

Statement on Wilkins Stadium Construction Power Outage

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On Saturday, March 08 there was a power outage in several university buildings due to the replacement of a transformer for Wilkins Stadium with facilities services and Evergy coordinating to perform the maintenance. Lindquist Hall, Jabara Hall, the Heskett Center, Grace Wilkie, and Grace Wilkie Annex were without power from approximately 7:00 am to 4:00 pm. Notification of this outage was made late Monday afternoon via email informing faculty and staff to plan accordingly.

This announcement was extremely disruptive to faculty and staff in my division, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, because midterms for online exams were scheduled for that date with approximately 10 exams taking place in affected buildings. Reservations for rooms for these exams had been made weeks in advance, with the midterm's date being set during the creation of the semester schedule since online math classes require in-person examinations for the midterm and final.

Staff were sent scrambling to make new reservations in other buildings days before the exam. This is very challenging because of the need to find multiple rooms large enough to accommodate sizeable classes and provide a reasonable test-taking environment. Adding to this difficulty is the fact that university personnel responsible for making reservations are not located on the main campus and are often difficult to reach on short notice.

This disruption could have been avoided with earlier and clearer communication from and between facilities and reservation services to check to see what activities would be affected by the outage. Additionally, due to the proximity of spring break it is possible that waiting a week would have been a way to reduce the risk of interfering with university activities to near zero. I urge the Faculty Senate to ask that the university administration and supporting groups such as facilities services and reservations be clearer in their communication and coordination to avoid undue stress on university faculty and staff.

Thank you.