

UNIVERSITY RECREATION AND WELL-BEING

OU Rec Well celebrating 20 years of shaping campus culture

Anniversary events include throwback dance party, OU's largest
dodgeball game



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This month, Oakland University's Department of Recreation and Well-Being (OU Rec Well) will celebrate 20 years of getting students staff, faculty, and community members to move their minds and bodies.

"I am so proud of the impact that our programs, facilities and services has had on the Oakland University community," said OU Rec Well Director Greg Jordan, who was there when the former Recreation Center opened its doors in 1998.



The OU Rec Well will celebrate its 20th anniversary this month. University Recreation and Well-Being Director Greg Jordan was there when the former Recreation Center opened its doors in 1998.

"The opening of the Rec Center was part of an overall plan to enhance campus and/or student life at OU," Jordan said. "The physical facility has changed over the years as we repurposed spaces, and the name of the department was changed in May 2016 from Campus Recreation to University Recreation and Well-Being to more accurately reflect what we do and our emphasis on healthy lifestyles.

"But what hasn't changed over the years is that fact that we make a difference in people's lives through their connection with our department," he added. "That's what keeps me coming to work each and every day."

Over the past 20 years, the department has grown to include 14 full-time staff and two graduate assistants. It currently includes the Recreation Center, Aquatic Center, and the Recreation and Athletic Outdoor Complex, which opened in 2014.

Some of the department's most notable achievements include the fall 2018 grand opening of the new Hillcrest residence hall, which includes a 1,600-square-foot recreation space that will serve as an extension for OU Rec Well, as well partnerships with Environmental Health and Safety, the American Cancer Society, and the CVS Foundation for Tobacco and Smoking Incentives on Campus, which awarded Oakland University a \$20,000 grant as part of an initiative to create a smoke-free campus at OU.

"Changes over the years have been gradual and mostly due to changes in staff and their individual interests, as well as changes demanded by the customer base," said OU Rec Well Aquatics Coordinator Michael Rossi. "Racquetball courts have become fitness spaces, fitness equipment has changed and improved, and programs have grown with the influx of greater numbers of students as the campus has grown. Recreation has also changed to include things such as outdoor pursuits and well-being to better reflect a more holistic view of what it means to be fit."

Rossi was the last of the original staff hired to oversee the Recreation Center when it opened in 1998.

"I was excited to come to Oakland University and Campus Recreation 20 years ago," Rossi said. "I'm equally excited to return for another year to see new co-workers, new student staff and a new group of students who will become part of my life, and hopefully they will indulge me by listening to my ramblings and learn a little but from me along the way."

According to the 2017-18 Annual Report, the OU Rec Well is currently the second largest student employer on campus with over 150 student employees. The Recreation Center, Aquatic Center, and Recreation and Athletic Outdoor Complex serve as a training ground for students to gain real experience working with facilities, programs and members.

"Hundreds of student employees and graduate assistants contribute to our success through their service," Jordan said. "Their contributions toward our student participants and members is impactful. As so many of our alumni remain in the area, there are countless interactions with them about how their time here has contributed to their success since graduation."

For OU alumna Rachelle Winkler, who worked as a graduate assistant in fitness and wellness from 2003 through 2005, her time with OU Rec Well was “one of the best experiences” of her life.

“Not only did it allow me to do a lot of travelling and meet a lot of great people in the recreation field, but it provided me with a lot of student development opportunities that helped me sharpen my skills and confidence in my field and my leadership abilities,” said Winkler, who currently serves as health promotions coordinator for the United States Marine Corps at Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

“I wouldn’t be who I am today, or where I am today, without the mentorship, guidance and support from the many wonderful professionals who I was privileged to work with at the Recreation Center, as both a student and a professional.”

Kristen Kosuda-Suhr, director of facilities operations for University Recreation at Central Michigan University, shared similar sentiments about her time with OU Rec Well, where she worked as a building supervisor and program assistant in facility operations.

“My fondest memories are with the people I met at the Rec Center, and the lifelong friendships I made along the way,” she said. “I developed my professional skills, such as my ability to solve problems, communicate with others and work in a team structure. I was given the opportunities to represent the department on various cross-campus committees and participated in events and initiatives that further grew me as a professional. These experiences led me to find my passion and join the field of higher education. Every day, I get the opportunity to interact with today’s college students and I hope that I am contributing to their development the way OU did for me.”

For Anne Maitland Wawrzyniak, an OU alum who worked as a wellness peer ambassador and wellness intern at OU Rec Well from 2016 to 2017, the experience helped her develop skills that have been invaluable in her current position as an occupational health officer with the Department of Defense at Ford Meade in Maryland.

During my time at Rec Well, my duties consisted of developing and presenting student wellness workshops across campus. coaching students toward achieving their health and wellness goals.

and developing monthly wellness and health promotion programs available to all students,” she said. “In addition, I was mentored by wonderful faculty, most notably my supervisor, Erica Wallace. Her mentorship and leadership allowed me to continue to expand my professional skillset, which has proved to be incredibly valuable in my current position.”

During his time with OU Rec Well, OU alum Christopher Carline was involved in everything from selling memberships to serving as building manager and program assistant for facilities.

