

news

Rec center makes policy changes to keep Eagle Nation safe

GRACIE WILSON
AU-Live Managing Editor

As students make their return to Ashland University this fall, they can expect to see changes made to combat the spread of coronavirus and the Rec Center is no exception as they take steps to make sure they are keeping their facility safe and sanitary.

“The Rec Center is going to look a lot different than when [students] left here in March,” Janel Molnar, Director of Recreational Services at AU said. “We still have the same weight equipment, circuit equipment [and] cardio equipment but it’s just in different locations so that we’re providing for space between users.”

The Rec Center has made sure to accommodate students in a way that allows them to use the facility as much as they can while still providing for physical distancing guidelines and proper sanitization.



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2020recreationmovement.com lets students access workouts virtually from all over the country free of charge.

In order to comply with these new guidelines, some areas of the Rec Center are closed. These areas include the golf simulator, billiard tables, sauna, hot tub and climbing wall as well as the racquetball and volleyball courts.

While these changes will be seen by students and Rec Center users once they are inside, changes can also be noticed as soon as they walk in the door.

“We changed how our card swipe is for customer service,” Molnar said. “The member will swipe the

card themselves, then they will show their card to customer service to verify.

The Campus Shield app that students were instructed to download will also be an important factor for students using the Rec Center. All users will need to show the customer service desk that they have the green badge on the app upon entry.

Perhaps the most important part of the updated entry policies for the Rec Center is the requirement for students to wear a mask at all times.

“Students will need to have a face mask on...when they enter and it has to be kept on the entire time they are in [the Rec Center] including if they are using weight equipment or cardio equipment,” Molnar said.

There is only one exception to the mask policy and that is for pool users, as “the mask should be worn onto the pool deck, removed to

swim and put back on when getting out of the water,” Molnar said.

The Rec Center staff has noted that their mask policy will be strictly enforced throughout their facility.

“If someone is not wearing their mask, we’re going to ask them to leave. The mask that someone is wearing is protecting other people, so we don’t want to put anyone else at risk because of someone who is not wearing their mask,” Molnar said.

Along with updated guidelines

in place to keep Rec Center users safe, the cleaning procedures within the facility have also been updated. These procedures include cleaning all of the surfaces that are being used twice a day and then cleaning of all high touch surfaces every two hours Molnar said.

“We have always done a good job with our cleaning; however, it is stepped up,” Molnar said. Part of the stepped-up cleaning procedures also includes the use of electrostatic sprayers to be used after hours for cleaning the workout equipment.

Part of the responsibility of keeping campus safe will rest on the student users of the Rec Center also. If someone uses a piece of equipment, they are asked to clean it with the provided cleaning spray before and after use.

Students will still be able to utilize the Rec Center for more than just their health and fitness needs.

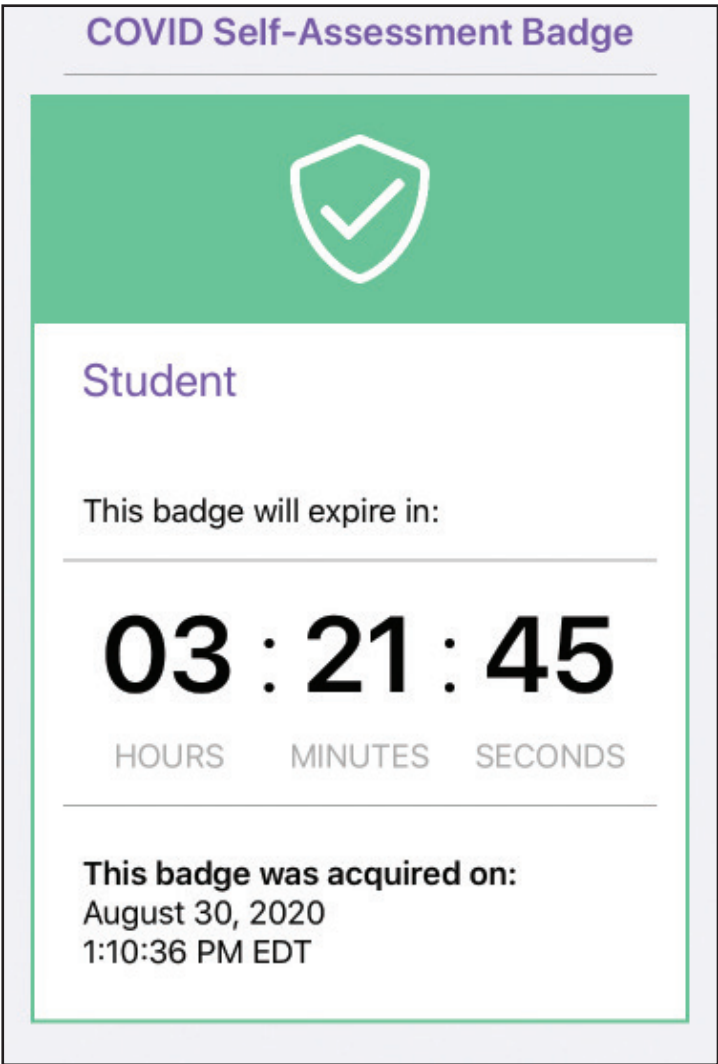
“We still have seating that is within the facility as we did before but on a more limited basis,” Molnar said. “It’s still a place if someone wants to come do their homework or if they want to be here to do their virtual classes, there are still some leather chairs and high-top tables.”

