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## The UMB Pulse Podcast

# Episode 3: URecFit and Wellness

August 12, 2021 University of Maryland, Baltimore Season 1 Episode 3



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Aug 12, 2021 Season 1 Episode 3

University of Maryland, Baltimore

Time to hit the gym again now that URecFit and Wellness has reopened its doors at University of Maryland, Baltimore. First, get a Pulse Check on UMB guidance (4:34). URecFit Director Julia Wightman, MEd, and Associate Director of Operations Jimmy Heiner (10:03) talk about how URecFit operated during its closure and how it reopened (14:49), exercising while following the face covering policy (21:31), return of the swimming pool (25:14), additional safety measures (31:12), and the URecFit Live App (36:47). Learn more about URecFit at [umaryland.edu/urecfit](http://umaryland.edu/urecfit).

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Time to hit the gym again now that URecFit and Wellness has reopened its doors at University of Maryland, Baltimore. First, get a Pulse Check on UMB guidance (4:34). URecFit Director Julia Wightman, MEd, and Associate Director of Operations Jimmy Heiner (10:03) talk about how URecFit operated during its closure and how it reopened (14:49), exercising while following the face covering policy (21:31), return of the swimming pool (25:14), additional safety measures (31:12), and the URecFit Live App (36:47). Learn more about URecFit at [umaryland.edu/urecfi](http://umaryland.edu/urecfi).

*Jena Frick: 0:04*

You're listening to the heartbeat of the University of Maryland, Baltimore, the UMB Pulse.

*Charles Schelle: 0:28*

Welcome to another edition of the UMB pulse. I'm Charles Schelle

*Dana Rampolla: 0:31*

I'm Dana Rampolla.

*Jena Frick: 0:33*

And I'm Jena Frick.

*Charles Schelle: 0:34*

And in a bit we will talk to Julia Wightman and Jimmy Heiner of University Recreation and Fitness or better known as URecFit and Wellness. It's time to lose those pandemic pounds or for the people like me pre pandemic pounds as well. They're doing so much to keep people safe while working out including improving airflow, which actually all campus buildings now exceed CDC air filtration guidelines. There's something we learn every day, right. The fitness center is open and Julia and Jimmy will share with us some of the changes made at URecFit to enhance this experience, as we mentioned before, and keeping everybody safe from COVID-19.

*Dana Rampolla: 1:07*

If you'd like to listen to the interview now look for the timestamp in the player or episode description. How's everyone kept active during the pandemic, especially those early days?

*Charles Schelle: 1:16*

Well, at the beginning, I was actually kind of happy there was nobody around. Everyone was locked inside. We were allowed to go out and play essentially at a certain point. Because I would just drive down to our sister campus UMBC, and just walk around that loop was a perfect place to do it. Nobody around.

*Dana Rampolla: 1:34*

And you didn't have your dog then either right? And now you got your dog.

*Charles Schelle: 1:37*

The only thing I got to pet only dog got to pet was that statue that they have of the retriever.

*Dana Rampolla: 1:42*

Oh not quite the same.

*Jena Frick: 1:44*

Definitely not as furry I would think I actually in the beginning of the pandemic did a lot of running. So I didn't have my gym to go to every morning at 5 am. So instead I got up and was training for a half marathon.

*Dana Rampolla: 1:56*

Oh, wow.

*Jena Frick: 1:57*

Then I got a foot injury and all the weight that I lost at the beginning of the pandemic came right back because I was playing airport rules and it was just eat whatever you want, drink whatever you want. Whatever day

*Dana Rampolla: 2:10*

I did a lot of online workouts I had had a gym membership prior to the pandemic and I actually used to do a lot of dance classes and they they had been migrating away teachers had left and that sort of thing. So it was kind of good timing. I started focusing on my online stuff.

*Jena Frick: 2:27*

Yeah, that's great. I did actually take a couple of different like Zumba and lime line dancing classes through the CEC that were virtual during the pandemic as well, which were super fun.

*Dana Rampolla: 2:36*

And that is fun. I always wanted to do those in person too. I just think they seem like those those folks have great energy.

*Jena Frick: 2:41*

It's very fun.

*Charles Schelle: 2:42*

I want to know what kind of dance moves you have. Dana Can you like Pop and Lock?

*Jena Frick: 2:47*

I would love to see a pop and lock

*Dana Rampolla: 2:49*

Funny it's I actually like the hip hop stuff I'm I'm not good at it took me a long time.

*Jena Frick: 2:55*

The Hip-Hop Stuff!

*Dana Rampolla: 2:59*

Yeah, that fun young stuff. I had a great teacher. She was really patient. So it took me about a year to catch on because I was kind of more of the old Zumba style. Yeah. And yeah, she was very patient and she had a class of us older ladies and she got us going, man. I mean I lost weight. I was in great shape that

*Jena Frick: 3:19*

Charles what's your signature dance? Do you pop and lock?

*Charles Schelle: 3:21*

I do not. I just kind of shimmy and shake and put my hands up chest high. Like I'm just going to the beat.

*Jena Frick: 3:28*

Fake it till you make it. That's all you gotta do.

