



# HEALTHY BODIES, HEALTHY MINDS

PLYMOUTH STATE UNIVERSITY

STRENGTH &  
CONDITIONING  
OPEN LAB

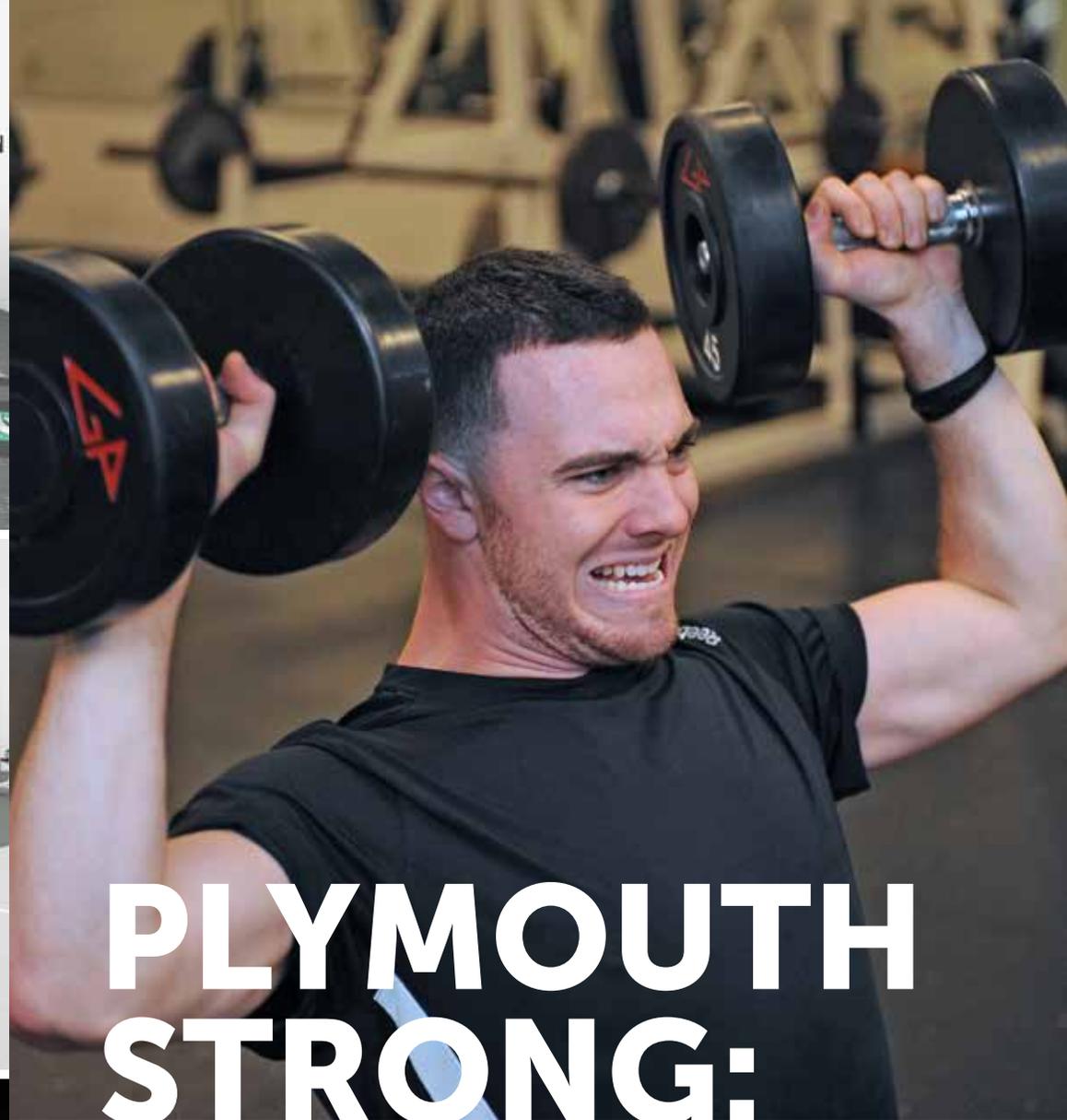
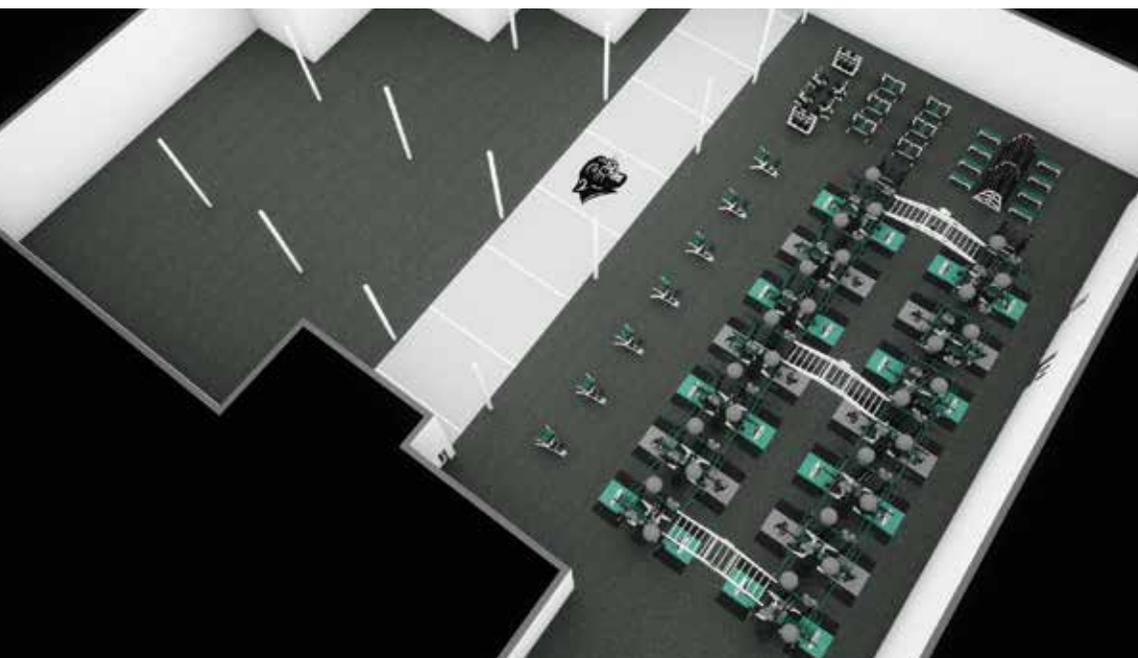




