

FLY TOGETHER

BY MICAH MERTES

Creighton and Omaha poised to reach new heights as historic campus transformation takes flight

This fall, Creighton University announced the largest gift in its history — a \$100 million commitment from the Heider Family Foundation. The gift leads Fly Together, the University’s approximately \$300 million initiative to reimagine fitness, recreation, athletics and community access for the next generation of students. Fly Together will encompass 11 new or renovated facilities and outdoor spaces comprising roughly 700,000 square feet on the east side of campus. Fly Together will be entirely donor funded.

Changes will include a new Sports Performance Center for Creighton’s 300 student-athletes, a new fitness center available to all students and the Jaywalk, a beautified pathway to campus that connects to the Builder’s District, the rising 10-block, \$650 million urban village east of 17th Street.

“Fly Together enhances student life, intramurals, premier club sports and intercollegiate athletics,” says the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, Creighton president. “It also strengthens Creighton’s connection to downtown and the broader Omaha community.”

With Fly Together, Fr. Hendrickson says Creighton continues the momentum of the past decade.

“There has been great traction in the evolution of the University. We are staying true to who we are as Catholic and Jesuit, and as an institution dedicated to academic excellence,” Fr. Hendrickson says.

Lead donors Cindy and Scott Heider, trustees of the Heider Family Foundation, say the breadth and depth of Fly Together make it a unique effort in higher education.

“Fly Together will serve students and student-athletes alike, but importantly, it will serve the Omaha community itself,” says Scott Heider, who is also a member of the University’s Board of Trustees.

He says Fly Together will connect the newly imagined east side of campus with the Builder’s District, creating a high-density blend of both spaces and giving the University and the city something that neither has had before: a front porch connecting to Creighton.

“This city has been very good for Creighton, and Creighton has been very good for the city,” Heider says. “Fly Together will deepen that bond and create countless new opportunities for the community to engage with campus and the Builder’s District.”

See everything Fly Together will bring to Creighton in the following pages.

A new Jaywalk pedestrian pathway (top), a new athletic village (middle) and a new Sports Performance Center (bottom) are planned as part of Fly Together.

Fly Together Projects

\$300 million

An approximately \$300 million donor-funded investment.

>700,000

More than 700,000 square feet of campus.

11

11 new or renovated facilities and outdoor spaces, serving all students and all student-athletes while strengthening Creighton's connection to Omaha.

Timeline

One project (the softball competition field) was completed this fall. Construction for two other projects is underway — the baseball practice field is expected to be completed by summer 2026, and the Sports Performance Center in 2027. Another — the baseball and softball team facility — will begin construction in 2026 and is expected to be completed in 2027.

The order of the remaining Fly Together projects will be determined by donor interest and campus need.

A NEW FRONT PORCH

Fly Together will create a dynamic east-campus corridor for all students that seamlessly connects with the nearby Builder's District — a 10-block, \$650 million urban village that will include a park and community space, offices, retail, restaurants, entertainment, a world-class hotel and 600 apartments, prime living spaces for Creighton's approximately 8,900 students.

The Jaywalk

Approximately 128,000 square feet renovated

Flowing through every new and improved facility is Fly Together's main artery: the Jaywalk. This beautified entryway connects Creighton to the Builder's District, inviting fans to catch a game at the reimagined D.J. Sokol Arena and welcoming the entire Omaha community to enjoy and experience campus.

"Fly Together gives us the opportunity to take significant strides while also embracing the strengths, values and mission of Creighton University."

THE REV. DANIEL S. HENDRICKSON, SJ, PHD
Creighton President



FITNESS AND RECREATION HUB

New Student Fitness Center

Approximately 86,000 square feet

Creighton's new recreational hub for all students, the fitness center — connected to the Rasmussen Center via a skybridge — will feature multipurpose courts, a student lounge and cafe, and spaces for strength conditioning, golf, yoga and more. The building's west-facing side will include an exterior balcony that curves around the baseball practice field. The current fitness center sees approximately 200,000 visits each year.

Rasmussen Center Renovations

Approximately 50,000 square feet

The new hub for intramurals and club sports, renovations to the Rasmussen Center will include three new multipurpose interior courts, a new indoor track and new exterior pickleball courts. Beneath the skybridge connecting the two facilities, a new bike trail will run through campus.

Did You Know?

Creighton students use the current fitness facility more than 200,000 times per year.

More than 4,500 intramural participants compete each year on more than 800 teams.

More than 450 students (44% of whom are freshmen) compete in club sports in 22 different programs.

Top right: The Jaywalk facing west starting at 17th Street between Morrison Stadium and the Rasmussen Center.

Bottom right: Located just west of 17th Street from the Builder's District, a rendering of the new student fitness center, connected by a skybridge to the Rasmussen Center.