Users of the Rec Center can also expect to see less community traffic in the building this semester as the facility is limited to use by Ashland University only.

“We are not allowing guests this year,” Molnar said. “In the past we had the guest passes...but we are keeping it to our Ashland University community. It’s just for our students, faculty, staff and their spouses.”

Along with all of the updated changes and procedures inside the building, the Rec Center staff have also been putting programs in motion for students to use who may not be comfortable coming back or for students who attend AU virtually.

There is a website available to AU students called 2020recreational-



GRACIE WILSON
All Rec Center users must present the COVID-19 self assessment badge from the Campus Shield app upon entering the building

movement.com that has over 100 universities that... upload their group exercise classes. All classes are free of charge.

“So, you could take part in a group exercise class from across the country,” Molnar said.

Since face-to-face Group X classes at AU are suspended for now, students now have a way to tune in virtually from anywhere.

“We’re really trying to think about creative offerings that we can do for students whether it is in person or if it’s virtual,” Molnar said. “Whatever it may be, we want to continue to keep students connected, continue to keep them moving; whether it’s within the facility or outside on their own.”

While these changes to the Rec

Center will feel different for this fall, it does not mean that this is how it will always be.

“If things ease up, then more areas will be open,” Molnar said. “Although this is how we are starting fall semester, it does not mean it’s how we are ending fall semester.”

Updated hours for the fall semester are Monday-Friday 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. and 12 p.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. with Tuffy’s smoothie Bar and the Rec Center academic wing remaining open during the mid-day closure Monday-Friday.

FSL gets creative with philanthropy and recruiting following COVID-19 guidelines

GRACE SCARBERRY
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Due to coronavirus safety precautions, Ashland University fraternities and sororities have been forced to explore new ways of accomplishing their very mission; to develop a supportive community of brothers and sisters that is empowered to lead and serve, creating engaged citizens of the future.

Although some events and traditions will still happen, the Greek community is now planning online options and socially distanced functions and gatherings.

Dustin Hargis, Director of Fraternity and Sorority life (FSL) and Student Leadership and Residence Life, explained that during a typical year, the community will raise up to \$80,000 of philanthropic donations, but he is concerned donations to the chapters will not be as available this year due to Covid-19 related financial issues.

“When we look at some of our larger scale events we’ll have to see how they can adapt to a universal format. One of our groups is looking at still doing a walk-a-thon but looking into streaming it in a vir-

tual setting,” he said.

This will allow people to tune in that may not otherwise be comfortable attending in person and FSL can still collect donations.

According to Molly Madill, recruitment chair of Theta Phi Alpha, raising money for charities is the main reason to hold membership in a sorority.

Hargis believes this year, instead of focusing on how much money the chapters can raise, the focus should be how they can raise any at all.

“It’s definitely going to be an interesting year for the philanthropic side,” he said. “I think it’s also important we recognize it might not be the most optimal time for people to donate. Covid is hitting everyone, so funds are definitely a little different for some people so that’s an aspect we’re looking at as well. Maybe the focus isn’t raising as much money this year, but how we can continue to raise.”

For example, the annual lip-sync battle that collects donations for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital will still be held in November, but all routines will be pre-recorded and streamed online, as well as virtual silent auctions that are typi-



SUBMITTED BY: MATT GIFFIN
From left: Mike Serrato, Justin Politzer, Michael Wolfrum, Matt giffin, Cam Rid-enour, Cam Deal

cally held in person by different sororities.

Hargis hopes this will lead to a larger audience since more people, both on campus and in the Ashland community will now have easier access.

“On a normal year there’s usually a lot of community engagement,” he said. “We’re not just trying to get people that are a part of the frater-

nity and sorority community or the AU community, but also the larger Ashland community.”

Philanthropy won’t be the only struggle the chapters are facing. Recruitment must also be modified due to necessary Covid-19 precautions.

Sororities have transferred to online recruitment entirely and fraternities are looking into socially dis-

tanced events to help keep a sense of normality.

“It will be very different to see and have those conversations over zoom,” Madill said. It’s nice to be in person to really get to know what people value and just get to know people on a personal level. It’s still face to face but it will definitely be something to get used to.”

Fraternity recruitment is going to look pretty similar except for the social distancing guidelines during the events the chapters do.

“We are planning on having some events where people are able to hang out and play some yard games, like a fruit baseball event where you can smash some fruit with some baseball bats, which sounds like a good time,” Hargis said.

There will be plenty of events going on, but when individuals are there, masks and six-foot social distancing are required.

Despite all the changes, Hargis is optimistic.

“The chapter members are just excited to be back on campus with their brothers and sisters... we’re excited for a good year,” he said.

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