,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSB – Parking</td>
<td>$4,227,000</td>
<td>$4,227,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift Funds (Private donations)</td>
<td>$2,056,000</td>
<td>$1,657,000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Trust Funds (deconstruction of obsolete facilities – Phase III)</td>
<td>$701,000</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$63,512,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$62,412,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $1.1 million funding, which includes $701,000 in Building Trust Funds and the remaining portion of gift funds, to be presented for approval at a future State Building Commission meeting (2015 or 2016)

**How will the Falcon Center operate?**

The Falcon Center is a unique building on the UW-River Falls campus. The Falcon Center represents a new collaborative model, which is a trend in the state, through which the state is expecting PR, in addition to private gifts, to leverage their financial investment in the facility. This shared investment model will carry over from the funding of the “brick and mortar” itself, to the operational aspects.

In this context, it is the Chancellor’s intent to form a Falcon Center Management Committee (FCMC) that will have equal representation from Athletics, Health and Human Performance (HHP), Campus Recreation, and Operations. This group will collaboratively decide on operational policies, fee schedules, priority for usage of space and hours of operation. Certain operational functions will be assigned to each component of the FCMC:

- The Health and Human Performance Department will be charged with executing the academic program, authorizing use of laboratory facilities, providing students with experiential learning opportunities, and undergraduate research initiatives, etc.
- The Athletic Department will be responsible for performing all game administrative and event management functions for UW-River Falls Falcon Athletic Contests.
- Campus Recreation will operate the Fitness Center, Fitness Programs, Kinni Outdoor Adventures, Climbing Wall, Intramurals, Membership Management and Group Exercise.
- Falcon Center Operations will schedule and operate the Falcon Center and existing facilities (including Hunt, Knowles, and Ramer Field), including management and execution of external contracts and reservations.

**What funding will Falcon Center Operations require?**

In order to run the facility efficiently and ensure that the services requested and required by the UW-River Falls student population are guaranteed, based on space usage calculations, it is projected that Falcon Center Operations will need around $1,000,000/year to effectively operate the facility. This amount will cover staffing, supplies and expenses, equipment and electronic technology. While external revenue generated will offset costs, a new segregated student fee of a maximum of $200 is being requested, per UW System financial policy F50 governing non-allocable segregated university fees, which are to be used to support long-term commitments for fixed financial obligations, such as ongoing operating costs of recreational sports centers. It is proposed that the new seg fee would be phased in incrementally over two years, with the first phase beginning FY16 (July 1, 2015).
The implementation of a seg fee would have several direct benefits to the student population, from the funding of staffing in Operations, Athletics, and Campus Recreation who will oversee and coordinate use of the facility, to consumable supplies and minor equipment capital equipment replacement and electronic technology to ensure a well-functioning, safe and modern facility. Following is a breakdown of how funding of the new seg fee, when fully implemented, would be distributed to cover specific operational needs:

*Distribution of Funds from the Falcon Center Operations seg fee*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost area</th>
<th>Benefit to students (for example)</th>
<th>Annually</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staffing</td>
<td>Dedicated Falcon Center operational staff who ensure efficient management and coordination of new and enhanced facilities</td>
<td>$123.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies &amp; Equipment</td>
<td>Consumables of various nature (i.e., cleaning materials and provisions)</td>
<td>$13.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Items</td>
<td>Replacement of equipment (i.e., artificial playing surface; ice re-surfacer, etc.)</td>
<td>$42.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Revenue</td>
<td>Income generated from public/non-student event attendees who pay for tickets (athletic contests and fitness facility use is free for students)</td>
<td>$(3.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Maintenance and replacement of technology available in non-academic areas</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Seg Fee</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$200.00</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Two year phase-in schedule*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Increment 1</th>
<th>Increment 2</th>
<th>Total seg fee</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>$175</td>
<td></td>
<td>$175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td></td>
<td>+$25</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The new seg fee will not affect, and should be considered in addition to, other existing seg fees, such as: Falcon Center construction/debt, athletics, intramurals programming, intramural complex, outdoor recreation, student org sports club, arena, stadium fee.

What financial commitment is the UW-River Falls Administration making to offset the cost of Falcon Center operations?

The University is able to guarantee a base of ongoing GPR support that will cover specific areas, as follows:

- **Academic costs**: all costs associated with instruction and academic space will be covered by GPR funding, including but not limited to: IT, furniture and active learning classroom technology, estimated to be at $1,100,000 annually.
- **Utilities**: the University will cover costs associated with services such as electricity, water, sewer, storm water, etc., which are estimated to be $300,000 annually.
- **Custodial/maintenance staff**: the University will fund four GPR positions for the upkeep and maintenance of Falcon Center (two custodial positions, two maintenance positions), estimated to be at $120,000 in salary annually, plus fringe benefits, for the four positions.
- **Athletics**: the University will continue to provide funding for its Athletics Department and programs, as in the past, estimated to be at $1,100,000 annually.
- **Dining**: Dining Services will contribute funds for the dining equipment, budgeted at $375,000, and will in addition cover other costs for dining-associated expenses such as menu boards, point of sale support, etc.

**Why should you vote yes?**

The Falcon Center has been designed for and will be used primarily by students. The proposed Falcon Center Operations seg fee is an appropriate use of student segregated fees. Without it, the campus’s new flagship academic, athletic, fitness and recreational facility would remain barely operational and underutilized. With support that makes successful, thriving operations possible, the majority of students at UW-River Falls will be beneficially impacted in terms of their physical, social and emotional well-being. The Falcon Center seg fee will produce a variety of tangible benefits to students, such as:

- Distinctive, modern, well-managed fitness facilities that are larger, fresher and safer
- More available time for open recreation, sport club practices and intramural events
- Greater flexibility in scheduling personal or team recreation
- A greater variety and number of activities offered

It is our intention that all UW-River Falls students be able to take advantage of the personal growth opportunities offered at the Falcon Center, through programming which encourages health, exercise, sportsmanship and school pride. It is a well-established fact that healthy habits developed at university frequently lead to life-long commitments to a lifestyle of wellness. We can hope for nothing less for each and every one of our students.