*Dana Rampolla: 3:32*

Goodness

*Jena Frick: 3:32*

This is crazy. But when this episode drops August 12 we are looking at the start of the fall semester for the majority of UMB Can you believe that?

*Charles Schelle: 3:40*

I can't.

*Jena Frick: 3:42*

Yeah, and as a student in the MSL program for the School of Law I'm about to get into finals week so I am looking at a 15 to 20 page research paper that I have to write and turn in by August 2 so [sad trombone sound]

*Charles Schelle: 3:59*

We're finally using our soundboard

*Jena Frick: 4:02*

Surprise guys we have a soundboard

*Charles Schelle: 4:05*

I am definitely not ready. But at the same time, it's actually going to be nice seeing coworkers again and for a lot of people didn't mean we're gonna have a retreat ourselves for our office that will get to see each other for the first time but you know what, there's no looking back now. We're going to get your heart rate up also before the direct fit interview with some reminders for when you come back and some news this is your pulse check. And indoor mask requirement is now in effect that UMB regardless of vaccination status. There are several key parts to the policy including exceptions, so please listen closely. Everyone, regardless of vaccination status must wear a mask in public indoor settings. Everyone regardless of vaccination status, must wear a mask on UMB buses or shuttles people may remove their masks when they are eating or drinking indoors inside an office laboratory or designated study area as long as they are by themselves. A person working in a cubicle can remove their mask while seated. If the following criteria are met, they are fully vaccinated. The walls of the cubicle extend above the top of their head when they are seated. A cubicle wall is between themselves and other people seated in the area. No one is seated closer than six feet from them on the open side of the cubicle. A graphic to help visualize the cubicle rules is available on the UMB recovery website at [umaryland.edu/Coronavirus](http://umaryland.edu/Coronavirus). Fully vaccinated staff and faculty giving in person presentations and lectures have the option to remove their masks during the presentation or lecture as long as six feet of physical distances between them and their audience. While eating or drinking indoors, unvaccinated people must physically distance. Vaccinated individuals are encouraged to physically distance when eating indoors. Masks are not required when people are outdoors except for at gatherings where attendees will be in fixed seating for more than 15 minutes without six feet of physical distancing. A face covering is required while exercising at URecFit and the UMB Community Engagement Center. The complete policy and FAQs can be found at [umaryland.edu/Coronavirus](http://umaryland.edu/Coronavirus). Additionally, the city of Baltimore reinstated an indoor mask mandate for everyone that became effective August 9. A new UMB policy on abbacy work is effective August 15. The policy addresses risks and considerations of out of state work and clarifies that out of state work must be authorized in advance. Special considerations for telework and neighboring states to Maryland and the District of Columbia are also outlined in the policy. This policy is not intended to apply to occasional and approved work related travel. To read the policy visit [umaryland.edu](http://umaryland.edu) and search using the keyword policies. We mentioned this in the previous edition of the pulse check but as a reminder, a new telework policy starts on August 15. The policy outlines flexibility afforded to employees and supervisors where employees are allowed to telework from and what employees are responsible for when working remotely. A list of frequently asked questions to better understand the policy can be found on the Elm.

*Dana Rampolla: 7:06*

All aboard the UMB shuttle! The shuttle resumed service on August 2, offering three routes the 702 Mount Vernon 703 federal Hill and 704 Canton Fells Point route. The UMB shuttle runs from 6am to 11am and 3pm to 11pm. Monday through Friday. The 703. Fed Hill leaves the hub at 5:55am. Students do not pay a fare to ride the shuttle faculty, staff and affiliates as well as postdocs can ride for a \$1.75 cent fare for a one way trip. riders will need to preload their UMB one cards with funds either online or at a campus kiosk before boarding the shuttle. Their easiest kiosks to find is right in the SMC right after you walk through the door past the guards desk. Drivers will not be equipped to accept cash at any time children 17 years old or younger may ride the UMB shuttle for free when accompanied by an adult if the parents affiliation is non student the parent is required to pay the dollar 75 fare. Remember that the UMB shuttle is public transportation so for now, face coverings are required to be worn. You can track the location of the UMB shuttle via the mobile UMB app and learn more at [umaryland.edu/shuttlebus](http://umaryland.edu/shuttlebus)

*Charles Schelle: 8:20*

On-campus dining is returning with a new vendor chartwells the market at the SMC Campus Center will reopen for grab-and-go items for its first week of operations starting Monday, August 16. Customers can self pay at the registers. Starbucks at the SMC Campus Center and additional food options will open on Monday August 23. The Carey School of Law Crema Coffee location will also reopen Monday August 23 hours and more details are coming soon for those locations and will be announced on the Elm, The Elm Weekly and Campus Life Weekly. If you need a caffeine fix now, the dental school Crema Coffee location opened August 9 and operate 7am to 3pm. Monday through Friday.

