



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

March 15, 2019

Dear Members of the State Building Commission,

We are writing to respectfully request your consideration for the addition of the UW Oshkosh Phase II renovation of the Nursing/Education Building (Clow Hall Phase II) to the 2019-21 Capital Budget. Clow serves the College of Education and Human Services (COEHS), the College of Letters and Science, and the College of Nursing at UW Oshkosh.

The proposed 2019-21 Capital Budget includes a number of exciting large new university building projects aimed at prioritizing science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). These proposed investments recognize the importance of educating our future workforce for the opportunities and need in Wisconsin. However, these investments in STEM will be less effective if students considering college are unaware of programs and careers to pursue, or arrive unprepared for the university curriculum.

One of the major priorities of the COEHS at UW Oshkosh is to increase interest in these subjects before college. Clow Hall Phase II is an important part of the effort to expand the state's talent pipeline by increasing the number of graduates in high-demand fields like healthcare, science, technology, engineering and mathematics. UW Oshkosh will produce more K-12 teachers in engineering-related fields for the region and state that help create more awareness at the high school level.

However, Wisconsin can't train the teachers of the future in a 1970's building.

The existing facilities do not support contemporary instructional methods. Providing learning laboratories similar to those that are typically found in primary and secondary education allows future teachers to experience best practices. The existent deficient campus spaces include early childhood programs, mathematics, reading, and science methods. The current space lacks flexible furnishings, instructional technology, and adequate storage areas. The current instructional spaces within Clow Hall were designed to be teacher-centric compared to the current trend of collaborative learning and student-centric. There is not space for active learning or student collaboration and study.

The Clow Hall Phase II renovation accommodates modern instructional methods; reconfigures and renovates space to create new active learning classrooms, and learning laboratories. Significant instructional lab and research space growth is needed for the COEHS to meet their programmatic needs. COEHS needs include: a Science Education lab which can emulate a typical K-12 science lab and promote engagement with STEM (i.e. integrated science, technology, engineering, and math) initiatives; a dedicated distance learning lab; an improved Counselor Education suite; an increase in faculty and staff offices, outreach workspace, and support space.

Since its inception as a teacher-training school in 1871, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh has long been a recognized leader in education. Teacher education is perhaps the greatest contribution of comprehensive institutions like Oshkosh to the regions served. Today, the College of Education and Human Services is proud to be preparing the next generation of professional leaders in education, human services and counseling, who will set the pace in education reform and social change in an increasingly diverse environment.

The original renovation project was separated into two phases after it was approved in the 2011-13 state capital budget as part of the Major Facilities Renewal Program that included projects at Oshkosh, Platteville, Stout and Superior. In coordination with the Division of Facility Development, UW System, and the university, an extensive pre-design study was completed in June 2013 that included a responsible and defensible case for need, and rigorous analysis of program space requirements.

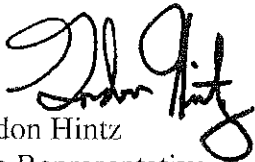
In Spring 2016, the College of Nursing relocated to the newly renovated section of Clow Hall (Phase I). While the Phase I renovation converted vacated space into nine rudimentary general assignment classrooms, it did little to help with the deficiencies in technology enhanced instructional spaces necessary for the COEHS and the campus-wide University Studies Program.

The UW Board of Regents listed the Clow Hall Phase II renovation as the 11th highest priority in the state in the 2017-2019 budget. At the time the Joint Finance Committee was approving the capital budget, UW Oshkosh was in the midst of litigation surrounding the UW Oshkosh Foundation and the UW System Board of Regents over the misuse of taxpayer funds. As a result, the project did not move forward. This issue remained unresolved at the time the UW System Board of Regents approved their 2019-2021 capital budget requests in the summer of 2018. As a result, the Regents moved Clow Hall Phase II from 11th highest priority in the 2017-19 budget to 44th highest priority and planned for the 2023-25 capital budget according to their 6-year plan.

Since then, a settlement was reached between the UW Oshkosh Foundation and the UW System. The project has been a priority for the UW Oshkosh campus since Phase I was approved in 2011. If the learning environment for our future educators is going to reflect the classrooms and advanced science and technology preparing the workforce of the future, this project cannot wait four more years. The distractions that have resulted in project funding being delayed has been resolved. As a result, it is our hope that you will reconsider restoring funding for Clow Hall Phase II in the 2019-21 Capital Budget.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



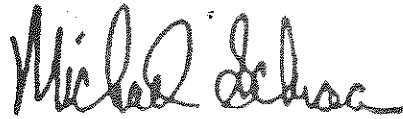
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