

Twice the advantage

It's the way it works in the best of relationships: each makes the other better.

The new DeVos Fieldhouse is highly anticipated for the role it will play as home court for the volleyball and men's and women's basketball teams, as a venue for other campus and community events, as home for the athletic training and kinesiology programs, and for the way it will enhance the "Eastern Gateway" to both Holland and Hope.

The building is no less eagerly awaited, though, for how it will complement the college's Dow Center, which is marking its 25th anniversary this fall. In some ways, the cascade effect on Dow—which will be able to emphasize anew its identity as a place for all members of the Hope community to be active—will be as electrifying as the direct impact of the new building itself.

"The DeVos Fieldhouse is going to be great for intercollegiate athletics, the community's going to love it, it's going to be just an absolute showcase as you sweep around Chicago Drive," said Dr. George Kraft, professor of kinesiology and a member of the faculty since 1967. "But I'm just as excited about what it's going to re-enable us to do with the Dow Center."

Dr. Kraft was the Dow Center's first director, serving until 1988. He noted that Dow was designed as an activity center rather than as spectator space. To stress the point, the building was even constructed without bleachers, except for an otherwise unusable area overlooking the pool.

"We didn't want to waste space with bleachers," Dr. Kraft said. "Our catch phrases were 'participate, don't spectate' and 'be physically active.' That really was the whole thrust of this facility."

It's a philosophy that continues, but program developments in the past 25 years have made keeping the vision a challenge. The gymnasium is regularly occupied by portable bleachers for home games in volleyball and women's basketball, both of which have grown substantially in the past quarter century, and home playoffs in men's basketball (the floor at the Civic Center is shorter than regulation and thus ineligible). Multiple teams practice in the building, even some of the outdoor sports when the weather is bad, and as seasons have extended they have dominated more of the schedule.

No one is complaining about the strong interest that lies behind the increased demand for the facility by the intercollegiate athletic program. The situation does, however, limit the Dow's availability to others.

And others are interested in using the place, constantly.



A large and enthusiastic crowd enjoys women's basketball from makeshift bleachers in the Dow Center gymnasium. In providing an attractive and spacious new home court for sports like women's basketball, the DeVos Fieldhouse will also help make Dow more available as an activity-oriented center—the purpose for which the building was originally designed, and also for which it remains highly in demand.

"I'm pretty confident that we run as many people through this building as any other building on campus on a daily basis," said Brian Morehouse '91, who is director of the Dow Center and also head women's basketball coach. "It's just amazing the increased emphasis that students are putting on physical activity."

It's not only that Hope has more students—3,068 today, as opposed to 2,371 in 1978. In keeping with the building's involvement-oriented approach, for example, the college has developed a strong intramural program open to all students. And the students have responded—nearly 50 percent participated in intramurals last year. Many of the activities take place at Dow, some running until midnight just to fit them all in.

In addition to participating in such organized activity, students are taking advantage of the building individually. Last year, based on campus use patterns, three racquetball courts were converted into a two-floor cardio room and weight room center, replacing the original, outgrown weight room. The new rooms, Morehouse noted, are almost always busy—even shortly after the Dow opens at 6:30 a.m.

"I think students are finding their fitness niche in a variety of ways," he said.

The enthusiastic voluntary use complements one of the building's academic priorities. The college's Health Dynamics course, developed in tandem with the Dow Center itself and required of all students, emphasizes fostering wellness and behaviors to help assure fitness for life. Even when the kinesiology faculty's offices move to DeVos, Dow will remain the major venue for the program.

Staff member Eva Dean Folkert '83 enjoys a unique perspective on the impact that the Dow and DeVos together will have. Through last year, she worked as an assistant in the intramurals program. This year, she started serving as senior women's administrator for athletics. She is also the college's ticket manager for athletics.

Her experience, however, runs even deeper than that. As a prospective student in the late 1970s, she found the Dow's premise so compelling that it convinced her to enroll.

"It was the academic program that initially got me interested in Hope, but it was this building that got me here," she said. "It was here for me in every sense as a student. It was here for me for activity classes. It was here for me as an intercollegiate athlete. It was here for me as an intramurals participant. It was here for me as someone who just wanted to stay in shape and be here every day on my own, doing whatever kind of workout I was going to do."

From working with intramurals, Folkert understands how fully used by students the Dow is today as well. Through her work with athletics, she appreciates the difference that an outstanding arena can make.

She also knows that an average home women's basketball game draws some 600 fans—more than many Division I schools enjoy—which the Dow was never intended to handle. And DeVos will mean being able to say "yes" to 1,000 more fans who want to catch the next home Hope-Calvin men's game, because the new building will seat more than the aging Civic Center.

"I'm excited about the new building on two levels," she said. "I'm excited that our intercollegiate athletes will have a first-rate, top-notch arena to play and practice in, and I'm excited that the rest of our students will get Dow back as a participatory facility."

"For each of these constituencies, with Dow and DeVos together we'll have the best of both worlds," Folkert said. "The hard part now is waiting." ↵

Legacies: A Vision of Hope

has four primary initiatives: building the new science center and renovating the Peale Science Center; constructing the DeVos Fieldhouse; increasing the endowment; and general campus improvements, including the construction of the Martha Miller Center for communication, modern and classical languages, international education and multicultural life.

While the Hope family has responded generously in making gifts to the initiatives, the need for support continues.

The projected cost for the DeVos Fieldhouse project is \$22 million, of which \$16.6 million has been raised. The hope is to break ground this coming spring, contingent upon successful conclusion of the fundraising effort for the building.

Thus far, support for the science center totals \$27 million. Total project cost, including the new building and the renovation of Peale, is \$36 million.

A major challenge grant from The Kresge Foundation of Troy, Mich., provides a particular emphasis as the

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college seeks to complete funding for the new science center. Hope will receive the \$850,000 grant upon raising an additional \$3.1 million for the new building by March of 2004. Thus far, the college has raised

\$2.8 million to meet the Kresge challenge.

Strong response from the Hope family has yielded \$38.7 million for endowment, exceeding the goal of \$30 million. At the same time, Hope's endowment-per-student remains extremely low among peer institutions, and the difficult economic climate makes building the endowment an even greater priority than when the campaign's goals were established.

Funding for the Martha Miller Center totals \$4.1 million of the \$12.5 million projected cost, and for other campus projects (such as the renovation of Graves and Lubbers halls) totals \$2.5 million of the \$10.5 million goal.

For more information about *Legacies: A Vision of Hope*, please visit the college online at www.hope.edu, call (616) 395-7775 or e-mail advancement@hope.edu.