*Jena Frick: 8:57*

Faculty staff and students are to be fully vaccinated by August 16 against COVID-19. No student is permitted to come onto UMB's campus unless they have received at least one vaccine dose by Friday, August 20 2021, or five days after the start of classes whichever is later, and they must have received their second dose by Friday, September 24 2021 or five weeks after the start of classes whichever is later. Students should talk to their student affairs Dean or admissions department about a leave of absence or enrollment options if the student fails to meet these requirements. faculty and staff also have a list of consequences if they are not vaccinated by the deadline including losing privileges to telework and go on university sponsored travel among other measures. A medical and religious exemption process is also in place for faculty staff and students. Details on exemptions and more can be found in the UMB COVID-19 vaccination protocols posted on the UMB recovery website at [umaryland.edu/Coronavirus](http://umaryland.edu/Coronavirus) and Is your UMB Pulse Check.

*Charles Schelle:* 10:04

[Energetic Music] Alright. If you're not struggling, you're not hustling! No ego, amigo! Hey! Love yourself, boo! Are you ready to talk t Julia Wightman and Jimmy Heiner of URecFitness?! Welcome to the show. So hopefully you feel motivated to work out now and talk about working out at URecFit.

*Jena Frick:* 10:29

Well that did get me super pumped up.

*Charles Schelle:* 10:30

That's good. So you know, it's actually the top fitness song according to Men's Health magazine. Power by Kanye West

*Jena Frick:* 10:38

This does not surprise me at all because that's the song that's on my workout playlist. Yeah, that right with lose yourself Eminem

*Charles Schelle:* 10:45

Do you two have a favorite song to workout to or your go-to in the gym?

*Jimmy Heiner:* 10:50

Typically, if I work out, I go running outside and I try not to have earbuds in so I can hear traffic and things like that. But when I swam competitively and the song I listened to to get myself hyped up was Enter Sandman by Metallica. So that's all a nice old one, but a good go to Yeah.

*Julia Wightman:* 11:07

Anything Cher?

*Charles Schelle:* 11:08

Really.

*Dana Rampolla:* 11:09

Oh wow

*Charles Schelle:* 11:10

Julia Wightman is the director at URecFit and Wellness and Jimmy Heiner is the Associate Director of Operations at URecFit and Wellness. We'll start with you, Julia. I just started last year. But you I looked up on LinkedIn, you're approaching a 30 year anniversary with you and me, is that right?

*Julia Wightman:* 11:26

Yeah.

*Charles Schelle:* 11:27

Congratulations.

*Julia Wightman:* 11:28

Thank you

*Charles Schelle:* 11:29

That had to be an exciting 30 years, especially this last year. But before we get to that, how did you become part of the UMB family?

*Julia Wightman:* 11:38

Well, I coming out of high school, I really wasn't sure what I wanted to do. But I had several teachers in high school that had an impact on me. So I'm like, I want to be a teacher. So I went to undergrad to be to become a teacher, and then quickly realize it was a lot of discipline to it. And I'm like, how did they do that? So I'm like, I don't want to do that. So I went back and got my master's in exercise physiology, was always interested in exercise and how it affected your body and just being overall healthy. So, you know, I was in cardiac rehab and adult fitness. And that was kind of stressful. My, my last year at Virginia, and I'm like, I need something to get away from the clinical side. So I saw the job posting in the Washington Post, and I'm like, I'm gonna apply. Luckily, they called me in for an interview. I was only going to stay for a couple years to get back in the clinical side. Well, here I am, almost 30 years later. So yeah, i, UMB bit me. I'm here.

*Charles Schelle: 12:51*

Yep. Great. Right. So Jimmy, hopefully you can make it to 30 years. How did you become part of UMB and URecFit?

*Jimmy Heiner: 12:58*

Yeah, that's a milestone that I'd love to see make here someday. I just kind of said I grew up in the world of aquatics. And I was living in the Midwest at the time and my family's in this side. I was looking for a job this way. Really good position here opened up they had aquatics and safety and it kind of was right up my alley. That brought brought me here 10 years ago and you know, have progressed up the line to associate director of operations.

*Jena Frick: 13:23*

So you moved here to Baltimore from the Midwest, what was that change, like for you?

*Jimmy Heiner: 13:28*

It was a huge change. The Midwest is a different type of living a lot a lot slower. And, you know, I grew up on the east coast. So like I was more accustomed to the faster pace society This is so it was more of adjustment. The four years I was living in the Midwest, it was more of a welcome home coming coming back to the eastern shore. So you went out there for college, was my first job at post grad school was was living in working at Mizzou.

*Charles Schelle: 13:55*

Nice, you know, it's great that URecFit is open again and to see that, you know, students center all together going and we just have to give Bill Crockett some some kudos I'm sure to, for for guidance to get everything up and running.

*Julia Wightman: 14:08*

He's a reason that I'm I'm still here. 30 years later, he was on my search committee. He was on my interview committee along with Cindy Rice, who's still here with the university. Bill, you know, being able to stay in a position or at one career path. He's a great mentor. He listens. He knows when to say yes, he knows when to say no. The man if you if you've seen him he's not he's not a big stature man, but he has broad shoulders. There's not many men are that I respect more than Bill Crockett a compliment.

*Jena Frick: 14:44*

Yeah, Bill Crockett, the man the myth, the legend. Julia and Jimmy. So for those who are listening that are maybe incoming incoming students or faculty and staff that maybe just haven't been been able to explore URecFit just yet. Can you give us an overview of exactly what it is what you all have there and what it's all about?

