

University of Wisconsin Oshkosh New Residence Hall Request

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh seeks to upgrade its housing facilities. No new residence halls have been built since 1971, with eight of ten residence halls constructed prior to 1966. During the past four years we have engaged in a number of exercises that analyzed our facilities and program while also seeking student input on housing preferences. These exercises included the following: *Existing Facilities Condition Overview* (2003) completed by campus facilities staff; the *Futures Committee and Futures Report* (2004) completed by a working group of students, staff and faculty; the *Taylor Hall Project* (2004-5), a planning process culminating in our first significant renovation of an existing building; a *Student Leadership Workshop with Members of United Students in Residence Halls* (2005) completed to seek feedback from current students on desired housing types and amenities; a *Summary of Information Report* (2006) completed by a representative from *Collegiate Development Services*; and data from *Educational Benchmarking Institute (EBI)* (1999-present). We are currently working with a consultant to confirm findings from these prior studies and to study student needs and housing issues in further depth. Preliminary data have already pointed out to us the obvious lack of “variety” in the housing options available on campus and confirmed the unmet interests and housing needs of prospective and current students. This study will be completed April 30, 2007. The following themes have emerged based on the analysis of the data gathered through all of above mentioned forums:

1. **Significant Deferred Maintenance** – The most recent analysis of our residence hall facilities suggests that to “enhance” our buildings to the point where they receive upgraded infrastructure without significant improvements in amenities would cost over \$80 million. Such work would *not* meet the expectations of students and their parents regarding amenities and comfort, yet the cost would be significant.
2. **Student Demand for More Privacy and Amenities** – Our students have told us they want more privacy and amenities in their rooms and improved creature comforts and common spaces. Student feedback has consistently shown a desire for an upgrade to our current facilities to better accommodate personal needs and more closely replicate their home environments.
3. **Address Future Housing Occupancy Issues** -- Presently, we are in the process of determining the right size and mix for on-campus student housing through strategic planning and analysis of facility infrastructure issues. Preliminary data indicate that the number of the available beds/rooms will be reduced as the campus addresses the quality of space issues. For example: Renovations of three current halls built in the early 60’s would cost \$45 million dollars while a new suite style building that meets student needs could be constructed for \$34 million resulting in a reduction of about 150 beds or 75 rooms. This would also allow us the flexibility to determine the right size and mix. Also, the present vacant beds allow us to provide surge space while we renovate existing halls and build a new hall.
4. **Market Advantage** – Within the last ten years UW Green Bay, UW Stout, UW River Falls, UW La Crosse, UW Platteville, UW Milwaukee and UW Eau Claire have built new halls. In addition, both UW Stevens Point and UW Whitewater are in the planning phases for new construction. We cannot hope to provide comparable housing options for students without upgrading the quality of life on campus. Students and their families expect and repeatedly tell us they want comfortable, up-to-date residence halls.
5. **Optimal Usage of Facilities** – One of our programmatic goals is to maximize usage of residence hall facilities through partnerships with conference groups, faculty and community organizations. This requires us to utilize our space during “off” times, particularly the summer months. The revenue generated during these times helps us keep rates manageable for our student population while creating bonds between the University and the larger community. Our marketing efforts indicate to us the demand for reasonably comfortable, climate-controlled facilities for use by both youth and adult conference groups.

SUITE STYLE RESIDENCE HALL - OSHKOSH

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
OSHKOSH CAMPUS
OSHKOSH
Agency Priority (Non-GFSB)

Recommendation: \$34,000,000
PRSB
2007-2009

PROJECT REQUEST:

Enumerate \$34,000,000 PRSB to construct a new 148,000 GSF residence hall facility that will consist of suite-style living accommodations for approximately 400 students. The location will be determined after a site analysis that was expected to occur in the fall of 2006. (The site analysis has not been done as of March 2007.) Because of the density of the campus, the final site selection may result in the removal of existing residence halls.

RECOMMENDATION:

Defer the request to allow for additional planning. Unlike some of the requests for additional residence hall beds, UW-O has not yet determined a site, or the net change in the number of beds.

ANALYSIS OF NEED:

UW-Oshkosh does not yet have any suite-style dorms. The current residence hall facilities were designed to reflect the simplified needs and amenities that were prevalent at the time of construction. The existing double occupancy residence hall room arrangements with gang shower and toilet facilities are now outdated. Currently, there is a strong sentiment for alternative arrangements in university-operated residence halls. Students now request facilities that provide individual privacy as well as physical layouts that foster a positive sense of community. Students have expressed the desire for suite style living accommodations on campus with an individual bedroom/study for each student. The concept of a residence hall has evolved from the role as primarily a place to live to that of a living/learning community that greatly enhances a student's academic experience. Planning for this project has not yet progressed to the point of deciding where the new dorm will be built, or what the net change would be in the total housing capacity on campus. Currently the campus has over 400 unused dorm beds.

UW System's 2007-09 Capital Budget request includes adding suite style dorms on six campuses. These projects will build over 2,300 beds. The suite style beds approved over the last four biennia averaged 360 GSF/bed with a range of 306 to 399 GSF per bed and \$52,000/bed construction cost in 2007 dollars (range \$48,500 to \$58,300). This project calls for 370 GSF/bed, which is within the range of recent projects, but the cost in 2007 dollars was estimated at \$63,300 per bed. This is 21% above the average, and 8.5 percent above the high end of previous costs.

It is anticipated that kitchenettes equipped with only microwaves and refrigerators will be provided in the suites. Full kitchens will be centrally located on each floor for use by all floor residents. The intent of this arrangement is to preserve the sense of community that is currently experienced in existing residence halls. The request states that student use of existing food service facilities on campus is expected to continue with minimal impact. This assertion is questionable. Many foods are quick and easy to prepare in a microwave. Financial assumptions based on maintaining revenue in the existing food service operation may not be viable. In general, the use of University food service programs appears to have been declining based on the changes in the "most popular meal plan" costs as shown in UW System reports over the last five years.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. An alternative would be to perform another comprehensive renovation to an existing facility in a fashion similar to the Taylor Hall renovation. Although this would provide an upgraded environment, the basic layout of the facility would not change and the desire for a suite-style setting would be unmet.
2. Choose one of the existing suite style residence halls to replicate on multiple campuses. During the previous housing building boom in the 1960s there were a few dorm styles that were built on several campuses. At some point the state/university should have enough experience to define a few practical and cost effective designs rather than reinventing the program for every project.
3. Defer the request. This project would be a good candidate to be deferred to a future biennium and receive additional review on the operating costs and fee impact.

CAPITAL BUDGET

	Request
Construction:	\$25,471,000
Design:	2,085,000
DSF Fee:	1,090,000
Contingency:	1,783,000
Equipment:	3,486,000
Percent for Art	<u>85,000</u>
TOTAL	\$34,000,000

OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT:

This project will increase costs for facilities management operations, maintenance, and utilities. The campus estimates needing 5 more FTEs and utility costs of \$284,160 for an annual operating cost of \$395,160. This project be financed by and operated through room rental rates charged to students who choose to live in the units. Preliminary projections of academic year room rates for students living in the suites are estimated at \$3,800 per year. The existing rate for a non-improved double occupancy room on campus is \$2,500. No change in rates will occur to the remaining, non-renovated residential halls.

ALTERNATE DELIVERY METHOD REQUESTED? No.