

Class sizes are small, allowing for closer working relationships among students and professors, and students can more easily get to know one another in class and around campus. As a student-centered institution, Gustavus empowers its students to pursue a path of self-discovery, to collaborate, to embrace new perspectives, and to develop social and critical thinking skills—all qualities which benefit graduates as they enter a highly competitive job market.

Integral to further strengthening Gustavus' student-centered culture is its commitment to promoting health and wellness. Such a commitment has resulted in a major overhaul of the campus Wellness and Activities Facility, known as the Lund Center. The facility opened its doors in 1984 and is currently undergoing an expansion that nearly doubles the original size to 365,000 square feet. In terms of achieving optimal functionality, the Lund Center's expansion will address two primary needs: first, to provide state-of-the-art wellness

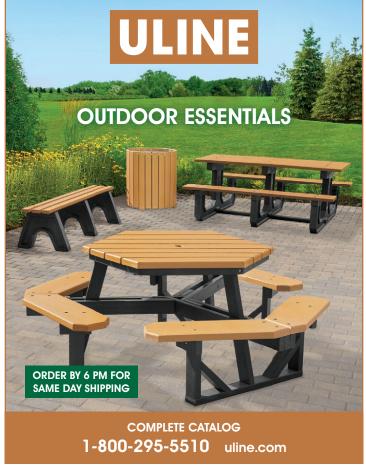
space and equipment for all students and staff; and second, to improve and add student gathering spaces, locker rooms, and office space. Kraus-Anderson, the construction company appointed to complete the \$62 million project, broke ground in April 2021. Thanks to Kraus-Anderson's diligent and steadfast work, in addition to the support it receives from the architectural firm of BWBR, Gustavus has celebrated the completion of the project's first phase as recently as April 2022.

## Balancing Traditional Campus Aesthetics with Fresh Ideas

Gustavus' 350-acre campus is lush with vegetation and ample green spaces, and it contains striking Kasota Stone buildings such as the Old Main, Rundstrom, and the Anderson Social Science Center. The expansion is located on the west side of the current Lund Center for Athletics and Health Exercise Science, overlooking Gustavus' football stadium as well as the College's 125-acre

Arboretum. According to Tim Kennedy, Vice President for Marketing and Communication at Gustavus, the location of the expansion was chosen because it "provides a gateway for the students and staff using the facility to move easily from indoor activity spaces to outdoor recreation and athletic facilities," most of which are located primarily on the west side of campus.

As with many other construction projects, staying true to campus aesthetics while also providing spaces that stand out in exciting ways poses definite challenges. "The goal [has been] to bridge the classical red brick masonry and locally quarried Kasota Stone facades from many of the other buildings on campus while [also] incorporating the vertical nature of the window fenestrations in the newer buildings." The exteriors of the new construction include creatively used pre-cast concrete that mimics Kasota Stone, and they have been paired with the red brick masonry of the original exterior. Campus dwellers are welcomed





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into the building by transparent, bird-safe glass that leads the eye towards a 10,000 square foot cardio and group fitness space. Gustavus and BWBR architects prioritized staying true to campus aesthetics while also creating a modern, naturally lit facility, one that balances a traditional look and feel with fresh ideas. The facility is open and inviting, offering a spectacular view of the sprawling southern Minnesota countryside.

### **A Story of Overcoming Obstacles** and Shaping Gustavus' Future

A major victory of the expansion project is that Phase I has been completed on schedule, despite the unpredictability that comes with building during a pandemic. Kraus-Anderson and BWBR have contended with labor shortages, material and supply chain issues, and COVID-19 protocols. The good news: contingency plans were in place that helped those on and off site to reprioritize and find focus. Unifying as a team allowed the group to adapt and present creative solutions. The \$24.6 million Phase I of the project features a 72,000-square-foot athletic and fitness facility addition, including 10,000 square feet of new weight room space,



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Phase II of the expansion will include the complete renovation of the existing facility along with a new 53,000 square-foot practice facility, plus the addition of a new entrance at the northeast corner of the building. Upon completion of the project, the Lund Center will offer vastly enhanced spaces for wellness as well as academic programs in health, exercise science, and athletic training. The facility will serve as a huge boost to the men's and women's athletic programs, and the broader impact of the expansion is its efficacy as a recruitment tool to prospective Gusties, including student-athletes.

Not only will the expanded Lund Center serve as a setting for summer campers of all ages, but it will also operate as a new venue for Gustavus' annual Nobel Conference, a major event on the St. Peter campus that draws thousands of students, alumni, and community members. Attendees will be able to attend speeches and panel discussions led by experts from around the nation



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and world, including Nobel Laureates. The speakers for the 2022 gathering in the fall will focus on mental health among young people, a topic that nicely aligns with the Lund Center's role in providing a space for health and wellness.

#### **A Commitment to Sustainability**

Gustavus' campus-wide commitment to sustainability informs its ambitions for realizing LEED Gold status. The College is working towards reducing campus energy usage 25% by 2025 and becoming a zero-waste campus.

Phase I of the project, for instance, saw the adoption of several sustainable strategies. Embodied carbon associated with the project was greatly reduced through the reuse and renovation of an existing facility. Improved wellness has been achieved through increased access to daylight via additional windows; acoustics were improved via new sound absorptive materials and other strategies; and renovation materials were vetted via multiple sustainable criteria, including considerations of human health impacts, responsible sourcing, and limiting VOCs. Other sustainable efforts included the elimination of high impact refrigerants, and the project's solar heat island effect was reduced through the use of high reflectance roofing and sidewalks.

#### The Lund Center's Transformative Impact

The community at Gustavus Adolphus College can marvel at the remarkable transformation of the Lund Center, particularly with the completion of Phase I. Gustavus, the architectural firm BWBR, and the general contractor Kraus-Anderson have all united with a common mission. That they have managed to accomplish so much during a global pandemic speaks to a collective determination to adapt, persevere, and find resilience together. As Tim Kennedy at Gustavus aptly says, "[The pandemic] could have easily disrupted the project, but we were able to turn it into the dream we always wanted it to be."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dr. David Vinson has a PhD in English with specializations in transatlantic literature and cultural studies. He is a committed scholar, teacher, and dad. If you ever meet David, avoid the subject of soccer. His fandom borders on the truly obnoxious.

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