*Julia Wightman: 15:04*

So we are campus and recreation facility and services for the university. So we compromise the fourth and fifth floor of the SMC Campus Center. And we also have the Pratt gym that is on top of the adjacent Pratt street garage, but you can only access the Pratt gym via the Campus Center. So we are basically the location to the landing spot for health, fitness, recreation programs and services for the university. So we have an indoor pool, which isn't open yet, but we have it. We have all the cardio the weight equipment, fitness and wellness classes. We have the Pratt gym which compromises the basketball courts the volleyball court racquetball indoor track, and then we also have the IM sport side of it. The university doesn't have any outdoor fields. So we're always looking to collaborate collaborated with UMBC in the past Loyola in the city to commandeer outdoor space.

*Jimmy Heiner: 16:15*

Some of our most popular programs that are group exercise classes that most people want to utilize right now currently virtual but you know, hopefully when we bring it back in person in the near future, if it allows,

*Charles Schelle: 16:26*

And a little bit of shorthand, you said IM sports, I guess you mean intramural?

*Julia Wightman: 16:29*

Yes, yes. Sorry.

*Charles Schelle: 16:30*

That's okay. Everyone has their lingo.

*Dana Rampolla: 16:33*

Jimmy, you mentioned virtual tell us what's the last year looked like? How did you transition? How did it work out for your team?

*Jimmy Heiner: 16:42*

It was a challenge. But working with good people having a good team really help. You know, I think all of us kind of thought this was going to be Oh, we'll be closed for a couple weeks. And then we're going to come back as soon as we realized, that's not gonna be the case, the team did what it could especially Jimmy Mzsanski, his assistant senior Assistant Director for fitness, did what he could work with his team to get them the cameras, the mics that they needed to be able to start teaching from home, and, you know, deliver programming that was needed because people missed being able to work out, you know, people missed coming home. I mean, the entire year, we were constantly asking, when are you guys opening when you guys opening and we all wanted to, we just had to wait till it was safe enough to do it. But the team stepped in and did everything they could to get us going virtual and then also set the facility backup. So if we were told we could open back up to services in two weeks time,

*Dana Rampolla: 17:29*

So just ready to go. What were you most proud of during that time? Just keeping people engaged?

*Jimmy Heiner: 17:36*

Yeah, having something for them to be engaged in. And then I think it just said the team coming together and just knowing that when we need to get something done, we did it. And we were ready to go. And it looks at any point could have been two weeks notice could have opened, because we tried to get, you know, proposed several times to get the facility open. But the metrics just weren't there just wasn't quite safe enough. And once we finally did, you know, it was happy for all of us that we could finally bring people back and do what they want to do.

*Julia Wightman: 18:05*

We were constantly getting questions about when we're going to be open. And yes, you know, you asked earlier about Tell us about URecFit and Wellness and I and where did I go? I went to the building, you know, I told you about the physical, you know, four walls and what we have inside of it. But with COVID we didn't have that. But we are so much more than our building. We like Jimmy said we have a tremendous team of professionals and we're in the field of where we are because we love people we like we just love being around people and being missing our our student employees or members, the patrons in the facility that was that was hard for us. And you know, I'm thankful again to Bill Crockett and Dr. Patty Alvarez for asking and communicating with us, you know about projects that were outside of our lane that challenged us. We got our certificates in contact tracing to help the university with that Some of the team assisted the grad school with projects. When the vaccine clinic open, the team stepped in and assisted with daily operations for the vaccine clinic. The vaccine clinic was successful in part due to the team of direct fit and wellness and also event services. All the equipment. I mean, I am so proud that anyone who saw URecFit pre COVID knew the layout of the equipment. And we get asked every day, well, when are you going to move the equipment back, you know, when can it go back to normal, but the guys moved, I wanted to calculate it. And I didn't do it. But I mean, it was tons of equipment. I mean, they moved so many dumbbells and weights, weight machines and cardio equipment, up to the Pratt gym. And that's not a direct route. That's a completely different building. So you had to move the equipment down to one elevator, come off of it, go across the building and put it in another elevator and then up to the Pratt. It was no easy feat. And it was a lot of equipment. And ue to budget, budgetary constraints, we did it in house because the money wasn't there to bring in Movers. I'm just proud that the team leaned in and understood that that's what it took. Because we were trying to set the facility to where it was going to be most advantageous for us to be able to open. So many other facilities left their facility alone, which is not a bad thing. I'm not saying but you know, and just marked off every piece of equipment every two pieces of equipment, but due to the importance of cleaning the equipment and physical distancing and airflow. The Pratt gym has very high ceilings, we moved a lot of equipment up there and stored equipment and everything got really spaced out. And we were really hoping that that would, you know, allow us to open but again, the metrics, the COVID metrics was horrible, and it just wouldn't allow us to do it. But when we reopened, it allowed, you know us to be in a I think a more comfortable situation for the for the students when they came back to be spaced out having that space to clean your equipment when you weren't, you know, butted up against somebody else

*Charles Schelle: 20:24*

Wow. Julia and Jimmy, unfortunately, COVID cases are rising, especially attributed to the Delta variant. So UMB has reinstated its face covering policy for all areas indoors regardless of vaccination status. That includes exercising and URecFit now. So what are some ways to comfortably exercise while wearing a mask, I think we should first say that exercising can be safe with a mask on but people with pre existing conditions. Such as you know, cardiovascular or pulmonary, you know, COPD should consult with their physician before they start an exercise regimen. But you know, the body adapts. So what you were doing last week when there wasn't a mask mandate, you know, don't expect to come back and go right into that regimen because you're now you're going to have a mask on. So you know, maybe break that regimen down into shorter segments, decrease the intensity.

