

INVESTING IN WELLNESS AND ATHLETIC EXCELLENCE AT CENTRE COLLEGE

by Michael Strynick

The largest, most comprehensive construction project to date at Centre College will create a 135,000-square-foot facility devoted to wellness and athletic excellence. It will benefit the entire campus community and set a new standard for holistic education at top-ranked residential liberal arts colleges across the nation.







PHOTO COURTESY CENTRE COLLEGE AND MSA SPORTS

Enhancing Student Success

Designed in partnership with Cincinnati-based architects MSA Sport, the \$50 million project reflects Centre's commitment to invest in facilities and programs that enhance student success, hone leadership skills and prepare graduates for lives of impact.

"This new facility will allow us to continue attracting talented students from around the nation and across the globe not only to work with our world-class faculty but also to participate in a premier athletic and wellness program with dedicated coaches and staff who teach important leadership skills such as teamwork, resilience and determination," said Centre President Milton Moreland.

"In the process," he emphasized, "Centre will extend into the next century its 200-year-plus history of producing great leaders."

A campus-wide strategic planning effort made clear the need for expanding wellness and athletic facilities in order to continue the long history and clear mission of training leaders

who can make a difference in the world. "This significant investment exemplifies Centre's continuing commitment to excellence," Moreland said. "It will strengthen our earned reputation as one of the nation's foremost colleges focused on leadership development and career readiness."

He added, "The Initiative for Wellness and Athletic Excellence represents a transformational moment for Centre College and will have a profound impact on our ability to offer a deeply holistic academic experience, elevating our mission to develop mind, body and spirit."

An aggressive fundraising campaign to support this new initiative is already in progress. Early commitments, including two lead gifts, exceed three-quarters of the projected cost, leaving approximately \$12 million to raise to fully fund the project. This substantial investment reflects the desire of the lead donors to challenge the Centre community, known for its pride and generosity, to share this vision and take the mantle of propelling their future giving to an even higher potential.

The expansive new building will continue a series of recent campus construction projects totaling more than \$30 million and is an important next step in the strategic plan to equip the College to better serve its mission and the needs of families and students for the next fifty years.

"Centre is accelerating out of the global pandemic by investing in spaces that will enhance the student experience, grow enrollment, and provide increased health and wellness opportunities for the entire campus community," said Mark Nunnally, chair of the Centre College Board of Trustees.

Included in the overall construction project, Farris Stadium, built in 1923, will be transformed to provide world-class facilities for football, men's lacrosse, and track and field, and also provide new seating, hospitality spaces and an upgraded press box. In addition, Gary Wright Field will be relocated to create a new and enhanced experience for Centre's baseball team.

Beyond the wellness and athletic excellence project, the Centre College Board of Trustees



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—Mark Nunnally, chair of the Centre College Board of Trustees.

also approved additional funding to repurpose what will eventually be the College’s natatorium, upgrade the softball field, completely renovate three residence halls in the Old Quad and build a new greenhouse.

Life Trustee J. David Grissom is particularly excited about the leadership opportunities these projects will provide.

“I am proud to be affiliated with an institution that is prioritizing health and wellness opportunities and investing in facilities that prepare our students to be leaders in the classroom, on the field and in their communities,” he said.

“By building on more than 200 years of academic and athletic excellence,” Grissom

added, “this new facility will increase Centre’s commitment to health and wellness for its students, faculty and staff, as well as enhance the drive for competitive excellence for Centre’s outstanding scholar-athletes.”

Key components of the initiative for wellness and athletic excellence building design include:

- A 10-lane, 50-meter pool with a moveable bulkhead, an integrated diving well with 1-meter and 3-meter diving boards, and seating for 700
- A six-lane, 200-meter indoor track and turf infield with event seating for 800; this area

can easily be increased exponentially by using the turf infield and will double as a large space for campus events, such as the annual Commencement ceremony, concerts and debates

- A 6,000-square-foot strength and wellness center
- A nutrition center that includes an educational component
- Hospitality and engagement areas
- Locker rooms and multipurpose event spaces for activities such as yoga
- An enhanced Athletics Hall of Fame

While benefitting all 24 varsity teams, the aquatic and the track and field components of the new facility will offer the opportunity to strategically expand rosters by as many as seventy student-athletes. All of these efforts have a clear goal in mind.

“Along with other recent projects to enhance and expand academic facilities, create a new student success center, and add and renovate

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residence halls,” said Moreland, “this project makes clear Centre’s mission to offer an impactful campus experience that prepares its graduates to move the world forward in ways driven by purpose and meaning.”

A groundbreaking for the project is being planned for October, with completion anticipated within 18 months. The relocation of Gary Wright Field for baseball is projected to be completed sooner.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Michael Stryck is Centre College’s chief communications officer. Stryck earned his Ph.D. in comparative literature at Binghamton University, SUNY, and completed an NEH Summer Seminar at Yale University. He taught at Georgia Tech, in the Kent State and University of Wisconsin systems, Davidson College, and Wake Forest University. Prior to his appointment at Centre, Stryck worked as a Strategic Partner with Patton McDowell & Associates, a Charlotte-based consultancy that provides philanthropic counsel and organizational strategy.



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