UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN OSHKOSH

# POLK LIBRARY *Redefined*

**uwosh.edu/polkredefined**

**63**

**AGE OF POLK LIBRARY**

*Built in 1962*
*Addition in 1969*

**50+**

**PERCENT OF BUILDING COMPONENTS DESIGNATED IN POOR CONDITION**

*Late-May 2024*

**30%**

**SMALLER FOOTPRINT**

*Current: 231,880 sq.ft.*
*Proposed: 163,000 sq.ft.*

Libraries are the hearts and souls of any university, let alone community. UWO's is failing.

UWO students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members desperately need a revitalized, redefined Polk Library. As the facility's steward, UWO has patched problems and preserved usage for years. But Polk is 63 years old and beyond Band-Aids. It weathers flooding incidents, water penetration and outdated, failing mechanical systems. More than 50 percent of its rated building components are in poor condition, according to a May 2024 report. Pipes are disintegrating. Entire sections of the building are at risk, unusable. It's no longer sustainable.

**Time to recycle and redefine the facility as Polk Learning Commons.**

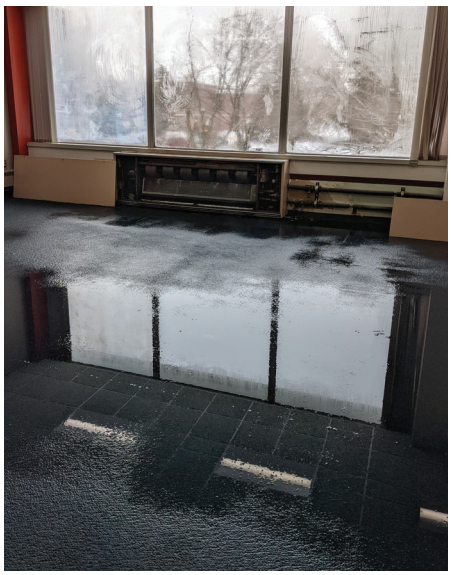
A hybrid renovation-and-new-construction plan endorsed and advanced by the Universities of Wisconsin Board of Regents transforms Polk, modernizing its 1969 wing and demolishing and rebuilding the 1962 north wing. The plan furthers UWO's renovate-first, rebuild-as-necessary ethos. UWO has added only one, new freestanding academic building (Sage Hall) over the last half century.

The $137.5 million Polk Learning Commons project will preserve print collections and traditional library functions. However, library scholars, professionals and users helped imagine and better define its future relevance and digital destiny. It will continue to house UWO's stellar University Archives, a partner to the Wisconsin Historical Society. It will be a modern haven for student study, creativity, tutoring and writing center support, multimedia technology and wi-fi that are lightyears ahead of what's integrated into current Polk. It will be UWO's meeting and digital research epicenter, open to campus and community alike—a town square for discovery, discussion, debate and the dissemination of new knowledge.

Polk Learning Commons will also boast a **30 percent smaller footprint**, moving from a current 232,000 square-foot facility to 163,000. That lessens lifetime costs for heating, cooling and upkeep.

It's time to rally around and invest in a renovated, redefined and futuristic Polk Learning Commons to serve UWO and our region for decades to come.

*Eroding mechanical systems and pipes within Polk Library.*



*Recent flooding, decaying floors and plastic sheeting covering library shelves and materials to prevent damage from potential pipe bursts.*

***From top:*** *North porch, third-floor, aerial, and second-floor rendering views of Polk Learning Commons.*

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Redefined...