“The Recreation Center was where I worked throughout my college experience; it was where I met friends and worked on developing myself as a leader,” he said. “The job gave me the opportunity to develop professionally, try new things, and apply what I was learning in school in a real-world setting.”

Carline said he still has many fond memories of working at the Recreation Center.

“When you worked there, you were part of a community of students,” he said. “You would have co-workers in classes with you, you’d have co-workers to hang out with after work, and you’d have co-workers to play intramural sports with. The staff and leaders at the Recreation Center built an ecosystem that supported the development of all students.”

OU alumna Nicole Wilkins agreed, noting that her time with OU Rec Well helped her find her calling as a personal trainer and fitness professional.

“I applied to work at the Recreation Center during student orientation and worked there all four years I attended OU,” Wilkins said. “I started in the fitness center and was head of the fitness assessment department during my junior and senior year. Engaging with patrons, assisting on the gym floor and teaching people results of their fitness assessment and how to improve played an integral role as I became a gym owner and personal trainer/fitness professional. I felt like I knew everyone when I walked in the door and some of my closest friends from college were made there. It’s one of the best jobs I’ve ever had.”

As part of the 20th anniversary celebration, OU Rec Well is inviting all previous, present and future alumni, as well as students, staff, faculty and community members to attend a series of special events and activities taking place on OU’s campus, including:

Wednesday, Sept. 12

- 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. — Drop and Give Me 20 at the Fitness Center. Stop by or join the competition and see who can do the most push-ups in 20 seconds. All participants will be entered to win a prize. The top two men and women will receive free pizza from Blaze, and free T-shirts will be provided to the first 20 people registered.

- 12:10 p.m. — Throwback 20th Anniversary Dance Jam in the three-court gym at the Recreation Center. Grab a friend and your favorite 90's attire and be prepared to jam with amazing instructors to a 90's inspired soundtrack. Free T-shirts will be given to the first 20 people to register, and free pizza will be provided to the residence hall floor with the highest percentage of people in attendance.

- 5:20 p.m., 6:20 p.m. & 7:20 p.m. — Cycle Back in Time Glow Party at the Fitness Annex. Reserve your ride for one, two or maybe even all three of the back-to-back cycle glow parties. Multiple instructors will take you on a 40-minute ride with colorful lights, glow sticks, high energy music, and a great workout. Pre-registration is required, but walk-ins will be welcome if there are open bikes. Free T-shirts will be provided to the first 20 people who [register online](#).

- 8 p.m. — OU's largest dodgeball game in the three-court gym at the Recreation Center. Grab a friend or roommate and join the largest dodgeball game on campus. Registration begins at 8 p.m. and the game starts at 8:20 p.m. Free T-shirts will be provided to the first 20 people who register in-person, and free pizza will be provided to the residence hall floor with the highest percentage of people in attendance.

Friday, Oct. 5

- 5-6 p.m. (tailgate party), 6-7 p.m. (game) — Tailgate Party and Rec Alumni Reunion Flag Football Game at the Recreation and Athletic Outdoor Complex. Cheer on your Rec Staff, with former and IM and Club Sports Coordinators Andre Love and Dan Bettmann coming back to lead the Rec alumni from the first 10 years (1998-2007), as they battle it out against Rec alumni hailing from the second 10 years (2008-2018). Stop by the tailgate for a hot dog, chips, and a drink compliments of Oll Rec Well. Enjoy music, lawn games, catch up with friends and see the

new RAOC facility. Tailgate attendees will receive a commemorative 20th anniversary T-shirt. The tailgate event is free to OU students, Rec Alumni and their families. [Registration](#) is required to play in the flag football game.

- 8-10 p.m. — Rec Alumni and their guest are invited to join Oakland University Recreation and Well-Being staff for a casual social with past and current Rec Well/Campus Rec staff at the Red Ox Tavern (3773 E. Walton Blvd., Auburn Hills, MI). A pizza buffet and salad will be provided and drinks may be purchased from the bar. [Pre-registration](#) by Sept. 24 is required.

Saturday, Oct. 6

- 1-4 p.m. — The OU Homecoming Festival and BBQ is free and open to alumni, current students, staff, faculty, members and their families. Current and past staff and students can look forward to visiting the featured reunion tent and catching up with their Rec Family as they celebrate 20 years of Recreation at OU. Enjoy videos highlighting the 20 years, snag a T-shirt, enjoy tailgate games, and catch up with other alumni. Advanced [registration](#) is encouraged.

- 11 a.m. — Join current Rec staff, former staff, and many others for the dedication of the Herman Room in the lower level of the Recreation Center. Enjoy a dedication video and remarks from Greg Jordan, director of OU Rec Well, as he presents former Dean of Students David E. Herman with a plaque. Light refreshments will be offered. Tours of the Rec Center will be available immediately following the program. [Register](#) by Sept. 24.

Please note that participation in the Sept. 12 dance, cycle and dodgeball events requires a membership or purchase of a guest pass.

For more information about OU Rec Well's 20th anniversary celebration, visit <https://www.oakland.edu/recwell/20th-anniversary/>.

