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WKU to close Hilltopper Hall after building 'shifted'

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Jan 18, 2024



Hilltopper Hall, one of WKU's newest residence halls, will close for the spring 2024 semester after exterior masonry was found to have "shifted" out of place. Students who live in the dorm have until Feb. 4 at 6 p.m. to move out.

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Students at Western Kentucky University who live in Hilltopper Hall have until Feb. 4 to move out of the dorm after personnel with WKU Facilities Management found some exterior masonry had "shifted out of place" earlier in the academic year.

According to a statement from WKU Housing and Residence Life, the university's Student Life Foundation engaged a team of experts, including civil engineers and an architect, who began an ongoing investigation into the shift. On Tuesday, the Foundation's Board of Directors voted to restrict all occupancy in the residence hall until the investigation was complete.

"We understand that any transition in housing poses an inconvenience and additional stress at the beginning of the semester," HRL said in the statement. "Our guiding principle is the health and safety of each of our residents and remains at the forefront of every decision we make."

According to a FAQ page about the issue, students were not notified of the shift earlier because the Student Life Foundation only received and reviewed a report of it on Jan. 17. The preliminary report was not provided before winter break.

"At every decision point as a university we will make choices that are in the best interest of our

students – and we acted immediately in the interest of their safety and welfare, even though the studies are not yet complete,” the university said in a statement.

The 400 students who currently live in Hilltopper Hall have two options for housing this semester. According to the statement, option one will allow students to relocate to a different residence hall on campus at that hall’s rate. Students will also receive a \$1,000 housing credit.

Students with housing accommodations have a space reserved “that will meet their needs” should they choose to remain on campus, according to the statement.

Option two will allow affected students to move off-campus for the Spring 2024 semester. According to the statement, those who choose this option will have an exemption from WKU’s required housing policy and will not be charged a contract termination fee, and the housing charge for Hilltopper Hall will be refunded on their spring bill.

According to the statement, students who choose to remain on campus will have moving help and timeslots to move available from Jan. 26 to Feb. 4.

Students who decide to move off-campus are responsible for moving their possessions out of the hall on their own, per the statement.

Jace Lux, director of Media Relations for WKU, said in an email neither WKU nor the Student Life Foundation have any additional information until more is known about “the scope and nature of the corrective work that will be performed.”

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