

Northwestern College

3003 SNELLING AVE. N. -- ST. PAUL, MN 55113-1598
651-631-5100 -- 800-692-4020 -- nwc.edu

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Riley gym renovation adds offices, classrooms, computer labs

SAINT PAUL, MN - The New Year brought something new to the Northwestern campus: a new academic wing to Riley Hall. Last fall work began on the \$2.33 million renovation of the Riley gymnasium. By dividing the area into two floors, the renovation doubled usable space from 7,775 to 14,800 sq. ft. -- without changing the original footprint of the building.

The renovation adds 13 faculty offices, three staff offices, eight dedicated classrooms, two dedicated computer labs, two small seminar/classrooms, an MIS (management information systems) lab, four workstations and a study lounge. The wing also features state-of-the-art academic technology.

The upper level classroom area features a state-of-the-art moveable partition system that when open creates a room that seats 235 for banquets, conferences and other special events.

For the first time since Riley Hall was built in 1961, the building is handicap accessible. An elevator was installed on the northwest classroom wing with a second floor corridor added to connect to the new area.

The academic department of business administration is the primary occupant of the facility. With their move out of the former Radio wing in Nazareth Hall, the music department has acquired the soundproof studios for practice rooms and increased office space for faculty.

“Northwestern has needed classroom space for years and this renovation fills that need,” says Dave Halstengard '78, director of alumni and parent relations, who has fond memories of Riley gym as a student. “The new academic wing is a terrific area for our students to learn, study and network with their

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teachers and classmates. To those of you who loved the ‘Riley Palace’ this conversion is wonderful and I invite you to come see it someday. It is worth the trip to campus and I would love to show it off!”

While the Riley renovation has given faculty, classes and computer labs space to breathe, the athletic department adjusts to the loss of an athletic facility. Matt Hill, athletic director, says with many intramural athletic events moving to the Ericksen Center, the building has extended its hours and staff has been added. Hill explains the department is also exploring intramural programs that don’t involve a gym, such as bowling and more outdoor sports.

The dedication of the wing was held Jan. 13 featuring an open house for faculty, staff and students.

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For more information call:

Janell Wojtowicz
Communications Manager
Northwestern College & Radio
3003 Snelling Ave. N.
St. Paul, MN, 55113
613-628-3387
jbw@nwc.edu