

Students restore neglected Villard Hall tower

By Mark Swartzfager
Emerald Contributor

It is only a start, but rehabilitation has finally found Villard Hall.

Historic preservation students are working this quarter to restore a portion of the building, the second oldest structure on campus.

Under the direction of adjunct Professor Gregg Olson, the nine graduate students are getting "hands on work experience" in the preserving of the northeast tower of the 103-year-old building.

Villard Hall has long been a showcase of disregard and deterioration. "It has seen 100 years of neglect," said Michael Shellenbarger, head of the University's historic preservation department.

Last month, the state's Historic Preservation Office placed Villard, and next door neighbor Deady Hall, the oldest building on campus, on a list of "threatened" National Historic Landmarks. The buildings may be put on the "endangered"

list next year if no substantive work is done by then, Shellenbarger said.

Of the two buildings, Villard Hall is in the worst condition. "It is in desperate shape for help," said Keith Richard, University archivist.

Villard's four large towers have seen the worst wear due to wood rot and poor drainage. These towers are made entirely of wood and have never been repaired.

However, after the students began stripping the paint and inspecting the wood for a closer look, they realized the building is in relatively good shape.

"The deterioration is not as bad as we feared," said Don Peting, architecture professor and the teacher of a recent class that did an analysis of the roof structure of Villard.

"The work is going along smoothly," he said.

Christine Taylor, an architecture student working on the project, said the opportunity to work in historic preservation is an "absolutely wonderful thing. You read all about it in

books, but it doesn't make sense until you are up there."

When the students are not on the scaffolding repairing the tower, they are in the shop. Here, with the use of a band saw, they recreate exact replicas of missing or damaged brackets and cornices and other decorative carvings. It is a time-consuming process.

In all, the students will replace and restore the roof fabric of the cornices, brackets and shingles, replace the missing urns and decorative carvings, and repair and replace the gutters. They plan to complete the project sometime this summer.

Taylor said the experience the class gains from the project will prove valuable in the coming years.

"We'll be able to analyze work done in the future, to judge someone else's work, and see what's right and what's wrong," she said.

Villard, along with Deady Hall, were designated as

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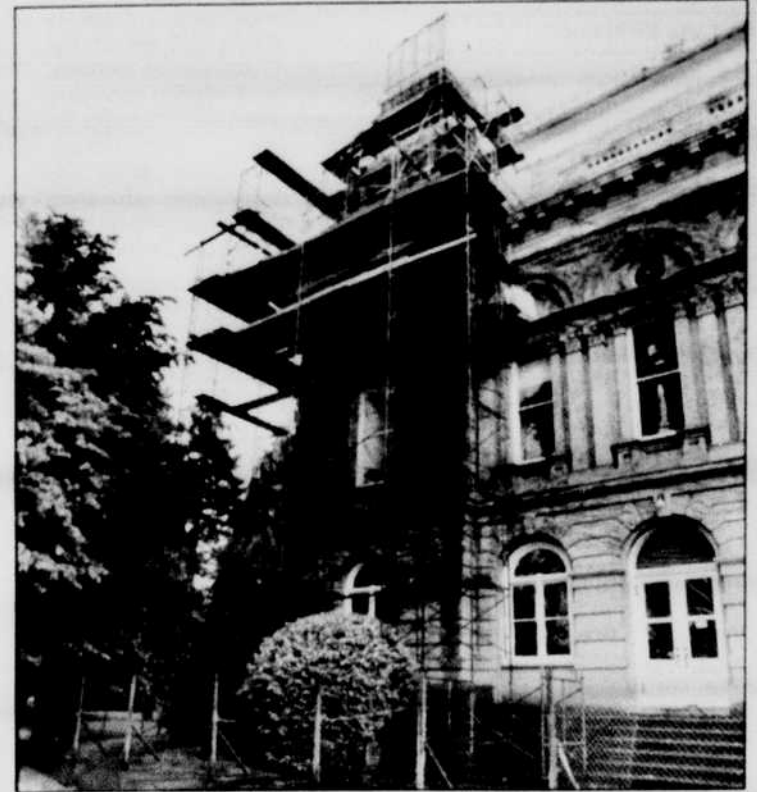


Photo by Mia Bertelsen

A group of University graduate students is helping to restore one of Villard Halls aging towers.

New health center peer group to discuss AIDS with students

By Brian Gallagher
Emerald Contributor

According to University statistics, about 60 students may already have the AIDS virus.

To combat the problem and emphasize the message that students should "take AIDS seriously," the Student Health Center is sponsoring an AIDS peer educator training.

Sherry O'Shea, graduate student in community health education and founder of the AIDS peer educator program, said the figures about AIDS and students are a projection based on statistics from a survey conducted by the American College Health Association in conjunction with the Center for Disease Control.

The survey, conducted on various college campuses throughout the nation, tested for the presence of the HIV virus in participants' blood samples. Survey results indicated

that between 55-65 people will test HIV-positive on each college campus nationwide.

The pilot peer educator program implemented on April 11 gives interested students the opportunity to learn more about AIDS as well as a chance to "share this knowledge with their peers," O'Shea said.

O'Shea said that a large part of the group's activities, in addition to offering individual private consultations and information, would include class presentations and other projects.

"Surveys show that the average college students have most of the basic knowledge," O'Shea said. "What they often lack is practical skills such as how to properly use a condom, and they are not changing their behavior to make them less vulnerable."

O'Shea said her involvement with various community-based AIDS awareness programs and

her concern for the lack of AIDS awareness displayed by many students were among the reasons for founding such a program.

"There may be a high level of sexual activity for college students, which means that they are a vulnerable population," O'Shea said.

She cited recent studies that indicate that the AIDS virus can have an incubation period of up to 9.5 years.

O'Shea's project, endorsed by Dr. James Jackson, Student Health Center Director, was based on similar programs offered by the American Red Cross and Willamette Aids Council.

She said she wanted to start a program that would be on a "peer to peer, student to student, informal basis," adding that a student would probably "feel better asking a peer than an authority figure."

The training for student volunteers began in early April and continued to meet once a week for five weeks, O'Shea said.

She added that the students (11 women and three men) recruited to the program are a diverse group of people all with different fields of interest.

O'Shea said the volunteers' first week of training focused mainly on issues such as basic biology and epidemiology, whereas the second week was devoted to the analysis of legal, ethical issues and psycho-social issues.

It was not until the basic foundations were laid that volunteers focused on the topic of risk reduction and issues such as safe sex, needle sharing and other safety precautions.

Afterwards, volunteers learned peer counseling skills and methods of networking with community agencies involved in providing services and education.

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