*“The new Open Lab will raise Plymouth State’s profile above the competition in a big way. I can tell you, as the strength and conditioning director for a D-1 program, that it will result in more internships for current students, more jobs for graduates, more applications for future enrollment, and great things for Plymouth State’s footprint worldwide.”*

*—DAVE FEELEY '04, STRENGTH & CONDITIONING COACH OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI HURRICANES DIVISION I FOOTBALL TEAM*





# PLYMOUTH STRONG:

## The Case for Plymouth State University's Strength and Conditioning Open Laboratory

In a world characterized by unrelenting change, Plymouth State University provides students with the skills demanded by today's marketplace while enhancing the economic potential and well-being of our regional home. The proposed Strength and Conditioning Open Laboratory will further these goals by helping to make the University a renowned center of health excellence in New Hampshire and beyond.

*“Physical medicine is the most powerful medicine. This facility will provide the tools to ‘train the trainer,’ educating future coaches and strength trainers to not only work with students, but reach a whole population of people with special needs who will thrive by having access to the new open lab and the programs it will offer.”*

*—NICK VAILAS, PLYMOUTH STATE PHYSICAL EDUCATION ALUMNUS FROM THE CLASS OF 1976, FOUNDER AND CEO OF THE BEDFORD AMBULATORY SURGICAL CENTER, AND PRESIDENT OF THE FITNESS NETWORK*



**STRENGTH BEGETS STRENGTH, AND THE STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING OPEN LABORATORY WILL MAKE PLYMOUTH STATE SUBSTANTIALLY STRONGER.**



*Plymouth State's new Strength and Conditioning Open Lab will be a nearly 10-fold increase in square footage over the current, inadequately-sized facility, far surpassing most Division III offerings.*



Over the past decade, PSU has built first-rate facilities and programs to meet the health and fitness needs of both campus and community. The University's Holderness campus includes the Active Living, Learning, and Wellness (ALLWell) North complex, the Bank of New Hampshire Field House, the Human Performance Center, The Physical Education Center, and the Ice Arena and Welcome Center—all outstanding examples of the synergy that results when academics, athletics, and recreation are integrated.

These premier facilities have yielded successful return on investment in student recruitment, athletic competitiveness, and graduate preparation. Yet their full potential has not been reached, because the advances they have prompted for PSU and the wider region have outstripped the capabilities of the University's Vailas Performance Center.

The center dates to the early 1980s and was commonly known as the "weight room" until 2004, when it was expanded, updated, and named for Nick Vailas '76, CEO and founder of Bedford Ambulatory Surgical Center. Vailas, a former Panther football team captain, provided significant support and the designation acknowledged his benevolence and continuing interest in PSU and its students. At roughly 1,700 square feet it is far too small to serve current demand. It is unwise in many ways to let this center, which was built to serve the needs of an earlier, less active era, constrain the exceptional promise and potential of PSU's current facilities and students.

Plans call for the lower level of the University's Human Performance Center to be the future home of PSU's new 16,000 square foot Strength and Conditioning Open Laboratory, which will replace the current center with a climbing wall; free weights, cardio, and plate-loaded equipment areas; and a turf rehab and speed training area. "There's not going to be a Division III program in the country that will offer this," says John "JT" Thomas, director of PSU's Strength and Conditioning Program. "This facility is going to be top notch."

