



Promotions coordinator Gribble says the Student Recreation Center is often a key reason why many students choose to attend Boise State.



Fun for Everyone

Campus Rec Open for Students, Alumni, Faculty and Staff

BY JULIE HAHN

Upstairs a group of people is swaying, carefully working out dance steps to a salsa beat. Downstairs a noisy, fast-paced pickup basketball game has started. And in between the two floors members are climbing the walls.

Welcome to an average weekday at Boise State's Student Recreation Center.

It's been 5½ years since the \$12 million fitness center opened thanks to the demands of students who wanted a place to work out, meet friends, pick up new skills and stay healthy. Since its opening in August of 2002 it has become one of the gems on campus.

"It's one of the biggest components for choosing Boise State," says Heather Gribble (BFA, graphic design, '05), promotions coordinator for Campus Rec, which oversees the Student Recreation Center. Students list the center in the top three reasons for picking Boise State over other schools, and visits to the center are must-dos for students on orientation tours or for athletes who are interested in spending their academic careers here.

In fact, the center is so popular that it counted more than 250,000 visits last year. And during the next few years, the center is scheduled to undergo some changes that are poised to make it an even more popular campus destination. A new indoor

pool is scheduled to be added to the 86,000-square-foot complex, supplanting the current pool in the Kinesiology Annex and giving Student Recreation Center members a one-stop exercise spot.

The pool addition is part of the long-term plan for the center, which began as a grassroots project in the mid-1990s. "There was a need and a demand for it from students," says Lisa Stuppy (MS, exercise and sports studies, '97), assistant director of fitness programs.

The idea of physical fitness as an essential part of campus life started in the 1950s with intramural programs, Stuppy adds. By the time Boise State started construction on the Student Recreation Center, it was joining a number of universities around the country with similar facilities.

"There was this idea that it's not just about athletics, and that it's more accessible to all students," says Geoff Harrison, director of the Outdoor Program.

The facility started out with a three-court gymnasium, two multipurpose rooms, a studio for group exercise, four racquetball courts, an equipment checkout counter, a running track, an outdoor rental center, cardio equipment and weight training areas. A two-story climbing wall was added later, and quickly became one of the main attractions in the facility. The state-of-the-art wall plays host to a number of climbing events, including the Women That Rock series for female rock climbers of all levels, the annual "Buck Off" climbing tournament,

and dozens of training events for everyone from beginners to pros.

The climbing wall dovetails with the Outdoor Program, which was founded almost 25 years ago and is now housed under Campus Rec. The Outdoor Program is home to the rental equipment business that lets participants take advantage of Idaho's vast wilderness and amazing landscapes. The Outdoor Program now provides the largest four-season rental operation in south-

west Idaho, doling out rafts, kayaks, canoes, snowshoes, skis, climbing gear, backpacks and other equipment needs.

This year also marks the beginning of a new opportunity for students. For the past nine years, the Outdoor Program has offered Wilderness

Quest, a chance

for students to explore Idaho before the start of classes. This year, students will be able to take their pick between traditional orientation or wilderness orientation in the scenic backwoods of Idaho. Eventually, Harrison says, they would like to have "outgoing adventures" for recent graduates so that "the last thing they experience as they go out into the real world is a BSU event."

The Outdoor Program is especially popular with alumni, who account for 30 percent of its rental business. The Outdoor Program and Campus Rec decided to take advantage of that participation this year with the creation of Alumni Adventures, which provides outdoor programming centered around Boise State football games.

"It was a natural place to try it out," Harrison says about centering the program around Bronco football. "It gave us really good ideas for how to massage and tweak it."

The first Alumni Adventures participants got to experience activities that they might not have been able to otherwise — at a discount. Alumni and their families who traveled to Boise State's game against Hawaii last November could take advantage of surf lessons at Diamond Head in Waikiki, kayak in Kahana Bay or catch a brag-worthy fish in the deep waters off Honolulu.

