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4-24-2021

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Recommended Citation

Wiley, Ben, "UREC Expands Services to Seattle University Community" (2021). *The Spectator Online*. 285.
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UREC Expands Services to Seattle University Community

Ben Wiley, Author

Throughout this academic year, Seattle University Recreation Center (UREC) has been providing a myriad of in-person services and programs which they are currently expanding to include small outdoor trips for students.

All of UREC's services are provided in-line with local, state, Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Seattle U guidelines to ensure the health and well-being of all members within the campus community.

Amanda Deml, Director of UREC, revealed that UREC has worked with the Seattle U COVID-19 Containment and Planning (C-CAP) group to make sure that their reopening plans are as safe as possible. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, people exercising must wear masks at all times and go through a daily health check.

Some of the many other things that UREC has done to safely reopen their facilities and services includes purchasing cleaning and COVID-19 resistant supplies, implementing an electrostatic disinfectant sprayer for equipment, increasing air flow and cleaning of high use touch points. They also require their student and professional staff to go through additional COVID-19 training.

Deml explained that since the fall, UREC has offered Open Recreation at Seattle U Park in which students, staff and faculty can participate in physically-distanced, open recreation using their own equipment or equipment provided by UREC. In addition, members of the community can play tennis on Seattle U's four outdoor tennis courts. Also, in the fall, UREC created strict return to play guidelines for UREC sports clubs to host on-campus practices.

During winter quarter 2021, UREC opened up the indoor Redhawk Activity Court (RAC) as a place for students to exercise during the cold winter months. Students can reserve a 45-minute time slot to have access to fitness equipment like dumbbells and kettlebells, and play basketball or badminton.

Along with these services, UREC continues to offer equipment rentals for fitness, sports and outdoor gear; virtual live and on-demand group fitness classes; virtual educational workshops and personal training classes; and virtual (trivia, esports) and in-person (tennis, disc golf) intramural sports.

Annaliese Martinsen, a third-year nursing student and a group fitness instructor at UREC, shared how the classes work for student recreation.



Jordie Simpson

"I've only used UREC facilities for teaching High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT). During COVID-19, I've been teaching classes of usually about seven people online through the computer in the studio in UREC. I have not personally gone to the gym to workout yet. I've been working out outside mainly by going on runs around Seattle," Martinsen said.

Along with the many services offered through Seattle U facilities, UREC began offering small outdoor excursions for students at the start of spring quarter.

"Trips include walking or biking from campus to local parks, Seattle Bouldering Project and more. Currently all of our trips are already full which shows students are excited about these offerings. We encourage students who are interested to sign up on the waitlist, as it is common for students to drop out," Deml said.

The pandemic has drastically impacted the mental and physical health of many in the community. For students at Seattle U and other colleges, the shift to virtual learning and the many health and safety restrictions has reduced the ability for students to make connections, build relationships with others and stay active.

As Deml conveyed when talking about the impact that UREC reopening will have on students' mental health, one of the best ways to get active and meet other members of the community is through exercising.

"Our goal is to offer services and programs during the pandemic that are providing opportunities for students to build connections, be engaged, stay active and foster an environment for their mental, physical and social wellbeing to flourish," Deml said.

As a result of the reduced programs offered during the pandemic, many student employees at UREC have had their job responsibilities impacted. Emma Federico, a fourth-year student majoring in cell and molecular biology explained how her job has changed.

"Unfortunately when COVID-19 hit both [competitive sports manager and snow coordinator] positions changed drastically...My positions have shifted to mostly being online and providing programming for the community. We have been working hard to provide an online community and programs," Federico said.

UREC offers a variety of programs that gives students a chance to exercise no matter their skill level or interest.

As spring quarter 2021 continues, look for UREC to continue to reopen and expand services as public health guidelines allow.