The new Strength and Conditioning Open Laboratory will further:

- *increase the benefits of the University's current facilities,*
- *enhance PSU's reputation as a regional center of health excellence, and*
- *transform the University's service to the community through a new open laboratory interface*



### **PSU is a Leader in Health, Fitness, and Community Contributions**

Plymouth State University is a superior environment for studying health and fitness and for acquiring life-improving skills. The new Strength and Conditioning Open Laboratory will expand Plymouth State's ability to train the next generation of health workers and allow students and members of the community to make substantially better use of the University's current facilities.

The University has earned a well-deserved reputation as a leader in health, fitness, and service to the larger community. In just this past year alone, Plymouth State has been recognized by many national organizations, including:

- *the Carnegie Classification as one of the very best schools nationwide for our contribution to the community. Only six percent of all higher education institutions receive this prestigious honor;*
- *the American Heart Association's Workplace Health Achievement Index for investing in the health of our workforce and workplace, and for our commitment to creating a workplace environment built on healthy core values;*
- *the CVS Health Foundation, which granted an educational program to counter the daily use of e-cigarettes by high school students (New Hampshire has the nation's highest percentage);*
- *the Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education Campus Challenge, for finishing first in our division and first in New Hampshire; and*
- *the nationwide examination for the licensing of nurses (NCLEX) for our students' 95 percent pass rate, besting the national average.*

### **The Open Laboratory Concept Sets Plymouth State Apart**

The Plymouth State Learning Model, "Integrated Clusters," emphasizes the acquisition of real-world, real-life proficiencies. This is especially relevant in regard to our strength and conditioning program. Beginning at the undergraduate level, PSU students will obtain valuable hands-on experience that many students at other institutions won't receive even at the graduate level.



**WE DON'T JUST TALK THE TALK.  
WE ALSO WALK THE WALK  
AS WE PUMP THE IRON.**

Professor Julie Bernier is coordinator of Health and Human Performance, which encompasses the disciplines of adventure education, allied health sciences, athletic training, exercise & sport physiology, public health, and physical education. “The Strength and Conditioning Center will serve as one of our finest ‘Open Labs’ encouraging teamwork,” she says. “Open Laboratories are transformational spaces for students and faculty to engage with businesses and communities and apply their classroom experiences to address challenging problems, and are core elements of the Integrated Clusters model. The Strength and Conditioning Open Laboratory will be an academic hub that integrates knowledge gained in the classroom with hands-on expertise.”

“One of the biggest benefits that our students will gain through the open lab is the hands-on experience,” says JT Thomas, “There are a lot of strength and conditioning master’s programs out there, with most emphasizing book learning but not hands-on experience. What we’re going to offer here fits in with the Integrated Cluster model of getting you out of the classroom and getting real-world, real-life experience. Students will learn how to deal with trained athletes, and how to deal with sports coaches and administrators—things that are going to be very important for them in the future.”

PSU students planning on strength and conditioning careers will have many opportunities to team up with their athletic training, exercise and sport physiology, and doctor of physical therapy peers. “Working with related professional disciplines on-campus will prime our graduates for collaborating and succeeding in the real world,” says Thomas.

While some students dream of becoming strength and conditioning coaches at major universities, career success can also come in many other forms. “We have student athletes who want to open facilities when they graduate, and others who are passionate about working with the elderly, first responders, or Wounded Warriors,” says Thomas. “The new facility will give them all a big leg up.”



*THE OPEN LABORATORY CONCEPT WILL OPEN  
A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES.*

*THE STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING OPEN LABORATORY IS A*  
***SMART INVESTMENT***  
*IN OUR REGION'S FUTURE.*

**Benefits for students, the community, and the region**

- Students will develop strength and conditioning programs for PSU athletes and work with injured individuals in functional rehabilitation.
- Members of the community will have access to top-notch equipment and state-of-the-art facilities.
- The equipment in the new Strength and Conditioning Open Laboratory will enable PSU to better recruit and retain high quality students, student athletes, faculty, and coaches, enhancing the academic rigor of programs and performance of athletic teams.
- The interdisciplinary perspectives gained by the Strength and Conditioning Open Lab will aid in making PSU a center of excellence in New Hampshire and beyond.
- New and upgraded facilities will enable new training grounds and programmatic opportunities for faculty and students to serve special populations, such as Special Olympic athletes, Wounded Warriors, and other underserved groups.
- Students will gain valuable real-world skills while developing strong networks of professional connections, addressing local employers' needs for a highly-qualified workforce. It will enable New Hampshire natives to stay and contribute to the regional economy.

Make the dream a reality.

[give.plymouth.edu](https://give.plymouth.edu)