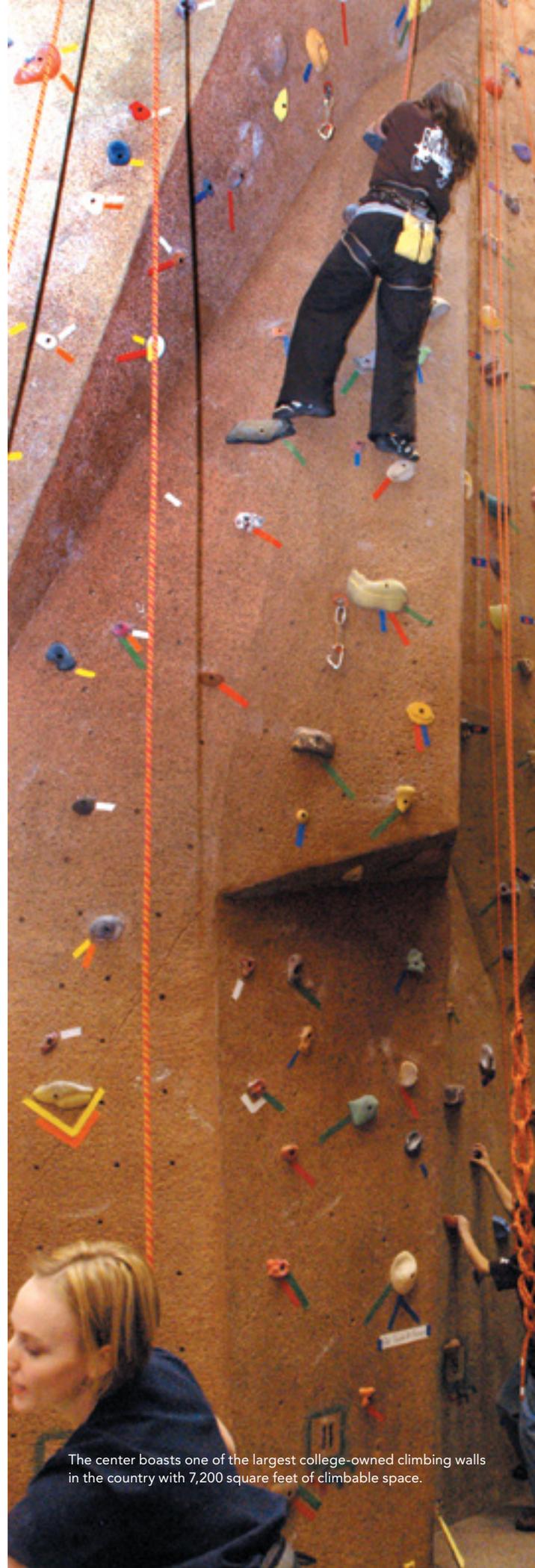
"What's unique is that this is an opportunity to create a long-term connection with other Boise State people," Harrison says. In the future, he adds, Campus Rec plans to expand the program to include two-week trips to distant destinations such as Europe and Belize.

But there are plenty of options for people who want to stay closer to home. Campus Rec has been steadily expanding its fitness program options far beyond the standard spinning and



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Fitness programs assistant director Stuppy, on the indoor running/walking track with student Colby Bertalotto, says there is a social component to the Student Recreation Center and the programs it offers.



The center boasts one of the largest college-owned climbing walls in the country with 7,200 square feet of climbable space.



yoga classes. The instructional program series lets participants delve deeper into different types of fitness exercises, including belly dancing, hoopedancing (which mixes dance and hula hoop moves), masters swim training, pilates, racquetball, salsa dancing, tai chi, yogassage (a combination of yoga moves and self-massage) and a fitness program for people over 50.

“You get the same 20 people to start together in one class and watch them progress,” Stuppy says. “We’ve found a really good group exercise system.”

The fitness program participation numbers have gone up every year, Stuppy says. “It brings fitness to the general public without having people lift weights or run on a track for three hours,” she says.

People who want an even more personalized experience can help themselves — as well as kinesiology students — by hiring one of the Rec’s personal trainers. The personal trainers — a mix of trained kinesiology students and community members — offer custom workouts for a fraction of the price. At the same time, the students gain valuable experience or fulfill internship credits.



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Opened in 2002, the Student Recreation Center has become one of the gems of the Boise State campus.

And this year, the Rec will offer one of its biggest challenges to date. It’s a little race they’re calling “Beat Pete,” and it’s something the staff has been planning for a long time.

Inspired by a race at UC San Diego that has raised about \$1 million for the university, the staff at Campus Rec recruited Bronco football coach Chris Peterson for a 5-kilometer race. Participants from the campus and the community can race on April 5; if they beat Pete, they get T-shirts saying “I Beat Pete.” Even if they don’t, they’ll be raising money for the university.

Coach Pete, a fitness buff himself, “was so excited for something like this ... He’s a competitive guy and I think he’ll bring his A game,” Stuppy says.

Full-time student membership costs are included in student fees paid to the university. Part-time students, faculty, staff, alumni and spouses or partners of members are eligible to purchase memberships. Emeriti and dependents of students, faculty and staff are also eligible to join.

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