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Social Science renovation, fire prevention system update for UMM included in Governor's signing of 2003 bonding bill

Summary:

(June 12, 2003)-Governor Tim Pawlenty today has signed the 2003 bonding bill, which includes allocating \$8,600,000 for renovating the Social Science building and updating the fire prevention systems in three residence halls on the campus of the University of Minnesota, Morris.

“All of us at UMM -- students, faculty and staff -- are overjoyed that the long-overdue renovation of our Social Sciences classroom and office building has been approved by the legislature and the Governor,” said UMM Chancellor Sam Schuman. “This structure is an important part of the National Historic District of our central mall area. The Social Science building has gone over 80 years without a total renovation, and we are sure that it has the potential to provide excellent service to students and teachers here for decades to come, once the interior has been totally redone. We are very grateful to the many legislators and friends of the College who have supported this project with patient and effective advocacy for several years.”

An independent classroom study had previously concluded that the Social Science building's classrooms or laboratories do not meet current standards for layout, furnishings, or technology.

Renovation plans will include heating, cooling, ventilation, lighting, sound and electrical systems replacement remodeling the auditorium for handicapped accessibility and improved technical teaching ability constructing ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) - accessible faculty office space and remodeling classrooms for new teaching techniques that include information and multimedia technologies, computer workstations and small working groups.

As one of the three most-used general classroom facilities on campus, the Social Science building is used by virtually every UMM student. Social science majors make up over 40 percent of each UMM graduating class. These students spend countless hours in social science classrooms and laboratories while earning degrees in anthropology, economics, history, human services, management, political science, psychology, social science and sociology.

The Social Science building is part of the West Central School of Agriculture and Experiment Station, which occupied the Morris campus from 1910-1960. Cited as one of the most intact examples of a residential agriculture high school still standing in the U.S., the WCSA and Experiment Station was entered on the National Register of Historic Places as a Historic District earlier this year.

Rehabilitation of the Social Science building is cost effective, and will maximize an existing campus resource and help to preserve the history of the campus. The project will create contemporary classrooms, instructional laboratories and research laboratories that will improve and enhance UMM students' education experiences and aid in the recruitment and retention of the high quality students and the exceptional faculty who have earned for UMM its reputation for academic excellence.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.