*Testimony Presented To*

The Senate Capital Budget Subcommittee,
Budget and Tax Committee

The House Capital Budget Subcommittee, Appropriations Committee

March 2016

Salisbury UNIVERSITY

Patricia R. Guerrieri Academic Commons

Construction progress to date.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Governor Hogan's FY2017 Capital Budget and to share Salisbury University's vision for the future of our campus. SU continues to deliver some of the best outcomes in the University System of Maryland, and we appreciate your transformative support in recent years to construct facilities that meet the needs of our students while matching our growing reputation and stature across the nation and around the globe.

## The Academic Commons

We are grateful to have the construction funds to complete Salisbury University's Patricia R. Guerrieri Academic Commons in August 2016. This 218,000-square-foot facility will become the social and academic hub of our campus and will house a number of student support services in addition to our library and the Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture. This project has had an estimated regional economic impact of nearly $240 million dollars and has supported nearly 350 local jobs. I appreciate the State's investment not only in SU, but also in the economy of the Lower Eastern Shore. It is clear that projects like ours play an important role in helping rural communities across the State continue to recover from the effects of the economic recession.

While I am concerned that the Governor's operating budget did not include additional resources for SU to hire faculty and staff to manage and maintain this new facility, we appreciate the commitment that we have been given regarding on-going operating funds to be included in the FY2018 budget. We are excited to open this new facility and will be certain to invite members of this committee to attend our ribbon-cutting ceremony in early fall.

## Turf Field Replacement Request

As you are aware, the Governor's FY2017 Capital Improvement Program includes funds for SU to replace our existing turf field. SU is home to 18 NCAA Division III championship teams, many of which play on the turf field of Sea Gull Stadium. Unfortunately, our existing turf field is rapidly deteriorating, resulting in a host of issues, including:

- An uneven surface, depressions and holes in the turf that create safety hazards for the players;
- Drainage issues, as water does not flow through the surface – 'puddling' is now commonplace;
- Significant fiber loss, making it difficult to properly groom the field for play; and
- 'Tumble weeds' of loose fiber that collect along the perimeter of the field and add to stadium upkeep expenditures.

Since 2014, SU has been in the process of constructing our new, state-of-the-art Sea Gull Stadium, which includes men's and women's locker rooms, injury treatment facilities, press and guest boxes,

concessions, and much more. The total project cost of $19.4 million was self-financed through plant funds saved via our on-campus auxiliary services (housing, dining, etc.).

With our stadium opening in a few months, it has become clear that SU urgently needs a new turf field. We very much appreciate the Governor's decision to fund the installation of a new turf field, and I also would like to thank Delegate Carl Anderton and other members of the Eastern Shore Delegation for their support and advocacy for this project.

## A Vision for Salisbury University's Future

As mentioned in my operating budget testimony, SU has become recognized as a national leader in higher education for our efficiency, effectiveness and commitment to excellence. Without your continued support for both our operating and capital budgets, these accolades would not have been possible. Still, our challenges persist.

SU has a number of capital priorities that must be addressed as we work to continue to meet the needs of our diverse student population. The projects we envision in the longer term are outlined below.

### Maggs Physical Activities Center Renovation

Our Maggs Physical Activities Center, built in 1977 for a student body of a few thousand students, serves as our campus physical education building as well as our primary athletics and recreational facility. The building remains woefully inadequate in meeting the demands of our current student body. We appreciate the General Assembly's funding the installation of air conditioning in our main gym in 2011; however, the majority of the facility is still not air conditioned. Additionally, the building's other heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems have surpassed their expected life cycle and the building itself does not meet current building codes. We have requested funds to renovate this facility in FY2019, though they have yet to appear in the Governor's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

We also continually work to identify donors who may be interested in helping SU fund a new campus recreation facility or field house to increase the square footage of our recreational space and provide additional quality facilities for our outstanding athletics program.

### Fine and Performing Arts Complex

SU serves as the artistic and cultural hub of the entire Delmarva Peninsula. As we continue to bolster our theatrical and musical program offerings, our recently completed Facilities Master Plan calls for the construction of a new Fine and Performing Arts Complex. Currently, our Holloway Hall Auditorium serves as the largest gathering space for performances on campus. However, its 711 seats are grossly inadequate as our student enrollment approaches 9,000. We hope to have this project included in the Governor's CIP in the coming years.

## Conclusion

Again, thank you for the opportunity to advocate for SU's capital budget priorities and for your ongoing support of our Capital Improvement Program. These capital funds will continue to be a critical part of the ongoing success of Salisbury University as *A Maryland University of National*, and increasingly international, *Distinction*.

*President Janet Dudley-Eshbach, Ph.D.*

Salisbury UNIVERSITY

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## *Responses to FY17 Analyst Comments*

By President Janet Dudley-Eshbach, Ph.D.

March 2016

**The Department of Legislative Services recommends that funding for the new turf field be deleted from the fiscal 2017 capital budget as the institution has adequate funds available to replace the field without direct State support. Given the amount of institutional support for a new stadium and the significant increase in athletic fees, the President should comment on why SU cannot pay for a new turf field out of its ICA budget, as was done in fiscal 2007. If that is not possible, the President should comment on why SU cannot use annual USM facilities renewal funding or fund balance for this purpose.**

The poor condition of the field and the potential liability it poses to the University and the State make it imperative that we replace the field as soon as this summer. Given the multitude of unanticipated expenses that SU has been asked to use operating funds to cover, especially the first year of funding for staffing our new Academic Commons at a cost of $2.3 million, as well as our $19.1 million investment in the new stadium, funds are not available in SU's existing funding to cover this important renovation.

During a site visit in summer 2015 with members of the Wicomico County Delegation, this issue was discussed. Subsequently, the Governor's Office indicated their strong support for this capital budget project. We appreciate the Administration's backing and urge the committee to reject the DLS language to cut this project from the FY 2017 capital budget.