



Bowie State University
FY 2020 Capital Budget Testimony
Dr. Aminta H. Breaux, President
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On behalf of the students, faculty and staff of Bowie State University, I am pleased to support the Governor's capital budget proposal for FY 2020. The FY 2020 budget provides funding for the initial planning phase for Bowie State's new Communication Arts and Humanities Building, replacing the 46-year old Martin Luther King, Jr. Communication Arts facility. We are grateful for the Governor's support of this critically important project and look forward to beginning the design process in the fall.

Our new Strategic Plan, entitled *Racing to Excellence*, is anchored in three main priorities: Academic Excellence, Student Success, and Institutional Viability. The five goals of this five-year plan are: (1) Achieve Academic Excellence Supported by Curricular as well as Co-Curricular Experiences; (2) Promote a Holistic and Coordinated Approach to Student Success; (3) Encourage Academic and Administrative Innovation to Meet Student Needs; (4) Enhance our Campus Culture of Diversity, Inclusion and Civic Engagement; and (5) Ensure Long-term Viability of BSU. In order for the university to meet our goals we must replace outdated facilities with state-of-the-art ones suitable for 21st century teaching and learning. Replacing the current Martin Luther King Jr. building is at the top of my priorities.

Built in 1973 and never renovated, the MLK building houses our Departments of Communications, English and Modern Languages, History and Government and Military Science (ROTC) and is woefully inadequate. The problems with this building are numerous:

- Structural problems and cracking floor slabs
- Outdated heating, ventilation and air conditioning system
- Bathrooms not ADA accessible

- Electrical systems outdated
- Elevator not ADA compliant and frequently out-of-service
- Small classroom spaces which do not support proper academic instruction
- Auditorium used for major convocations is too small and is not ADA-compliant

The MLK building supports our humanities program. It is by far our most heavily used academic building because every BSU student must take general education classes held in the facility. The new building will feature active learning classrooms and collaborative informal student study space. The specialized class laboratories include audio/video editing and demonstration spaces for media production, broadcast/print journalism, public relations, language, literacy and writing as well as history, government, and geographic information systems laboratories. The building will also house the administrative functions of each of the departments with general support space and amenities. Specific features include:

- flexible and collaborative learning environments
- specialized class laboratories
- space for student support services
- 1,500-seat auditorium / lecture hall
- administrative space to support interdisciplinary faculty
- professional media production facilities for the University's television and radio stations.

Enrollment at Bowie State has increased by 13 percent in just two years, to an all-time high of 6,320 students. With continued increasing enrollment, it is imperative that we replace this major facility as soon as possible. I am grateful that funding has been provided in the five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to allow us to get started with design in the fall. Our goal is to open the facility for classes in the fall of 2024. However, as currently proposed, the CIP does not support our goal. Indeed, the project schedule and funding reflected in the proposed current five-year plan undermines our efforts to accelerate this project in the face of growing enrollment. Although more funding than we requested for planning/ design is provided in FY 2020, the total planning funds proposed is more than \$2 million less than what is needed. Moreover, the proposed budget does not allow for completion of the facility in time for move-in and occupancy by the fall of 2024. As proposed, this project will take at least six years to complete. It is my hope that the project will be funded as recommended by the Board of Regents.

I am proud of the latest additions to our academic infrastructure. The Natural Science, Mathematics and Nursing Building, a LEED platinum facility opened in June 2017, and

the Fine and Performing Arts Center, opened in 2012, are beautiful, state-of-the-art facilities that have helped to transform the learning environment. I am also proud that these two major projects were completed on time, *and* on budget! In fact, the University was able to return to the State leftover funds from the Fine and Performing Arts project. We have been good stewards of the State's resources.

Looking ahead, we will be revising our Facilities Master Plan in the coming year so that it aligns with the new Strategic Plan. The new Master Plan will inform our capital priorities, key among them, the woefully out-of-date Thurgood Marshall Library. We have also engaged Sightlines, a consulting firm, to assist us in addressing deferred maintenance.

I thank the Governor and the General Assembly for the support we have received. Not only do our faculty and students deserve 21st century, first-class academic facilities, but the workforce demands it and our growth and competitiveness depend greatly upon it. I urge your full support of funding for our Communication Arts and Humanities Building.