*Jimmy Heiner: 22:31*

I mean, I think for me, it's like really listening to your body. If you're feeling light headed, dizzy, extremely short of breath work from when you normally work out, that's when you need to stop and take a pause. You know, I mean, a lot of people don't push themselves hard, and that's great. But if you're feeling something a little bit different this time, you know, stay hydrated think that they take the time to put the mask down, take a quick sip, I think it really, really helpful and during that time.

*Charles Schelle: 22:53*

Yeah, I think you know what you said, you know, pulling back holding back, I'm sure there's a lot of people who feel if they're not going all out, they're not getting a workout, but but really for your safety, you really have to know your limits.

*Jimmy Heiner: 23:04*

Yeah, I think that's fair, you know, maybe you're not doing the full 5k that you wanted, but maybe it's just your you strive your new goal is at that 30 minute activity at a reasonable pace where your breathing is comfortable for you, there's going to be two places where we're not, you're not going to need to use masks. And that's going to be while you're physically swimming in the pool, you'll need to wear the mask on deck and you get to the edge of the pool, put a mask in a band that we're going to provide do your workout, as you get out of the pool, put the mask back on until locker room. Other place would be as you're when you're taking a shower. So in any of those wet areas other than that the expectation would be that you would have the mask on.

*Charles Schelle: 23:39*

Now the face covering policy has a list of the types of masks and face coverings you can wear and can't wear at UMB for instance, a couple of the face masks you can't wear or there's gaiters around your necks and bandanas or even those masks that have those valves and or holes in them. But they do make some exercise related mask maybe some materials that are more breathable or good for sweat as well. Do you have any recommendations of maybe the type of mask or a face covering that can at least help you a little bit while working out?

*Jimmy Heiner: 24:11*

I don't know of any specific brands I mean that you can go out and Google and they have some listings and I you know not paid or endorsed by anybody so I'm not gonna put anything out. But I mean, what do you said you know, water wicking is best cloth is what you want breathable, something like a surgical mask will work but it's not necessarily the best. Having multiple masks whether that's just for through your workout, or just knowing that you're going to get this one all sweaty so you better have another one when you go back to class or work because that's not going to be comfortable and the wetter a mask is the least effective it is so if it gets wet during your workout, probably best to switch that out. For the rest of the workout.

*Julia Wightman: 24:52*

Yeah, I agree. I mean, you know, it's like it's like clothes. Try it on. See how it fits. If it doesn't fit well when you're not exercising, it's probably not going to fit well when you're exercising. So, you know, try try multiple masks to find the one that's going to fit your size of your face and your exercise regimen.

*Dana Rampolla: 25:14*

What are some things that haven't returned yet? Sounds like you're you're back in action. You've got some limited equipment in place everything cleaning protocols are going well, what's what's not back?

*Jimmy Heiner: 25:26*

So there's a few things I am definitely looking to bring back in the future as we get approval. We have a few items there for leadership to look at and approve one of them is swimming pool. That has a lot to do with staffing. One of the hardest areas to staffing I know because I was in the position for about six years is lifeguards. There's a national lifeguard shortage right now, and we're doing everything we can to find staff to be able to bring back some hours in the near future. We still have restrictions on group play such as basketball volleyball, that hopefully in the intramural sports and some of that programming that we're an in person group exercise. Again, as safety allows we get approval from leadership, we will bring things like that back.

*Dana Rampolla: 26:05*

And how will we know that things are coming back but we see that in the Elm Campus Life weekly.

*Jimmy Heiner: 26:10*

We try to blast out is everywhere. We can definitely website, our app, Elm, Campus Life weekly, wherever people are looking, we try to try to put it so they know

*Jena Frick: 26:21*

So that you told us what's not back. So what what is currently back what can people do right now in the center or even in the virtual classes that you had mentioned, tell us about that.