Fly Together Objectives

1 Attract more students, driving admissions and Nebraska brain gain. Approximately 80% of Creighton's undergraduates come from out of state. Half of all undergraduates stay in Nebraska after graduating.

2 Elevate Creighton facilities and experiences for student-athletes, coaches and fans in an evolving era of intercollegiate athletics.

3 Create a new environment for students participating in wellness and recreation, intramural and club sports.

4 Connect Creighton to the Builder's District with a new front porch on the east side of campus.

5 Further invest in Omaha. Fly Together and other developments, including public-private partnerships with the University, comprise the approximately \$1 billion that Creighton will have invested in Omaha's urban core from 2015 to 2030.



Scan for more details and information about Fly Together or visit FlyTogetherCreighton.com.

ATHLETIC VILLAGE

Collectively, the reimagined Ruth and the new Sports Performance Center (and the courtyard between them) will be known as Creighton's Athletic Village, a campus within a campus.

New Sports Performance Center Approximately 50,000 square feet

The state-of-the-art facility will serve all Creighton student-athletes, with approximately 10,000 square feet of strength and conditioning space, as well as areas for nutrition, sports medicine, academic advising and sports psychology services. Construction began this summer.

The Ruth Scott Training Center Renovations Approximately 4,800 square feet

Upgrades to the practice facility for women's athletics will include a new glass, interior-view facade facing the Jaywalk, along with other exterior revisions and relocated entries.

ATHLETIC FACILITY RENOVATIONS

D.J. Sokol Arena Ryan Athletic Center Approximately 50,000 square feet renovated

Enhancing the home court of Creighton volleyball and women's basketball, upgrades will include a renovated concourse, gymnasium, locker rooms, players' lounge, media room, athletic training spaces and offices.

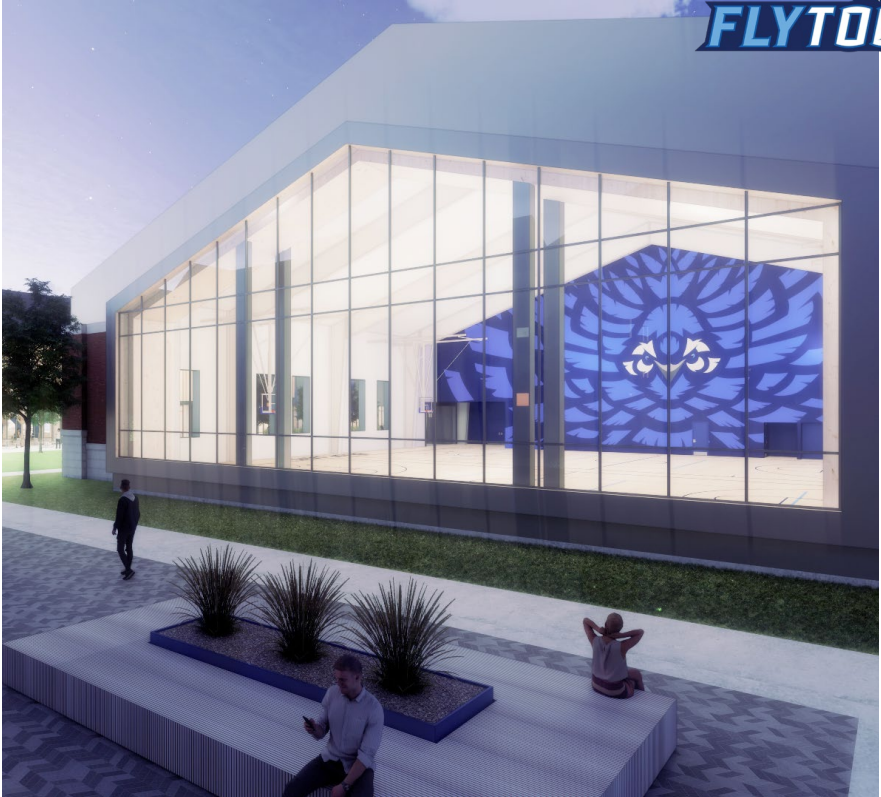
McDermott Center Approximately 30,000 square feet renovated

The men's basketball practice facility will receive upgrades to the weight room, lounge, locker rooms, hydro-training space and courts.



“Investing in this project will make us better. Investing in this project will help enhance the student experience. Investing in this project will, I believe, help us win and help us compete with some of the best programs in the country.”

MARCUS BLOSSOM
McCormick Endowed Athletic Director



Top: The new Sports Performance Center for all Creighton student-athletes.
Bottom: The Ruth Scott Training Center, left, located along the Jaywalk, will undergo enhancements, and the D.J. Sokol Arena, right, will likewise be upgraded.



