

# New HPU arena takes shape

**BY CINDE INGRAM**  
ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

HIGH POINT — Construction of High Point University's Nido and Mariana Qubein Arena continues at a full sprint toward a goal of having it ready to open in August.

Visitors to the 283,000-square-foot complex will pass through a dramatic entrance crowned by a glass ceiling, with a grand staircase flanked by escalators and a water feature. Inside will be spacious concourses, a state-of-the-art scoreboard, plush locker rooms and functional meeting rooms.

With 4,500 purple seats, the HPU Panthers' pride boasts the state's largest single-use collegiate athletic scoreboard, said Andrew Kibler, project manager of construction and renovation. The state-of-the-art scoreboard is second in size only to the PNC Arena in Raleigh, used by both the Carolina Hurricanes professional hockey and N.C. State University basketball teams. The giant HPU scoreboard includes a 3D imaging system and is surrounded by wood panels reminiscent of Madison Square Garden and Clemson University, Kibler said.

Work is underway to install terrazzo flooring through the concourses, an adjacent fine dining restaurant named



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**Melissa Anderson, left, assistant vice president for university events at High Point University, and Andrew Kibler, project manager of construction and renovation, observe the construction progress in the women's locker room at the Nido and Mariana Qubein Arena.**

Alo and the 30-room Jana and Ken Kahn hotel. More than 300 workers are on site every day, Kibler said.

"We're shooting to have everything

completed in August, with the inside possibly finished in June," Kibler said.

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The conference center will provide event space for undergraduate and graduate programs, student groups and community organizations. It will seat up to 2,500 people and can be subdivided into smaller venues with lighting, sound and video for presentations.

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## ARENA

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"They're hoping to be able to use it when students come back in the fall."

The Panther teams' practice court on the arena's first level is practically complete, Kibler said. The teams' locker rooms, Panthers Club, the commissary kitchen and hotel lobby also are nearing completion on the arena's first level.

The arena's second level includes two student suites and the president's suites. The third level also features luxury suites for a total of 15, Kibler said.

The arena's conference center will be used to host executive groups and alumni, students, families and school counselors as well as to facilitate majors in hospitality and event planning.

Outside the arena, construction is underway on the new HPU welcome center and Panther Drive entrance from

Lexington Avenue. The additional campus improvements boosted the project's total cost to \$170 million, said Melissa Anderson, assistant vice president for university events.

"We love hosting visitors to campus," Anderson said. "In addition to the men's and women's basketball program, we can have concerts or guest speakers. We'll do our December commencement in here. It gives us a lot of flexibility in the types of events we want to host."

In addition to planning for the arena and conference center to bring more than 100,000 visitors each year, the university is incorporating the arena's features into its curriculum, Anderson said. For example, the white-tablecloth Alo restaurant will serve as a learning lab where students can practice etiquette skills, as they do at the existing 1924 Prime steakhouse on campus.

"Our students can dine here once a week and use a meal swipe on their passport card," Anderson said. "They'll get an appetizer, an

entree, a desert and a beverage. It's going to be a globally focused menu that takes inspiration from coastal Mediterranean, so Italy, Greek, Morocco."

The hotel's two presidential suites also reflect the arena's spacious layout. In addition to a fireplace and wetbar, the suite has huge windows and a balcony that overlooks the HPU soccer, lacrosse, and track and field areas. The university's baseball field can be seen in the distance. When Qubein initially announced the basketball arena and conference center, he said the space would be large enough to host high school graduations, which occur later in the year than the university's. Anderson confirmed discussions continue with community partners about expanded opportunities to host large events, including high school graduations.

"We love showing off our campus," Anderson said.

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