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Iowa State Closing Towers in Fall 2021

Iowa State University (ISU) has announced the closing of two resident halls for the academic year 2021-2022 due to increased resident vacancies causing many students to lose their ISU homes. The university is closing Wallace and Wilson Resident Halls, also known as Towers, on May 8 at noon. The building(s) is/are located a mile south of the central campus at 926 Hayward Avenue, Ames, Iowa.

Wallace-Wilson residents were informed prior to the spring semester. The announcement left students scrambling to find new places to live next fall. According to the ISU Department of Residence website, [current Wallace-Wilson students](#) have a wide range of options to stay on-campus with comprehensive rates to their previous home and residents have first pick where they want to live next year.

Towers will close for the first time in over a decade and until the university can find students to fill the residency. Brittney Rutherford, the Communications Manager at the ISU Department of Residents, said COVID is not to blame for the drop in occupancy.

“There are less humans,” Rutherford said. “In fall 2016, our occupancy was 12,042. In fall 2020, it was 8,655. This is a 28% decrease in the last four years.”

Rutherford also said recruiting is still strong, and freshmen want to live on campus and have the dorm experience; however, Wallace-Wilson is not a freshman’s first pick and demand is not there. Therefore, the university decided to close, and Towers will stay vacant until demand is back. All Towers staff and facility will keep their jobs and be relocated.

Myles Jenkins, a Community Advisor (CA) on the seventh floor of Wilson, said it was only a matter of time before Towers cut down.

“I wasn't surprised,” he said. “The Department of Residents can have a tendency to kind of look at the financials more than anything.”

According to the university, the closure of Towers’ 1088 beds will save around [\\$1.27 million](#), and cuts will not happen elsewhere.

When asked about his residents, Jenkins said his freshman brushed off the closing announcement as not fully understanding the community Towers because of COVID restrictions. Yet, the die-hards of Towers are upset as they cannot return to their ISU home next year.

Casey Dworzynski, the Wallace Hall Director said he had an emotional response when he heard about Towers closing as being the director for five years.

“It’s been complicated... some [students] not really sharing any emotion at all, but for those students, especially our returning students who have seen hours during its prime, there was anger there was frustration. There was sadness, but there was also a lot of confusion around what

comes next. What [dorm] is comparable because there are no other real comparable options across campus. Where are they going to live next?"

Bethany Groos, a freshman living on Wilson's ninth floor, was saddened by the news. She is going to miss the community as wanting to return to Towers.

"When I first heard I was going to be in Towers, I was a little skeptical, like a lot skeptical, but I kind of grew on me... The community just like a home away from home, and kind of looking forward to living in Towers [next year]. It's not so much about like the area that you're in, it is like the people that you meet, and I really like glad that I met the people I met in Towers."

Groos said she will live on-campus next year, but she will hold Towers and the community in a special place.

The Towers' tagline, "Going the extra mile since 1967," has an extra meaning to the residents as going the mile for their classes, literally. Towers sit a mile from the central campus, and students may complain about the distance, but the community makes up for it. Dworzynski said he will miss the community and people.

"I think that Towers is a unique experience for students here at Iowa State. The fact that it is far more diverse than the campus itself. It has a high concentration of international students, it has a high concentration of students color, first-generation college students; so just that diversity of backgrounds and education all coming together with a common goal being Cyclones; and really when they go to campus, they get to be a Cyclone, but at the end of the day coming home to your community and I'm going to really miss that feeling of coming home."

Laura Drummy