

Alfred University acquires new equipment for fitness center

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ALFRED, NY — In a move that will benefit the entire AU campus and the Alfred community, Alfred University has acquired several new pieces of exercise equipment for its fitness center.

The University is leasing 10 treadmills, four elliptical machines and four adaptive motion trainers, to be installed at the Gibbs Fitness Center, located at the McLane Center. The equipment is being leased from Advantage Sports and Fitness Inc., of Ithaca, NY, for three years and was delivered and installed Oct. 3 and 4.

The equipment will cost \$30,000 per year to lease, and replaces items that are as old as 15 years. Last year, the University spent \$14,000 to repair and maintain equipment in the fitness center; maintenance and repair costs for the new equipment are covered under the lease terms.

Advantage Sports and Fitness will take most of the old equipment as part of the lease agreement. The fitness center now has six elliptical machines, 10 treadmills and four adaptive motion trainers. The adaptive motion trainers have flat screen television monitors mounted on the equipment; wireless receivers controlling a bank of televisions are included with the new treadmills.

The fitness center is available for use by students, faculty and staff of the University as well as members of the surrounding community. Each month, while school is in session, thousands make use of the equipment at the fitness center. For the 13-month period from September 2011 to September 2012, there were 23,271 visitors to the fitness center.

Despite usage typically dropping during the summer month, the fitness center still had an averaged nearly 1,800 visitors per month since the beginning of the 2011-12 academic year. Kathy Woughter, vice president of Student Affairs at Alfred University, pointed to those numbers in discussing the need for acquiring the new equipment.

“Every year, thousands of students, faculty, staff and community members use the fitness center. The machines have

been put to hard use and have served us well, but they're showing their age," she said. "New and updated equipment will mean fewer breakdowns, quicker repairs, less wait time, and assurance that state-of-the-art equipment will arrive each year to take the place of older machines."

Alfred University has made it a priority to pursue initiatives aimed at promoting physical fitness and wellness. Ground was broken this summer on the McLane Center Annex, a 33,000 square foot facility that, when completed in September 2014, will include an indoor track, an all-purpose court, two locker rooms with restroom facilities. A support wing located on the west end of the annex will house a multi-purpose room for community-oriented activities like yoga, Zumba and martial arts, along with an office and some room for storage.

Woughter said the improvements at the Gibbs Fitness Center fits in with the University's vision of promoting wellness on the AU campus.

"Our wellness philosophy is multidimensional -- one that incorporates a holistic and education-based vision of mental and physical wellbeing," she commented. "Studies show over and over that if students are physically fit and well, they will perform better in the classroom. Any initiative that supports that fits in with AU's efforts to graduate not just academically qualified, but also holistically healthy and well students."

Because the equipment is being acquired on a three-year lease, there will be a guarantee that every student, during his or her time at AU, will be able to use brand new fitness center equipment. That's a solid selling point to offer to prospective students, and not just prospective student-athletes.

"The fitness center is a stop on the tours not just for varsity athletes but for all students," Woughter noted. "We all know that it's not just varsity athletes who work out in the fitness center. In fact, I'd even say that recreational athletes will be more positively impacted by this new program than our varsity athletes, since often the fitness center is their primary venue for working out."

Woughter said news of the fitness center upgrades has been well-received, particularly by the student body.

"It's worth noting that I have been in my position and attending Student Senate meetings for nine years now. My announcement last week about the new lease program got the most enthusiastic response to anything I've mentioned in nine years," she said.