Phelps Hall Psychology Lab and Classroom Update
Winona State University

Background. Phelps Hall, originally constructed as a model school in 1916, is the oldest building on campus. Today, this venerable building is home to two modern disciplines of the 21st century—Mass Communications and Psychology. Portions of the building have been renovated in the last 100 years, yet other portions of this beautifully historic building still wait to be brought into the 21st centry.

The Present. The WSU Psychology department teaches over 3000 students every year. It serves over 300 Psychology majors and 160 Psychology minors, many of them taking classes held in the department's Neuropsychology Lab. Students in the Psychology Department's Neuropsychology Lab learn the technological skills for 21st century careers and graduates work for **Minnesota employers such as the Mayo Clinic, Medtronic, and the Hormel Institute.** The Neuropsychology Lab is also home to patent-producing research programs, where students have analyzed the genes involved in neurological disorders such as Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, autism and Down syndrome. Students of the Neuropsychology Lab have gone on to earn Ph.D.s and M.D.s, and many currently hold high-level positions in industry and acadmics .

Of course, the Neuropsychology Lab, like any other STEM training program, requires high tech equipment. Most of this equipment has been funded by external sources (with grants from industry and institutes). This includes highly sensitive state of the art equipment such as microtome-cryostats, plate readers, and thermal cyclers. Use of this equipment is continually limited by the existing space and electrical constraints of Phelps Hall, specifically the Neuropsychology Lab and the surrounding rooms that house its equipment. Because of the success of this lab, it has outgrown the space and electrical capacities of its current facilities. The proposed remodeling, however, would allow this space to meet the needs of this

successful, growing program and the students it serves.

The Current Space. The current space severely limits the number of students who can enroll in a course at one time. The current configuration prevents research activities from taking place during class time (and vice versa). Equipment used in teaching labs and for research must be distributed across multiple rooms to avoid electrical problems, occupying areas that could otherwise be used as a classroom. In sum, it is poorly configured for the current and future enrollment demands.

The Solution. This proposal is designed to update Phelps Hall so that the space can be efficiently and safely used as a modern classroom and laboratory. The remodeled space will better train Minnesota's students for 21st century careers in our hospitals, schools, and businesses as technicians, physicians, nurses, psychologists, and teachers. The proposed cost is $591,758.97. The benefits will include:

- Increased Class Size: The remodeled space would allow for a dramatic increase (of 25 to 67%) in individual class sizes, thus serving more students without increasing the number of faculty.

- Improved Course Availability: Courses taught in this space are in high demand. Remodeling would allow the department to teach more students at no additional cost.

- Increased Efficiency: The plan takes existing space and reconfigures it from single use applications to allow for multiple uses (i.e., dividing the research spaces and the teaching spaces).

- Improved Safety: Upgrades to electrical and ventilation systems will better protect the safety of students and employees.

- Better Protect Equipment Investments: The electrical updates would reduce the current risks to high cost equipment and the remodeling would improve the security of this equipment.

- Repurposed Storage Space: The remodel would open rooms used to store equipment (in Phelps 219/222) for educational purposes.