

# Recreation MANAGEMENT

IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS FOR RECREATION, SPORTS AND FITNESS FACILITIES

## Something for Everyone

Harold Alfond Forum at the University of New England in Biddeford, Maine

By Jim Ladesich

The Harold Alfond Forum entered service this academic year at the University of New England (UNE) in Biddeford, Maine. The \$20 million athletics and student life complex was made possible by a \$7 million lead gift from the Harold Alfond Foundation announced in 2010.

The 106,500-square-foot complex ranks as UNE's largest building project and gathering place thus far on its two campuses, and provides needed facilities for intercollegiate competitions, recreational activities and related academics. The new facilities anchor a developing area on the south side of Biddeford's 540-acre main campus and near a recently completed lacrosse and field hockey field, surfaced with rare blue turf, and a 300-bed suite-style student housing building. With three more residence halls, additional sports fields and other infrastructure planned on the property, UNE has clearly embarked on a significant physical expansion program.

Sasaki Associates, of Watertown, Mass., designed the multi-use complex, whose physically dominant ice rink and dual-purpose basketball/performance wings are separated by a multi-level connector. The connector has support areas for the sports teams, a fitness and weight training center, cyber-cafeteria, study space, offices, conference rooms and classroom/lab areas. Sasaki's Director of Design William Massey, AIA, LEED AP, would proudly present the complex as an example of the firm's work on this scale to future prospects.

"UNE gained a huge amount of program space for their investment," Massey said. "It's a great project with a very efficient design."

"Our Campus Center was almost immediately too small," said Alan Thibeault, assistant vice president for UNE's Planning Department. "We've grown a lot in the last 10 to 15 years to where the Center was being used almost exclusively for intercollegiate sports and offered few opportunities for recreational and intramurals except early morning or late evening."

If the same holds true at UNE as often occurs at other institutions, the state-of-the-art sports and recreation facility will likely boost athlete recruitment and potentially future enrollment. Sports at the Division III School include basketball, cross country, golf, ice hockey, lacrosse, soccer, volleyball, softball, swimming and diving teams.

The facility will also bring the recently established UNE "Nor'easter" hockey teams onto campus. The men's hockey team had previously used the multipurpose Biddeford Ice Arena located off campus and some distance away. The addition of a new women's ice hockey team would have further challenged logistics and the need for space.

Sasaki had designed an earlier building when selected to design the Alfond Forum. Wright-Ryan Construction was chosen by UNE to serve as the construction manager-at-risk. The project originated as a modified design/build program with the university, architects and prime subcontractors participating in the early planning and budget development. A principal goal was to have basic schematics, materials and operating systems specifications to establish a budget to present to the foundation for the grant, the Sasaki design principal noted. The approach proved to be a wise strategy for earning the grant and bringing the project to fruition, Massey said.

The primary materials solutions evaluated included a custom-fabricated conventional steel structure with a non-metal roof versus a Butler Manufacturing metal building solution. The Sheridan Corp., a Butler Builder that serves all of Maine, presented the Butler building system alternative, which included an integrated package of structural framing, heavily-insulated MR-24 standing seam metal roof system and a metal wall panel system with a blue-finish. The roof was later changed to the Butler CMR-24 with an energy-saving white finish. This composite roof has five inches of rigid-board insulation between the weather barrier and protective interior liner panel that Sheridan recommended as more appropriate for the special event and performance usage area.

"The evaluation concluded that the Butler Building solution offered a seven-figure savings," the architect said. "That significant savings led to quick acceptance of the alternative because we were presented with an extremely tight budget and we were able to design within it."

"We worked with Sheridan Corporation to tailor the systems to meet budget and schedule targets," Massey added.

Sasaki designed the project using the latest Revit building information modeling (BIM) system by AutoDesk. With the project completed, the database of "as-built" drawing information can be used as a 3-D tool for future facilities management.

"BIM was a valuable tool in redesigning the structure to appropriate bay sizes and column spacing that avoided physical conflicts," Massey added. "BIM gave us the ability to quickly visualize solutions and reconcile them in an efficient way and to expedite the cross-reference of trade information."

"Although we don't have 3-D capabilities now, we're moving in that direction," said Greg Hogan, UNE's facilities manager who worked with the project team once the construction was underway. "FM groups are generally not used to looking at drawings and having a 3-D model gives added understanding of what's in the building. It will be a lot better than using 2-D mechanical and electrical documents."

To vary the roof elevations and most efficiently accommodate cut and fill requirements, the design recesses the ice rink wing to eight feet below grade. Because spectators walk down into the rink, the Hussey seating is top-loaded and sized for 900 spectators.

In addition to basketball, the fieldhouse located on the other side of the connector supports other sports, intramurals and performances. The floor area is a combination of the Connor Resichannel wood court and the manufacturer's Elastiplus synthetic system on the adjacent space that is separated by a curtain. The wood court will subdivide into two cross courts with two additional basketball courts and areas for badminton, volleyball or other activities on the synthetic floor area. Hussey also supplied the fixed seating for 1,200 spectators in the arena that will accept removables to create a total of 3,000 seats for performances and other special events.

The two-level connector is a conventional steel-framed element with the main entrance into the facility. It has a spacious ticket lobby with great views into the rink and fieldhouse, a 90-seat cafeteria with a commercial kitchen,



PHOTO COURTESY OF BUTLER MANUFACTURING

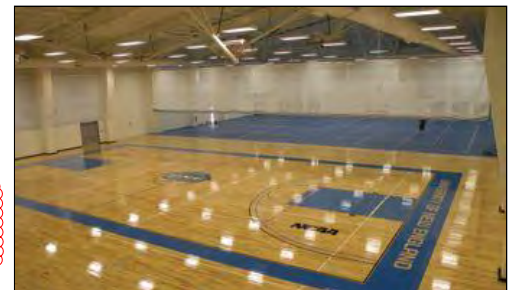


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and large mechanical room. The cafeteria was designed as a destination point and sized to serve the evolving student housing. There are custom millwork lockers built into each of the men's and women's locker rooms and a visitor locker room. UNE also included a Strength and Conditioning Center with 15 equipment stations that absorb two-thirds of the floor space with one-third devoted to free weights.

The upper level has 15 coaches' and 14 academic offices, two dual-use conference rooms divided by a folding door that opens to create a single large meeting area with views of the rink and basketball/performance court. The classrooms include custom-designed teaching and laboratory space for UNE's Athletic Sports Training and Applied Exercise Science academic programs.

In keeping with opportunities to incorporate green features into buildings, the roof and walls have cool-rated color finishes.

Sports and recreation play an important role at this New England institution that now has a showcase environment in which to support a broad range of athletic activities.



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**Butler Manufacturing:** [www.buttermfg.com](http://www.buttermfg.com)

**Sasaki Associates:** [www.sasaki.com](http://www.sasaki.com)

**University of New England:** [www.une.edu](http://www.une.edu)