

Fitness Center Opening Next Year

Goolrick Addition Slated To Be Finished In December 2003, Open In January 2004

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Staff Writer

After many delays, the Mary Washington College fitness center is now scheduled to be completed on Dec. 1, 2003 and will be available for use after winter break on Jan. 19.

The initial bid for the fitness center was made on Feb. 27, 2002, for over \$3.2 million by the Mary Washington Department of Purchasing. The notice to proceed was sent to the contractors, Haley Builders Inc. out of Ashland, Va., who broke ground on May 17, 2002.

Due to 14 change orders and bad weather, the completion date has been moved back three different times. The initial date of March 15, 2003 was moved to March 18, then April 17 and is now Dec. 1.

With the many changes that needed to be made the cost of the center has gone up. Adding cable for television outlets, a handicap ramp, frames for roof deck support and a conduit for future speakers are a few changes. The cost of the fitness center as of the last change order is \$3,323,132, which is \$54,882 over the initial bidding amount.

The wet weather last fall, winter and spring had a lot to do with the delays, according to project manager Matt Duerksen. The soil didn't dry out in the cold weather and the fitness center was at site work stage last fall and winter.

However, this happened across the construction industry. Duerksen said once the projects from last fall and winter were delayed, the work and projects that were slated for the spring were delayed as well.

"It is a snowball effect which we are still feeling today," Duerksen said. "A case in point is the roofing industry. They couldn't keep up last fall and winter because of the rain, thus the jobs got pushed forward, delaying jobs like the roofing of the fitness center."

Haley Builders Inc. usually has 20 or more workers on site at one time depending on the workload. The landscape, exterior stone trim and interior finishes still need to be done, Duerksen said.

The faculty are not surprised about the delays of the fitness center.

"I've never in my life heard of a construction project on the state level that has come off on time and/or under budget," said rowing coach Brad Holdren. "I am disappointed with the delays, but it will be nice for the entire campus

community when it finally opens."

Director of Athletics Edward Hegmann said, "This is a pattern we have experienced before at Mary Washington, and I am sure we will be through it again."

For Bob Liebau, associate director of campus recreation and fitness center, the delays have worked in his favor.

"It just takes time and you have to deal with it," Liebau said. "I have been busy though. The delayed opening has allowed me to prepare more thoroughly for the opening of the center."

After leaving the head trainer position this past year, Liebau said part of his new role in the fitness center will involve the daily management of the facility and helping patrons set up training

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programs if they desire.

The upper level of the new fitness center will house treadmills, cardiovascular equipment, rowers, bikes and stair steppers. There will be six televisions hanging from the ceiling and the machines will each have headphone hook-ups.

The lower level will contain the weight machines and the free weights. There will also be two televisions for people to watch as they lift weights.

When the new fitness center opens, it will have the same hours as the Goolrick gym.

Monday
through
Thursday;

7:30 a.m.

to 10

p.m.,

Friday,

7:30 a.m.

to 9:30

p.m.,

Saturday,

10 a.m. to

6 p.m.

and

Sunday,

noon to

10 p.m.

Record will be kept of who comes in when and after the first three months, Liebau and John Macdonald will track the pattern of use and change the times if needed.

The facility will only be available to faculty, staff and full-time students, Macdonald said. This is due to the operations budget, which is funded by the student fees. The facility is limited to those who pay the fees. Part-time students do not pay these fees.

Both the new and old fitness centers will be used and, according to Clint Often, sports information director, "It will be interesting to see what effect the new facility has on the existing weight room, as the new center is designed more for students and faculty usage, rather than athletics."

However, Macdonald said there will be certain rules for the new facility to keep the crowding under control.

"Athletes will be able to use the new facility

as an individual, not as a team," Macdonald said. "When there was first talk about a new facility, President Anderson asked that it be a recreational facility."

Holdren said in an e-mail his team is being positively affected by the opening of the fitness center.

"The current weight room is not open during the day to regular user traffic because of weight training classes," he said. "The opening of the fitness center will allow all of the student body, my team included, to get in their daily workouts in a more timely fashion which in turn will free up more space during the crowded hours in the

weight room.

I do not have any plans to use the new fitness center during organized practices. It is my understanding that it is for daily use by individuals."

Macdonald said, "The new facility will be a great

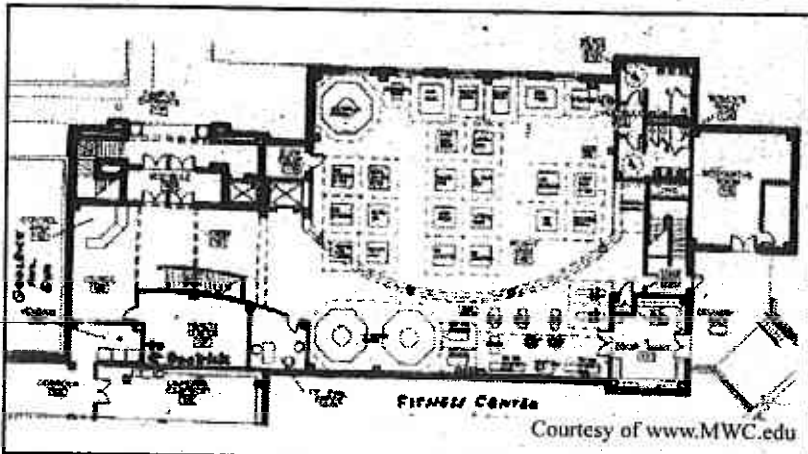
addition to the college. Students don't like to go down to the Goolrick gym. They call it the dungeon. In the new fitness center, there are skylights and big open windows to make it an airy, bright facility."

Students agree that the new facility will be a great addition to the college.

"I don't use the Goolrick gym," said junior Allison Broglie, who works out at Sports and Health Club in Central Park. "It's hard to get on the machines when it's crowded because there aren't very many and not much variety either. The machines are old and don't work right. I am excited for the new gym to open because I will definitely use it."

Senior Erik Rodriguez said he agrees.

"It's not so much of a disappointment," he said. "The delays have happened because of the rain this summer so there is a reason why they are being delayed. I am anxious to see what this new facility will look like and hopefully get to use it."



Blueprint of the lower level of the new Fitness Center.