

# THE MOUNT ‘SHAPES UP’

Transformation 2025 continues apace with the construction of a state-of-the-art recreation and fitness center

By Jessica Baltzersen

“It is our time to step forward. It is our time to reinvigorate our legacy. It is our time and it’s our turn to ‘get in shape’ for the 21st century.”

*- President H. James Williams, Ph.D.*

A field of grass often symbolizes growth and expansion—its verdant pigmentation embodies abundance, health, and freshness. It seems only fitting then that the grass enclosure to the right of the Jean Patrice Harrington, SC, Student Center is the designated development plot for a new recreation and fitness center set for completion in fall 2020.

This first-ever dedicated fitness space for the Mount community is in alignment with the University’s strategic vision plan, Transformation 2025. The new center is also symbolic of the plan’s goal to focus on developing the mind, body, and spirit of each Mount student.

“The facility was identified as the top priority of MSJ’s Transformation 2025 master plan, so we wanted it to make a strong statement for the school’s vitality and its commitment to the health and wellbeing of students,” says Mike Habel, president and CEO of BHDP Architecture, the firm tapped to complete the design of the project.

Habel recently completed his term as a member of the Mount’s Board of Trustees and is currently serving on the Campaign Committee for the new recreation and fitness center. In the initial stages, before any conceptual design was initiated, students, faculty, and administration met with design team members to identify opportunities and share their needs, ensuring that all University stakeholders were carefully considered into the creation of the new development.





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“Anyone can utilize the space...I really see it as a place where athletes and students can come together more holistically to experience the Mount at the University itself; it is therefore going to allow for the community to better experience the Mount as well,” says Trustee Chairperson Jason Niehaus '98.

**MEETING THE NEEDS OF A GROWING STUDENT POPULATION**

More than 60 percent of the Mount’s freshmen students participate in athletic activity, with 44 percent involved in one of the University’s 22 NCAA Division III teams. Because of the continual growth in athletics and group recreation events, the recreation and fitness center will help alleviate the overcrowding of current facilities and accommodate not only

athletes but the entire Mount population and nearby community members.

“We don’t have many facilities equipped to really meet the needs of our student-athlete,” says Niehaus. “Many times, our student-athletes are having to go offsite to even practice. That is additional time that that student is away from campus, away from their studies or away from social engagement.”

The center will bring that functional component of accessible resources back to campus.

One of the more expansive features will be the fieldhouse, a sizeable indoor practice and training space to accommodate multiple teams, including track and field, softball, baseball, lacrosse, and soccer. The new space will also house an NCAA regulation-size track, made up of six 200-meter



**JUST THE FACTS: THE MOUNT’S NEW RECREATION AND FITNESS CENTER**

- COST: \$18 million
- GROUNDBREAKING: April 2019
- EXPECTED COMPLETION: Fall 2020
- CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIRS: Don Bush and Mike Habel
- HONORARY CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CHAIR: Sister Jean Patrice Harrington, SC
- ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR: Kathy K. McMullen
- CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE: Donald J. Doyle Jr., '89  
Sister Barbara Hagedorn, SC, '71  
Timothy J. Schroeder  
Kenneth W. Stecher







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- Tina Blakley, head coach for the Mount’s cross country and track and field team

lanes, complete with long jump, high jump, and an interior space within the track that will enable the Mount to host communal indoor track and field events. The second level will contain a fitness area featuring state-of-the-art workout and cardiovascular equipment, such as treadmills, stair climbers, stationary bicycles, and elliptical and rowing machines, as well as a multi-purpose space for fitness classes and activities, including yoga, cross training and dance. “Aesthetically, its architectural appearance will be in harmony with the existing campus’ horizontal massing,

masonry detailing, and welcoming entrance,” adds Habel. From a sustainability perspective, the building aligns with the Sisters of Charity’s environmental focus and has been designed with many energy-efficient features, including a photovoltaic panel system on the roof, low-flow plumbing fixtures, large glass windows to that incorporate natural light, and an electrical vehicle charging station. The facility will accommodate up to five teams, each with their respective locker rooms. Amenities to round

out the extensive center include the celebrated, MSJ Hall of Fame and spirited exterior banners and signage to showcase school spirit. “The new recreation and fitness center will impress prospective students during their campus visit, perform well as the campus epicenter for athletics, and become a valued community asset by enabling members of MSJ staff, many of whom are members of the Delhi community, to enjoy the facility,” says Habel. “We are leveraging [the center] in recruiting 2020 [student-athletes] right

now,” adds Jason Susshine, head coach of the men’s lacrosse team. “I am excited to have a spot on campus that will be readily available for my team to use out of season.” “Personally, I am very enthusiastic about the new center because it shows Mount St. Joseph University is growing and transforming,” says Tina Blakley, ’15, head coach for the Mount’s cross country and track and field team. “In my 30 years here at the Mount, this will be the third ground-breaking I have participated in, and, I couldn’t be more proud about everything the Mount has accomplished, and I couldn’t be more excited about the Mount’s future,” says Steve Radcliffe, director of athletics.

FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Prior to her passing in July 2017, former Mount President Sister Jean Patrice Harrington, SC, was designated the honorary chair of the Transformation 2025 campaign. She remains the honorary chair, and the University will continue her legacy by dedicating the campaign in her name. In keeping with Sister Jean’s lifetime of service, the recreation and fitness center aligns with the Sisters of Charity’s mission to empower students as well-rounded, compassionate individuals who will make a meaningful impact on the world. Physical health and wellbeing are essential to this mission, which is also complemented by the Mount’s growing field of health care-focused academic majors such as the physician’s assistant and health and wellness degrees.

“I think the new facility will go hand-and-hand with the developing academic programs. It’s all coming together to build the Mount for the future,” says Sister Barbara Hagedorn ’71, SC. “This is the perfect attraction for students wanting a smaller school with bigger school advantages.” The momentum for new Mount ventures comes from Transformation 2025’s originator, President H. James Williams, Ph.D. “It is our time to step forward,” he says. “It is our time to reinvigorate our legacy. It is our time and it’s our turn to ‘get in shape’ for the 21st century.”



HISTORY IN THE BREAKING (GROUND)

What an exciting time to be at the Mount! On April 29, the University made history when it broke ground on its Recreation & Fitness Center, the first new building in more than 15 years. The atmosphere on campus was electric as community members heard a blessing from Sister Joan Cook, SC, ’74, followed by words of inspiration from Mount Board Chair Jason Niehaus, ’98, President Williams, Student Body President Emma O’Dell, ’19, and Athletic Director Steve Radcliffe. Joe Lion and the Mount University Band were also on hand to electrify the school spirit in the atmosphere and energize the crowd with music and cheers. The Recreation and Fitness Center will be a place to gather, to practice, to compete, and to reach personal fitness goals. The building will stand as a welcoming home for athletes and non-athletes alike, and for local alumni who want a new place to work out or host unique events. It is our hope that this state-of-the-art building, net-zero energy building will also attract new students, as well as draw more people from the Cincinnati area and beyond to learn all about the Mount. I look forward to offering Mount alumni hard hat tours as the building is constructed. In addition, we are exploring ways to keep everyone informed of the progress, including video streaming. Clearly, excitement is growing and will continue so in the years ahead. Now I ask all our generous Mount alumni, to step forward and support this university. Please prayerfully consider a gift that will solidify our future. In this issue of Mount News is an envelope where you can designate a gift either to the Mount annual fund or directly to the construction of the new Recreation & Fitness Center. The needs are many—however, the rewards great! We cannot do this without your help.

Raye Allen

Sincerely,  
Raye Allen, Vice President for Institutional Advancement