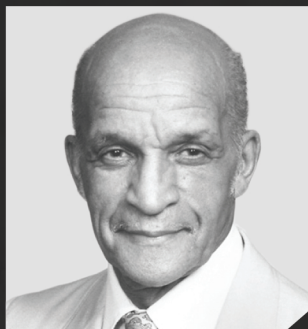




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MOAACORNER



Marcus Attles

Northwestern University
Associate AD for Facilities & Operations

Top 5 Misconceptions of a Newly Opened Facility

Opening a new facility certainly comes with a lot of excitement, energy and advantages for student-athletes, coaches and staff. While the benefits far outweigh the challenges – there can be misconceptions when opening a new facility.

5. New facilities solve all of the operations issues of the past.

While new facilities often account for past challenges, they may not eliminate them all. For landlocked institutions, parking often cannot be addressed. Increases in storage space are typically one of the first items cut when project managers are feeling pressures of the project budget. Aesthetics and branding can present obstacles related to foot traffic or building flow.

4. Schools lose history and tradition when opening new facilities.

Nostalgia can play a huge part in the fan experience –



people often see new/modern facilities and immediately miss the days of old. However, a popular trend with recent facility projects has been reusing iconic materials from the old facility or the campus itself. Furniture made from old football bleachers and accent walls using the old basketball floor are just a couple of ways facility managers have mixed the old with the new.

3. All scheduling issues are mitigated with new facilities.

New and renovated facilities are often designed with scheduling in mind, however, the number of additional space requests can be underestimated during the design phase. New facilities dedicated to one specific sport program or unit may be a way to avoid some of these challenges, but even they are not completely void of scheduling conflicts. That said, the majority of institutions throughout the country are looking for multi-use facilities.

"How can we impact the largest number of student-athletes through this project?" That is a question many of us face, however, we often fail to realize that many of our sport programs have gotten creative with less than ideal solutions to scheduling challenges. When you consider the programs looking for a potential upgrade and the fact that new facilities attract a higher volume of external events and university-related requests – you can often create more scheduling issues than you had before.

2. When a new facility is opened ... the work is done.

Project managers will often tell you "a project is never complete, it simply evolves over time." This is true, when construction is complete and occupancy is granted, you've only just begun. It is not uncommon to have punchlist items in the thousands – months after you've moved in. Building occupants will require work requests to add to, alter and adjust spaces to fit their needs. While there are amazing architects in the world, you will never truly know how a new facility operates until the occupants have had a chance to settle in.

1. New facilities always negatively impact the general student body.

The most common misconception of a new facility is that it's "athletics only" and negatively impacts the general student body. In reality, more athletics facility projects are privately funded than ever before – these projects may free space in facilities that were previously shared with athletics. Projects funded through state funds may have an academic or community component to them. If student fees are used, it could be an increase in enrollment that covers much of the expense (rather than an increase in fees to each individual student on campus). We have gotten more creative than ever to ensure we're being fiscally responsible when exploring opportunities for new athletics facilities.

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