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**By State Rep. Rob Stafsholt, R-New Richmond - Contact: 608-266-7683
and UW-Stout Chancellor Bob Meyer – Contact: 715-232-2441**

UW-Stout’s South Hall renovation warrants Joint Finance Committee and full Legislature support

At a recent news conference on the University of Wisconsin-Stout campus, the president of the Stout Student Association, Hannah Bragelman, laid out the perfect case for why the university’s South Hall residence hall should be renovated.

“UW-Stout students are really devoted to sustainability and doing everything they can to preserve our natural resources and protect our environment,” Hannah said. “That is why it makes much more sense to renovate a residence hall like South Hall rather than tear it down and build something new. This renovation approach is something that we pride ourselves on at Stout.”

Hannah went on to say that renovating South Hall would be much cheaper than tearing the building down, therefore keeping student housing fees as low as possible.

For these and other reasons, we are making a unified appeal for the Legislature’s Joint Finance Committee, during its 2019-21 capital budget deliberations, to include the \$35 million project on the list it sends to the full Legislature. We also certainly hope that the project receives full legislative support and is approved by Gov. Evers.

The residence hall – with 366 beds over four stories -- is more than 50 years old, and few improvements have been made in the intervening years. The project includes upgrading the infrastructure, adding expanded restrooms and an elevator and stairs, and creating an accessible entrance, along with window and door improvements and other renovations to make the building ADA compliant.

Residence halls do more than provide shelter to our students; they also play an important role in helping our freshmen, in the case of South Hall, make that important transition to their academic experience, aided by academic resource consultants and residence advisers.

Ten years ago, UW-Stout put together a comprehensive plan to renovate all of its aging residence halls. We have made considerable progress in implementing that plan, with the latest piece being the renovation of North Hall, which will be wrapped up this year. That renewal plan called for South Hall to be completed in 2015-17, meaning that the project will be at least five years late under the best-case scenario.

The time has come to renovate South Hall. We respectfully request that the Joint Finance Committee and the full Legislature approve this important project.

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Rep. Stafsholt serves the 29th Assembly District, which includes the UW-Stout campus. Chancellor Meyer is in his fifth year of leading UW-Stout.