*Julia Wightman: 26:30*

We have a small subset of virtual group exercise classes that you can register for via our URecFit Live app, or the online portal. And it's a variety, some in the morning, afternoon and evening. Most of the services within the facility are based toward fitness and conditioning. So we have half the half of the treadmills out about half or 60% of the remaining cardio equipment out. We were able to keep all of the selectorized or the pin selector I don't know how else to describe that for someone, all that is still out. The free weight equipment is up in the Pratt gym, we were able to basically keep most of the strength equipment because we were that's first it was hard to move. And at first we were when we were first hoping to open it was last late late summer, early fall. And we're like well people can do their cardio outside. You know, let's try to

preserve as much of resist strength equipment as we can. And you know, and we drained the pool once we saw where COVID was going or wasn't going and we weren't allowed to be on campus. It was only once in a while as per approval that Jimmy and the assistant director of aquatics was allowed to come in to check the chemistry of the pool because you need to maintain a safe pool. Well once we saw that we weren't going to be opening we drained the pool. I just want to go back to I forget which one of you said you know the the back end process draining the pool wasn't an easy, easy feat. But also bringing the pool back online has not been an easy feat. I think a lot of people think you just fill up the bathtub and you just get in and you start playing around well that's not the case. I mean you have Jimmy can talk to it but I mean you don't have the pumps and the filtration system the chlorinator the pump the I don't even know really what the Dectron does but you have a Dectron that the water goes through and HVAC system. You know I mean,

*Jena Frick: 28:40*

It sounds so complicated.

*Julia Wightman: 28:42*

When the when the when the tub got full, we ran in, there's been issue after issue after issue because it's sat for a year.

*Dana Rampolla: 28:50*

Wow.

*Julia Wightman: 28:51*

With not with no activity

*Dana Rampolla: 28:52*

Stuff we would never think about

*Julia Wightman: 28:54*

There's a lot going on the back backside that a lot of people don't know about

*Jena Frick: 28:58*

Right.

*Charles Schelle: 28:59*

As you said, Jimmy, you're looking for lifeguards, but the pool is filled.

*Jimmy Heiner: 29:04*

It is refilled and treated and heated and we're ready and anxious to get our swimmers back.

*Charles Schelle: 29:10*

Before we get any further. As we mentioned, you're doing a phased reopening. So we talked about what you can do inside who can come inside right now and what are the hours and I know they're restricted right now. But tell us then a little bit about maybe your your future plans of kind of seeing how this is going to go with COVID.

*Julia Wightman: 29:27*

We originally open just to students in June but now we're starting in July we after the Fourth of July weekend, we extended our access to all members with the exception of sponsored members and guests. So basically a sponsored member is a guest, a student is just a extended guests, students and eligible members can do a plus one. We know that if you're going to be successful in your exercise regimen, that you know, to part of a barriers not having that connection or that workout partner. So we created a plus one or sponsored membership. Some people aren't married, you know, sometimes it's your roommate, who's going to be that person who's going to help you maintain your exercise regimen. So right now, sponsored members and guests are the only subset that's not allowed to come back. We're only open Monday through Friday from 8am to 730. You know, we alluded to that we that we are in need of lifeguards, but we're also in need of staffing overall. We typically have around 125 135 employees. We're not even halfway there yet. So, and I'm also we're also down three professional staff.

*Dana Rampolla: 30:52*

Wow.

*Julia Wightman: 30:52*

So in order to offer the hours that we had pre COVID, we need to build that employment base back up, and also get back the three professional staff that we have lost during this.

*Jena Frick: 31:05*

So if anyone's looking for a job, at URecFit

*Jimmy Heiner: 31:09*

Come our way.

*Julia Wightman: 31:10*

Yes, absolutely.

*Charles Schelle: 31:11*

Absolutely. What other health and hygiene measures is URecFit taking other than having to enforce the mask policy?

*Julia Wightman: 31:21*

Yeah, I mean, from from day one, Jimmy, and myself, and then the entire team have been in communication with various stakeholders across campus. We met early on with Dr. Majette, who's no longer with the university, Steve Deck from EHS. And we were blessed with Steve Deck being on the Safety and Health Committee because he was a member of the facility pre COVID. So having that insight from an individual who knew how the facility ran or operated before COVID, to me was hugely important to our success, and being able to come back, we're in touch with Steve, like, weekly to know what we can, you know, this is what we're thinking. Because if he's not going to approve something, that I'm not going to push it up to leadership. So we try to have that conversation with the health experts before we send it up to leadership.

*Charles Schelle: 32:15*

Yeah, I mean, I think we're all just playing this week by week anymore, you know, year and a half in, but with the cleanliness, give me some examples. You mentioned about machines being spaced apart and everything it has there been anything else that that was implemented, specifically to kind of keep things sanitary, or tell people to say, Hey, this is what you can do after you've used the machines?

*Jimmy Heiner: 32:38*

Yeah, so we purchased some items, we added more cleaning stations that are a little bit more visible, there's a shorter walk to it from a machine. We also try to help put the onus on the user, educating the user of cleaning machines before and after is really going to help the spread. I mean, that's a good practice anyway, going to a gym, right? a surprising amount of people that don't buy so we really wanted to make it you know, hey, you were part of this to help prevent the spread. by wiping that down. We also were able to purchase electrostatic sprayers, that at the end of the night, we were able to spray down with a disinfectant. So some of the handheld stuff like the dumbbells and barbells. And that sort of thing that helped to kill anything. So it's, you know, we spent hours and hours research with other institutions and webinars and everything going over what best practices were. So as we were setting up, we were doing everything, according to what people have learned other areas had opened much sooner than we had. So it was listening to what went well for them and what didn't, and then, you know, modeling those practices, so we could have a safe welcoming facility when we were able to get the permission to open.

*Jena Frick: 33:48*

That's great.