The new softball field is depicted at right, near 20th and Cuming Streets, with the new baseball practice field and team facility located just to the east.

“Like Forward Blue, Fly Together is a significant leap forward for Creighton University and its continued partnership with the city and state we call home.”

FR. HENDRICKSON

NEW SOFTBALL AND BASEBALL COMPLEXES

The demolition of the Creighton Sports Complex has made way for a new 5.7-acre Creighton Quad, west of the Harper Center. (Read more about the Creighton Quad on Page 22.)

New Softball Competition Field

Approximately 79,000 square feet

The new home of Creighton softball — which opened this fall — provides a first-class experience for Creighton softball student-athletes, enhances the gameday atmosphere for the Bluejay program and its fans, and offers expanded recreational opportunities for students and the community. The softball field additionally updates its former basic scoreboard to a state-of-the-art video board, along with expanded seating and enhanced dugouts.

New Baseball Practice Field

Approximately 193,000 square feet

The practice site for Creighton baseball, to be completed in 2026, will also be the principal location for teams preparing to compete in the College World Series. The all-turf field’s design mimics that of Charles Schwab Field Omaha, a few blocks east, to better orient visiting teams preparing to compete in the Greatest Show on Dirt. Both fields will also be available for intramurals, club sports and community events. The two ballfields are being funded by a combination of public and private support.

New Team Facility

Approximately 38,000 square feet

The two-story facility serving Creighton’s baseball and softball teams will include batting cages, training rooms, team lounges, staff offices and more. It will also be available to visiting CWS teams, Creighton intramurals and various community partners.



Heider Family and Lead Donor Generosity Transforming Creighton

This fall at a news conference, Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, was joined by McCormick Endowed Athletic Director Marcus Blossom; Trent Demulling, senior vice president and chief financial officer at Kiewit Corporation; and Scott and Cindy Heider, trustees of the Heider Family Foundation, which provided a \$100 million lead gift, the largest in Creighton’s history.

Event guests included Omaha Mayor John Ewing Jr.; Creighton Board of Trustees Chair Diane Duren, BSBA’81; various community and University leaders; Creighton Athletics coaches and staff; and multiple early lead donors of the Fly Together initiative. Additional lead donors of Fly Together include Don Scott, CL and Rachel Werner, and Larry, MBA’81, and Linda Pearson.

The Heider Family Foundation’s \$100 million gift marks a transformational decade at Creighton made possible by the family’s support.

The Heider name is tied to Creighton in perpetuity. In 2013, Charles Heider, BSC’49, HON’10, and his wife, Mary Heider, HON’10, invested in the success of the newly named Heider College of Business, Creighton’s first named school or college.

The Heider family has also supported academics in every school and college, faculty chair endowments, programming for dozens of areas, capital projects, student experience, mission and Bluejay Athletics.

“The Heider family’s generosity to Creighton has benefited our University in countless ways and — in the mold of our founders, the Creighton family — strengthened our Jesuit, Catholic foundation,” Fr. Hendrickson says.

“Becoming a part of the Creighton community has been so rewarding for our family, as it was for Scott’s mother and father before us. I believe that’s one of the biggest reasons we are supporting Fly Together: Creighton is an amazing community, and we want to invite more people to be a part of it.”

CINDY HEIDER
Heider Family Foundation President

FORWARD BLUE

Fly Together’s launch supports Forward Blue, the largest fundraising campaign in the University’s history.

Announced publicly in 2021, Forward Blue has raised hundreds of millions of dollars from tens of thousands of donors, supporting scholarships, mission, academics, programs and capital projects at Creighton.

The University’s priorities include supporting the humanities and global outreach through initiatives such as the Kingfisher Institute, the Institute for Population Health and the Arrupe Global Scholars and Partnerships program.

During Forward Blue, Creighton has raised nearly \$250 million in scholarship support, creating nearly 500 new scholarships for students.

In the past decade, the University has seen a 47% increase in extramural research funds (to \$31 million) and a 38% increase in endowed faculty chairs, totaling \$33.6 million.

Philanthropic support generated through the Forward Blue campaign has constructed or renovated 13 campus buildings, including the Creighton University Health Sciences Campus – Phoenix, the CL and Rachel Werner Center for Health Sciences Education, Graves Hall and Simpson Family Courtyard, the School of Dentistry building and clinic, the Ruth Scott Training Center, the Mike and Josie Harper Center, the Jérôme Nadal, SJ, Jesuit Residence, the 24th Street corridor, and St. John’s fountain and plaza, among others.

These and other developments comprise the approximately \$1 billion, including public and private partnerships, that Creighton will have invested in Omaha’s urban core from 2015 to 2030.

