FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**UND’s Wilkerson Hall to be renamed ‘Wilkerson Commons’**

The University of North Dakota will rename Wilkerson Hall, which is currently undergoing remodeling and expansion, to Wilkerson Commons, following approval of the name change by the State Board of Higher Education.

Remodeling of the longtime student service center is progressing on schedule, and the building is expected to re-open this fall. The building is located in heart of campus on University Avenue, west of the English Coulee.

The term “commons” more clearly identifies the building’s revamped purpose as a bigger and brighter central gathering space with a large dining area used by the entire campus community. Changing the name to Wilkerson Commons also retains the historical value of the original name and continues to recognize and honor J.W. Wilkerson for his contributions to the University.

Remodeling of the 46-year-old building was planned in two phases, the first being to construct the addition through the fall and winter months while still keeping the existing kitchen open to serve student meals. The new addition to the building includes floor-to-ceiling windows on the south and east sides of the second floor dining room which gives a fantastic view of campus and the coulee.

"It’s exciting to see the addition taking shape and the installation of the new windows has a dramatic impact on the student space inside. Adding natural light to the dining room was a major goal of the renovation project,” says Connie Frazier, executive director of Housing and Dining Services. “On the main floor students will find a new coffee shop, entertainment stage, and lounge areas for individual and group study.”

The second stage of construction began March 13, as contractors gained complete access to the building in order to begin the extensive integration of a cook and chill operation in the new kitchen. The building is completely closed and meal service has transitioned across the street to Smith Hall for the remainder of the spring semester. Dining Services staff looks forward to the expanded kitchen which will allow food to be prepared in one location and distributed across campus. In addition, eight display cooking concepts will offer an improved dining experience for students.

"Display cooking is very popular since the majority of the cooking is done in front of the students. Entrees are made-to-order with the fresh ingredients that students select,” said Orlynn Rosaasen, director of Dining Services. “Some of our new concepts include Global Cuisine, Dakota Home-style, Gourmet Noodles, and Wood-fired Italiano. We will even have an allergen-free concept."

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