

Board of Regents approves design plans for UWO's new academic building at Dec. 4 meeting

by News Bureau - Monday, December 01, 2008

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/1510/board-of-regents-will-review-design-plans-for-uwo-s-new-academic-building-at-dec-4-meeting/>

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh will play a major role in transforming northeastern Wisconsin, as construction begins on one of the Midwest's most distinctive academic buildings, the University's first since 1971. During its Dec. 4-5 meeting, the UW Board of Regents approved a design plan, which means construction will remain on schedule to begin in late summer 2009.

The new academic center will be one of the largest single construction projects in the history of northeastern Wisconsin's New North. Using conservative estimates, the much-needed project will generate over the next three years more than 2,400 construction-related jobs in fields such as masonry, architecture, pipefitting, electrical and plumbing, providing a big boost to the regional economy in the midst of a global economic crisis.

UW Oshkosh's 12,700 current students and tens of thousands of future students will be impacted by the long-awaited 175,000-square-foot academic center. The \$54 million funding package provides \$40 million from the state to fund construction of the building as well as \$6.2 million for the relocation and site preparation for the facilities management department, currently located on the future site of the building. An additional \$8 million is being raised from private donors via the [pride.purpose.promise](#) campaign – the first comprehensive campaign in the University's history. The campaign includes the academic building, scholarships and student/faculty collaborative learning and research.

In support of UW Oshkosh's green master plan adopted in 2003 and its commitment to "green and sustainable" principles, the design of this iconic building will incorporate LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) principles. By constructing the building to "gold" LEED standards, the University will save more than \$182,000 annually, compared to existing building energy usage. Existing buildings of this size use approximately \$335,000 in energy annually. A building constructed to gold LEED standards would use \$153,000 annually, saving close to \$6 million during the building's 30-year lifecycle, assuming energy prices remain constant.

"Northeastern Wisconsin, one of the largest population centers in Wisconsin, continues to grow, and with that growth also comes an increased demand for affordable, accessible, quality educational programs and services," said Chancellor Richard H. Wells. "UW Oshkosh, the region's most comprehensive university and the state's third largest, has grown to meet that demand while maintaining quality education. The campus, however, has not added a new academic center since the early 1970s and is significantly short of meeting minimum space requirements."

Since 2000, the university has increased its enrollment by 1,000 students – increasing the university's total annual economic contribution to the region by 16 percent from \$432 million to more than \$500 million and increasing the number of jobs created directly and indirectly from 7,900 to 9,000. Under the

Wisconsin Growth Agenda, UW Oshkosh expects to increase its enrollment by several hundred more students in high-demand fields such as biology/microbiology, medical technology, psychology, nursing, business and math/science teacher education.

The building, providing a much-needed contemporary teaching and learning environment for the College of Business and numerous College of Letters and Science departments, will feature state-of-the-art classrooms, labs, project rooms and faculty offices. The university-wide impact will relieve crowding and provide opportunities for future renovations to update facilities for the colleges of Nursing and Education and Human Services. The building will also provide nonprofits and the business community with world-class facilities for meetings and special training, educational and professional development programs in the evenings and on weekends.

“UW Oshkosh is proud to offer quality education in an attractive setting,” Wells said. “Modern facilities and amenities are important to students and faculty; and necessary to meet Wisconsin’s growing demand for well-educated professionals and business leaders. An investment in the new academic center will help our faculty and staff to deliver the promise of a contemporary learning environment to future generations.”

Located along the Fox River, the academic center will become the new “front door” to the campus. Award-winning Chicago architectural firm VOA, in association with Berners-Schober Associates Inc., Green Bay, have been selected to design the building. Berners-Schober was the architect for the \$17-million remodeling/renovation of the University’s Halsey Science Center.

The plans will be presented to the state’s building commission for design review, chaired by Gov. Jim Doyle, in January.

[Click here](#) to see renderings, blue prints and a model of the new academic center.