*Charles Schelle: 33:49*

I didn't I don't want to put you on the spot about the spray bottles. But I was thinking, you know, they we talked about the dwell time with some of these with the EHS and everything. I don't know if you know that the dwell time for those bottles, if I'm actually supposed to wipe it off, or just leave it set. So it has like 10 or five minutes to actually disinfect?

*Jimmy Heiner: 34:05*

That's a hard question to answer because each disinfectants different. Yeah. So for if we're talking our facility, you know, I believe it was one or two minute is what the EPA suggested. Some of them will say 10 minutes, but we tried to use chemicals that are quicker,

*Charles Schelle: 34:22*

Right? Yeah. But I was thinking I didn't want to leave it soaked for the next person. But I also want to leave it clean.

*Jena Frick: 34:28*

You know, it's almost like it's almost like this has been really good for gym cleanliness. Because Jimmy you had said some people just normally don't wipe things down. And I can't tell you how many times pre pandemic, I would go to the gym, and I would go to use a machine or I would do like a circuit training class and I go to the next station, and they're just be like droplets of sweat just hanging out. Like, you all have towels for a reason, guys. So it's kind of nice. Now that everyone's like Alright, Let's wipe everything down. Let's make sure it's clean and courteous for the next person. And so

*Jimmy Heiner: 35:01*

I'm hoping that continues into the future. And this is a lesson learned?

*Jena Frick: 35:04*

Absolutely.

*Dana Rampolla: 35:05*

In a lot of ways, lots of lots of areas, do you foresee continuing some of your virtual programming or is your hope to really migrate to being back in person fully?

*Jimmy Heiner: 35:18*

I think the focus is definitely going to be in person, but I think there is a very much at home and a need for some virtual some people felt more connected more, you know, more easier to do it, they could just get up, roll out of bed and do it right, they, you know, do some yoga on the floor right there. And they didn't have to do a lot to make it there. So there's definitely a need for that for some people. You know, we wasn't successful yet. But we introduced some egaming, as well as something we hadn't done before as partner intramurals. I want that to stay because there's a portion of the students that may not want to come and work out but they love video games, Madden FIFA, or something like that. And they can still participate and be part of their schools, for our Poe Cup and that sort of thing. So there's things like that, that we've implemented that hopefully will be to stay for the future.

*Charles Schelle: 36:04*

eSports is so huge. my alma mater, Ball State University actually now has an Esports like, arena for students now becoming that serious. Yeah,

*Jena Frick: 36:14*

What exactly is eSports? I don't know. I'm not a video gamer. So I guess maybe I'm just like, kind of behind on this thing

*Charles Schelle: 36:21*

Think about those like multiplayer games, especially you can play with other players on the internet. So you're literally forming a team. Whether that's something like Fortnite or Yeah, I can't think of the the other ones. Yeah especially Madden. Sports games make sense where you need, you know, four or five people. And it's a whole lot of strategy and dedication and hours and hours and hours.

*Jena Frick: 36:41*

Wow. Yeah, the closest thing I do to that is Dungeons and Dragons. Speaking of E- sports and gaming. So during the pandemic, you guys also launched the URecFit live mobile app, what are some cool features for the app? And how can people download it,

*Julia Wightman: 36:57*

They can download it on their Android, Android or Apple just search, go to the store, search URecFit Live, I think from the feedback that I'm receiving from the students and the members, is that if you're interested in group exercise, you can save your favorite classes, they're easier to access, you can register for the classes there, you don't have to have, I mean, let's face it, we are a an immediate gratification, you know, on your phone all the time. I mean, look at some of the safety, marketing media that's out there, like don't be walking in on your phone, but yet everyone's doing it. So yeah, if you wanted to be walking over to the facility and sign up for a class, once classes come back live, you could do it you can receive, let's say, the showers let's say the water went out, and we pushed out a notification, it would come it would a notification alert would come across your the the app,

*Jimmy Heiner: 37:58*

I think with a customer friendly things areas, you can renew your membership through the app, all new members we want to come into the facility to so they can see it and you'll get a tour and that sort of thing. But if you're you'll get an I think you get a notice that says hey, you're gonna expire. And you can go and just do it right there on the app real simple, and we don't have to do it in person. So that's one of those customer service things I think it really helps with.

*Dana Rampolla: 38:17*

And so if I'm not a member of URecFit, how do I become a member? Can I get a trial, I remember a couple years ago, when we were in person, you could get a guess after the holidays was it that you would offer a free week or two?

*Julia Wightman: 38:29*

Well, if you're eligible. So basically, at this point, we're talking about an employee of the university or an affiliate, and there's a long list of affiliates. And it's even for me, who's been here 30 years hard to remember that long list of affiliates. So please reference our website for those affiliates. But the main affiliate would be the hospital, you would have to come into the facility to the fourth floor business desk with

with your one card or work ID so we could validate your eligibility and then you would fill out the your profile on the computer, we'd process the sale and you would be good to go. If you wanted to come in and just try out the facility. Again, if you're eligible, you can come in complete your profile, we would just sell you a free one day pass. You can come in try out the facility, see if it's meets your needs. We have what you want. And then you could just renew your membership after that.

