

## 'Power of Partnership': UW-Stout celebrates groundbreaking for \$144M Heritage Hall renovation

With ceremonial shovels full of dirt, leaders from University of Wisconsin-Stout, the regional business community and the state of Wisconsin celebrated the start of a three-year, [\\$144.3 million renovation project](#) that will transform the half-century-old Heritage Hall into a cutting-edge educational hub to help meet Wisconsin's workforce needs.

The project, which began in August and is expected to be completed by fall 2028, will double the number of students Heritage Hall can serve through an extensive, clean-slate renovation.

"Today, we celebrate more than the groundbreaking of a building – we celebrate the power of partnership and perseverance. The renovation of Heritage Hall is a direct reflection of our mission as [Wisconsin's Polytechnic University](#): to provide career-focused, applied learning and research, and industry collaboration that meets the evolving needs of the state's workforce and communities," **Chancellor Katherine Frank** said at the ceremony on Tuesday, Sept. 9.



Chancellor Katherine Frank spoke at the Heritage Hall groundbreaking.

"For more than 50 years, Heritage Hall, originally known as the Home Economics building, has served as a launchpad for thousands of UW-Stout graduates – teachers, counselors, police officers, food scientists, hospitality leaders, and more – who have gone on to strengthen Wisconsin's economy and enrich our communities," Frank continued. "[With approximately 60% of our graduates remaining in-state and a near-perfect employment rate](#), UW-Stout places students into Wisconsin's workforce at a higher rate than any other technical college or university. But the building's true value lies in the lives it will shape and the challenges it will help solve – from childcare and education to mental health, manufacturing, and tourism."

Among those whose lives and careers have already been shaped by UW-Stout is state Rep. Clint Moses, a UW-Stout psychology alum who now represents the Menomonie area in the state Legislature. In that role, Moses was a strong advocate for funding the project in the state budget.

"I'd like to thank the chancellor and her team for doing an excellent job showing why it's important that we support UW-Stout and the type of students that this institution puts out," Moses said. "From hotel, restaurant, and tourism to golf management, all of these create the jobs we need for Wisconsin."



State Rep. Clint Moses of Menomonie spoke at the Heritage Hall groundbreaking.

Another proud UW-Stout alum is Ashley DeMuth, CEO for the Menomonie Area Chamber of Commerce, who called the project an affirmation of a shared commitment to improving the workforce and the community.

"Heritage Hall truly is more than a building. It's a bridge between campus and community. It's an investment in the next generation of professionals in education, hospitality, mental health, manufacturing, health care, tourism, nutrition and more," DeMuth said. "This is where applied learning meets real-world needs. From the Child and Family Study Center to the programs training our future teachers, counselors, and wellness leaders, Heritage Hall has long been at the heart of UW-Stout's mission. The Chamber and our investors across all industries are proud to support this vision."

Before the renovation began, Heritage Hall served more than 2,000 students in 29 undergraduate and graduate programs annually. Once it reopens, this number is expected to grow to more than 4,000 students each year.

The three-year project will involve demolishing the interior partitions of the building to create maximum flexibility for new spaces. An independent feasibility study conducted in 2020 found that while the building is structurally sound, most of its systems are either obsolete and difficult to repair or near the end of their life. The renovation will completely replace the building's mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems; replace the roof, windows and entrances; create code-compliant and accessible restrooms; and more.

"The renovation of Heritage Hall represents a bold step forward for UW-Stout," **Senior Facilities Officer Justin Utpadel** said. "This four-story facility will be completely revitalized with modern infrastructure, including solar panels and enhanced daylighting to support sustainability and wellness. Accessibility will be significantly improved, with accessible entrances on three floors."



Representatives from the campus, community and state took part in a ceremonial groundbreaking.

The renovation will also directly benefit the community at large, noted **Provost Glendalí Rodríguez**. “Heritage Hall is not only physically central to the university’s footprint; along the north it is a key community connection and entrance,” Rodríguez said. “With the renovation, the university’s Clinical Services Center, which serves members of the community, will be more easily accessible and celebrated.”

Rodríguez went on to outline the plethora of programs that will be housed within the remodeled building, noting that many of them produce graduates who can fill jobs in economic sectors projected to grow in Wisconsin in the near future, including tourism, mental health, education and child care.

The bulk of funding for the project came from the state of Wisconsin through the [2023-25 state budget](#). The project also received \$13.5 million in private funding from university supporters, industry partners and alumni made through the [Stout University Foundation](#).

Wisconsin-based Miron Construction will serve as the project’s general contractor. Andrew Daniels, senior vice president of the company’s Eau Claire office, said the project is particularly meaningful to Miron because many of its team members are UW-Stout graduates.



Miron Construction is the general contractor for the project.

"We're excited to build a space that reflects the future of learning: flexible, interdisciplinary, sustainable and safe," Daniels said. "And we're even more excited to know that the students who will walk these halls – some of whom may one day join our team – will be learning in an environment designed to help them thrive."

The renovation will allow Heritage Hall to serve Blue Devil students well into the future, said **Noah Rosenberger, president of the Stout Student Association**, who said he knows the building well as a [hotel, restaurant and tourism management](#) major.

"To me, the biggest takeaway from today is that this project shows how much the university, alumni and community believe in us as students," said Rosenberger, of Sauk Rapids, Minnesota. "They are investing in spaces where we learn, grow, connect and live the polytechnic spirit. I can't wait for the day I walk back into Heritage Hall as an alumnus and see it completely reimagined. Not just new walls and classrooms, but the energy it's going to bring to campus."