

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dwane and Velma Wallace Foundation pledges \$1 million to renovate WSU building named for pioneering couple

The engineering building at Wichita State University named for Dwane and Velma Lunt Wallace in honor of their dedication to the university will undergo a facelift, thanks to a \$1 million gift from the Dwane and Velma Wallace Foundation.

Built in the mid-1970s, Wallace Hall has not had significant renovation since then. Grant funds will be used to update and modernize the facility with an emphasis on making it more student-friendly, functional and aesthetically appealing.

“What I want to see most are improved spaces for students,” said Royce Bowden, dean of the College of Engineering. “This building has limited gathering places for them to network and study between classes.”

The grant to the WSU Foundation also will help convert some spaces to faculty offices and research labs to accommodate an increase in hiring the past couple of years. This will be achieved by moving some of the activities that take place in the building to the Experiential Engineering Building when it opens next January on the Innovation Campus.

Wallace Hall is home to the aerospace engineering department, which is housed mostly on the second floor of the building. That’s where the renovation will start next year, Bowden said.

“I think that’s fitting considering Dwane Wallace’s standing as an aviation pioneer and visionary,” he said. “We’re deeply grateful to the Wallace Foundation for its willingness to help us preserve the Wallace legacy at Wichita State by upgrading the facility named in their honor.”

Meanwhile, the university has agreed to provide money for exterior structural work on the building and a range of interior projects. Professional Engineering Consultants (PEC) will donate engineering services to the overall project.

Dwane and Velma Wallace gave generously to a variety of areas at Wichita State over the course of about 50 years, but their philanthropy focused on the College of Engineering. In 1976, they endowed a fund to provide scholarships for high-achieving engineering students. Since then, more than 300 Wallace Scholars have graduated with engineering degrees.

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Dwane Wallace, a 1933 graduate of the University of Wichita with a degree in aeronautical engineering, was president, chairman and CEO of Cessna Aircraft. He retired in 1975 and died in 1989. Velma Lunt Wallace died in 2012.

“The Wallace family is excited to support Wichita State’s ongoing investment in its engineering students and the enrichment of learning opportunities in and out of the classroom,” said Steph Johnson, a granddaughter of Dwane and Velma Wallace. “It is inspiring to see what a dynamic time it is at WSU. As our grandparents were before us, we are proud to be part of Shocker nation.”

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Media note: [Photo](#) of Wallace Hall on the WSU campus