



REC CENTER ADAPTS TO COVID-19

The rec center placed restrictions due to the pandemic. Photo by Joseph Chapman/The Jambar

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The Andrews Recreation and Wellness Center looks more than a bit different this semester. Students can still participate in group classes and use exercise equipment — with some caveats. Ryan McNicholas, the associate director of Campus Recreation, discussed some of the changes in place due to COVID-19.

“The biggest one is the face coverings. We did that basically for everyone’s safety; not only for patrons using the building but our staff as well,” McNicholas said. “Granted, it might be somewhat of a challenge for everyone to wear a face covering while they’re running or doing some exercising, right? So we ask that all patrons monitor their exercise levels, take more frequent water breaks, maybe lower their intensity, those kinds of things.”

Contact sports, including intramural sports, will not be available this semester. The basketball courts will be closed to host all group classes, with the exception of Spinning. Equipment is disinfected daily with an electrostatically charged cleaning device which disinfects surfaces quickly and efficiently.

In addition, students are unable to use locker rooms or

water fountains this semester. McNicholas said students should come to the rec center in workout clothes and use the water bottle refill stations in the strength and conditioning area to fill their bottles.

Gianna Davila, Group X student supervisor, said the rec center changed group classes to adhere to safety guidelines. Registration for each individual class is online this semester and is open until class starts, so students can sign up the same day as their desired class. Spin classes are still at a maximum capacity of 25 while other classes have had their sizes cut by as much as 50%.

“So all the instructors have been told to, you know, get extra breaks for patrons to catch their breath, extra water breaks, we’ll have staff walking around to kind of check in from different angles to make sure that everybody’s okay,” Davila said.

Cassandra Smith, head of facility operations at the rec center and a graduate student in the Department of Counseling’s Student Affairs program, said her exercise habits have been different during the pandemic.

“When you think of going to a gym, you think of going with a buddy to lift so that when you have somebody spot you and that sort of thing. If you’re coming with people you

don’t already live with, [make sure] that you’re practicing good social distancing,” she said.

Certain areas of the rec center are being restricted in regards to their capacity to ensure social distancing is possible.

“We did one person per every 150 square feet of space, so that means in that particular area of the rec you can only have 10 patrons at a time,” Smith said. “So when we have 11 people [in the dumbbell area]... we’ll say if somebody’s not using a bench, we have different places in the facility that you can take the weights and go and work out in a different area.”

Smith said the rec center has implemented policies to make exercise safe and enjoyable for everyone.

“While it’s not the most ideal situation for some people to have to wear something like a face covering while they’re working out, I think it’s a very simple and easy way to not only protect yourself but to protect your fellow penguin,” she said. “As someone who likes in-person classes, if this helps protect my ability to come to work, to go to classes, and to keep the penguin community healthy, I think it’s a step worth taking.”