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Game changer, transformational, long-anticipated – all words used to describe the Murchie Family Fieldhouse which opened last spring on the campus of the University at Buffalo (UB). The project had long been discussed since UB's ascent to Division I more than 20 years ago, and its completion represents the continued rise of New York's Public Powerhouse. The facility has been deemed critical to the future of UB athletics in terms of recruiting, training, preparation and the overall student experience.

In the early planning stages of this capital project, a comprehensive financial pro forma was created with collaboration of many internal and external constituents. A variety of funding options for this project were explored, such as philanthropic giving, current revenue streams and debt components. Once funding was identified and key university and state process approvals were obtained, we were finally able to see this project come to life.

From the early stages of this idea being conceived through construction and completion, building partnerships with many constituents was a key to its success. The business operations role was prevalent throughout the project in financial planning, budget evaluations and change order requests, and the involvement continues with the building open for regular use. When millions of dollars are designated for capital projects, business managers should take an active role in controlling costs and maximizing resources. Additionally, we share in responsibility that our donor's gifts are being optimized and ensuring our department is a good steward of financial resources.

The costs associated with all facilities is sizeable and as we bring a new building online, it has been important to evaluate how our role within business operations can impact the facility function. We are aiming to properly capture start-up costs separate from routine maintenance so we can effectively create an accurate annual operating budget. As business managers are typically very organized planners, it is also important to be agile and flexible in the early stages of a new facility as every day brings a new reason to spend more resources.

New or aging facilities can become one of the areas that causes budget stress. However, it is the responsibility of the business office to be prepared

with financial data and research, and provide historical context so sound business decisions can be made. The new fieldhouse at UB is already a great sense of pride on campus and a true testament to the hard work of many folks. With athletics team practices, student recreation activities, and other university-related functions, the scheduling is expected to be near capacity and we look forward to continuing to provide students an outstanding college experience to grow and develop.

Thanks to Nate Wills, Deputy AD/COO at UB for his facility insight.

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