

Dunn County Wisconsin: Dunn County Board asks Legislature for Heritage Hall renovation funding

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MENOMONIE, Wis. — The Dunn County Board of Supervisors Wednesday night adopted a resolution asking the state Legislature to approve funding for a \$139-million renovation of the University of Wisconsin-Stout's Heritage Hall, a 50-year-old academic building that is used by more than 2,000 students.

"The Dunn County Board is pleased to support UW-Stout in its request for state funding for the Heritage Hall renovation project with this resolution," said Kelly McCullough, board Chair. "The university plays a major role in the cultural and economic health of Menomonie and the county as a whole. We hope that our support for this project will resonate with our elected officials, and they will continue to strongly advocate to have the renovation of Heritage Hall included in the 2023-2025 state capital budget."

The UW Board of Regents ranked the renovation of Heritage Hall as its No. 1 priority in the Chippewa Valley and the third highest priority for academic buildings across the state, the resolution noted. Gov. Tony Evers included planning funds for the Heritage Hall project in the 2023-25 state budget; however, the County Board's resolution asks the Legislature to approve full funding for the project because it is an immediate need and delaying the renovation will add \$10 million a year to its eventual cost.

A 2020 feasibility study revealed that the building's systems were in danger of failing without an upgrade, the resolution noted, adding, "renovation will renew and modernize instructional environments, optimize operational efficiency, and provide state-of-the-art workforce training and services to students, the community, and

employers.” The project will include classroom, laboratory and mechanical updates throughout the 133,000-square-foot building.

University officials say the renovation will help UW-Stout provide additional employees in critical fields, including mental health and wellness, childcare, education, and hospitality and tourism.

UW-Stout Chancellor Katherine Frank said she was grateful the County Board supported the renovation, adding, “As Wisconsin strives to address its service and workforce shortages, our collaboration with Dunn County and our large collection of regional partners will continue to serve as a leading model to grow local, regional, and state-level economies. And with the state’s financial support, Heritage Hall will enhance its distinct value to the taxpayers, employers and students of Wisconsin.”

UW-Stout officials said that more than 50 percent of the necessary planning and design work has been completed, and they have secured more than \$13.5 million in external funding associated with the project, which the university has been pursuing since 2007.

The full resolution can be found in the County Board’s meeting packet at <https://bit.ly/41JuBok>.

More information on the Heritage Hall renovation project is available at <https://bit.ly/42Jvej8>.