

## Alfred University's Ade Hall selected for 'transformative renovation' design project

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Hanbury Evans Wright Vlattas + Company, a Norfolk, VA, architectural design and planning firm, was looking for some challenges, and they found one in Alfred University's Ade Dining Hall. Kathy Woughter, vice president for Student Affairs at AU, learned today Ade Hall has been selected as one of three projects the firm will study on a complimentary basis under its own form of "stimulus package." Woughter explained she was at a national meeting for student affairs administrators when she learned of the Hanbury Evans Wright Vlattas + Company competition. The firm, which specializes in campus projects, invited attendees at the conference to select projects in one of three areas: historic preservation, campus planning or transformative renovations. The firm promised a design team would visit the winners in each category to help that campus conduct a feasibility study or prepare a preliminary design for the selected projects. Woughter suggested Ade Hall under the "transformative renovations" category. As she explained in her submission, Ade Hall was built in 1963 to serve the north end of campus, where most of the first- and second-year residence halls are located. About 78 percent of AU's 2,200 students live on campus; about 1,300 of them are signed up for residential board plans and eat their meals at either Ade Hall or the dining room in Powell Campus Center. Powell, she explained in her proposal, is sometimes considered to be the warmer, more personal of the two dining halls. Ade Hall has one large dining area on the second floor that can accommodate 520 students at once, while Powell is divided into smaller, more intimate spaces and can handle fewer diners at the same time. The first floor of Ade is largely unused space, although in recent years, the MidKnight Express caf has been located on the southern side of the first floor. As Woughter explained, "The first floor, through which all students enter to get to the dining hall, is an underutilized space with a ton of possibilities." Because of its location - in the middle of the first-year residence halls and directly across the street from the Miller Performing Arts Center, which is undergoing expansion with the addition of a proscenium theater - Ade Hall has potential as a "social space for students as well as a featured gathering space for high-profile receptions, which could complement performances in the Miller building." There are challenges, however. Two open staircases lead up to the dining hall, making it difficult to secure the area. Gating the staircases does not work because of fire code issues. The open space on the first floor is also split lengthwise, with the upper portion accessible by a flight of three steps. "I am hoping that someone with fresh eyes and experience in architectural planning will find the transformation of Ade Hall a wonderful, and perhaps relatively simple, brainstorming exercise," said Woughter. "As a result of this visit, I hope we are able to reinvigorate the collective thinking around the possibilities of this space, and move it from a wish-list project to a planned and budgeted proposal for various funding sources."