*Charles Schelle: 39:25*

Great and what would your quick pitch be to those people who have gym memberships elsewhere and switching to URecFit?

*Julia Wightman: 39:31*

We care. I mean, I'm not saying that other facilities don't care. I'm not saying that at all. And we are overly safe and cautious and sometimes that's a double edged sword for us. Sometimes people say we're too cautious or too safe, but you know we have red shirt drills in regards to training our staff in regards to you know if someone would collapse we have those on a on a, minimally a monthly basis if not more. You would find it hard if you wanted to like drop in and see how friendly The staff is, when you come in the staff are going to greet you. And when the staff leave, they're going to they're going to say goodbye, have a good night, have Have a good afternoon, we care about the facility and the users of the facility. And if something's not, right, we try our our best to get it fixed.

*Charles Schelle: 40:22*

Great. Well, you definitely need a positive attitude to work out to get motivated. So it's great that you're fostering that environment. To learn more, visit [umaryland.edu/URecFit](http://umaryland.edu/URecFit). Thank you, Julia and Jimmy, and Bill and Patty and everyone else.

*Dana Rampolla: 40:39*

Especially everyone moving all that equipment, they must be in great shape.

*Jena Frick: 40:42*

I know!

*Jimmy Heiner: 40:44*

We are we are getting ready to move it back here soon. So we are actually gonna be closing the week of August 9 in order to undo everything we did get set it back up. So hopefully, you know some of these restrictions we talked about, well, we can pull back off as you know, we're allowed to

*Jena Frick: 40:59*

Great sounds like the perfect time to download the URecFit live app. So that way you can get a notification once you all are open back up.

*Jimmy Heiner: 41:06*

Sounds good to me. All right. Thank you guys. Yeah. Thank you for having us. Thank you.

*Jena Frick: 41:12*

So now that we're getting back to campus very slowly, we got the semester starting very soon, how does everyone usually get to work or get around when they're on campus?

*Charles Schelle: 41:22*

I've been driving recently, mainly because my usual Light Rail is having work through September. So they stop at Camden Yards and then offer a shuttle. So I'm been parking on the street when I can, but I try to walk as much as I can once I'm here, except we're on the west side of campus, recording this. So this is this is more of a hike.

*Dana Rampolla: 41:43*

Yeah, this is a good walk when it's not hot. I drive to work. I live out in the county, so I have a good drive. But same thing when I'm here. I usually even if I'm coming from west to east side, back and forth, I tend to walk

*Jena Frick: 41:55*

Yeah, I usually drive to campus. But I moved to federal Hill recently, and I've been really wanting to ride my bike to campus. So I guess I don't know, maybe when it's not as hot out, I'll give that a try. I just I hate the idea of coming to work just being all sweaty. But maybe I'll give it a try. Once we get into like October when it's cooler, less, you know, hot out

*Dana Rampolla: 42:18*

We also had that benefit. Charles, you might know if it's still in effect it had started before COVID got quite some time before COVID probably a year before and it was where you got your sticker from the parking department. Is that still in effect? Yeah,

*Charles Schelle: 42:32*

Absolutely. And actually, I'm glad you mentioned that because those stickers expire each year, July 31. And I just put in my renewal application. And that MTA sticker will get you on to the Baltimore subway line, the light rail and the MTA bus system as well. The only thing that it doesn't do is that you can't take the MARC train for free using that. Okay,

*Dana Rampolla: 42:59*

Yeah, before COVID I had taken the metro a couple times for mountain Owings Mills and come in that way. And it was great. I could read I can listen to podcasts. Yeah, sometimes

*Jena Frick: 43:08*

It's nice not being behind the wheel and just kind of letting somebody else take care of that, especially if it's a really early morning. You can maybe just kind of like shut your eyes for a little bit.

*Charles Schelle: 43:16*

So why are we talking about how we get around campus? How we come to work? Are you trying to stalk me?

*Jena Frick: 43:22*

Absolutely. That's what I'm trying to charge. No, I'm asking. I was asking as a little segue. Oh, you know, no pun intended there.

*Charles Schelle: 43:34*

I just got it. It took me a second.

*Jena Frick: 43:35*

Yeah. That's the other version definition of a Segway, but you get what I'm saying. I'm using this as a segue to talk about what's coming up on our next episode of The UMD pulse. We're going to go over all the options that Parking and Transportation Services offer from the UMB shuttle to parking garages, the MTA sticker charters and so much more. We will be chatting with Angela Hall from Parking and Transportation Services.

*Charles Schelle: 43:59*

Well, I'm looking forward to it. I guess I have to hop on a scooter and get out of here with the rest of you. So thank you to Julia Wightman and Jimmy Heiner again from URecFit. Time to get our steps in for the next show and thanks for listening to the UMB pulse.

*Jena Frick: 44:19*

The UMB Pulse with Charles Schelle, Dana Rampolla and Jena Frick is the UMB Office of Communications and Public Affairs production. Edited by Charles Schelle. Sound engineering by Jena Frick. Marketing by Dana Rampolla. Musi by No vibe URecFitness segment usic by Paul Keane. Recorded in the University of Maryland Baltimore Community Engagement Center.

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Episode 4 Teaser

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