



Bowie State University
FY 2022 Capital Budget Testimony
March 2021



Rendering of new Martin Luther King, Jr. Communication Arts and Humanities Building

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President

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 2022. The FY 2022 budget provides continued funding for the planning phase and funding to begin the construction of Bowie State’s new Martin Luther King, Jr. Communication Arts and Humanities Building. This new building will replace the 48-year old Martin Luther King, Jr. Communication Arts facility which will be demolished. We are grateful for the Governor’s support for this funding and look forward to continuing the design process of this critically important project.

The facility is currently at the end of the design development stage. Expected completion for the design is November 2021. Construction is currently scheduled to be completed in July, 2024. We are pleased that the accelerated funding proposed in the Governor’s budget may enable us to complete the project in time to open for classes in Fall, 2024.

This project is critical to the success of the university’s Strategic Plan, entitled *Racing to Excellence*. The plan 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 the 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 In order for the university to meet our goals we must replace outdated facilities with state-of-the-art ones suitable for 21st century teaching and learning.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 has been a top priority.

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- Outdated heating, ventilation and air conditioning system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- Electrical systems outdated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 building began experiencing crumbling concrete and significant water intrusion at the stair tower joints to the building last year. The university contracted with a structural engineering firm to inspect these areas of concern. The firm continues to provide quarterly inspections of these areas, and the university is making necessary repairs to maintain safe operation of the facility.

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.
- Space for our growing ROTC program

Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, Bowie State University is growing. Fall 2020 enrollment was 6,250 and applications for Fall, 2021 were up 20% as of January 1, 2021. We admitted 21% more students for fall 2021 over last fall. We expect the demand for a Bowie State education to continue, and so it is imperative that we replace the MLK building as soon as possible. I am grateful that funding has been provided in the five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and I am especially grateful that funding has been accelerated to allow us to begin the construction phase in FY 2022.

With support from the Governor and legislature, the academic infrastructure at BSU is changing to keep pace with enrollment and the educational needs of today's learners. The most recent addition to campus, the Natural Science, Mathematics and Nursing Building, opened in June 2017, continues to transform the learning environment with its state-of-the-art classrooms and labs, including a nursing simulation lab.

Though not a state-funded project, we are thrilled to see the new Entrepreneurship Living Learning Community near completion. This public-private partnership will greatly enhance our residential housing by adding 500 new beds and will serve as an anchor for our entrepreneurship programs. This signature building will support our efforts to infuse entrepreneurship throughout the curriculum and equip all BSU students with an entrepreneurial mindset.

We recently completed the update to our Facilities Master Plan to align with the Strategic Plan. The updated Master Plan informs our capital priorities, key among them, renovation of the woefully out-of-date Thurgood Marshall Library. This space has the potential to further transform the campus. It is our highest priority for future capital funding.

Bowie State University's faculty and students deserve 21st century, first-class academic facilities. The workforce demands it and our growth and competitiveness depend greatly upon it. I thank the Governor and General Assembly for the support we have received as we continue on our *Race to Excellence*. I urge your full support of funding for our new Martin Luther King, Jr. Communication Arts and Humanities Building.

Response to DLS Recommendations

1. Approve \$3,600,000 in general obligation bonds for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Communication Arts and Humanities Building.
RESPONSE: The University agrees with this recommendation.

2. Approve the preauthorization of \$40,703,000 in general obligation bonds to continue construction of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Communication Arts and Humanities Building.
RESPONSE: The University agrees with this recommendation.

3. Approve the preauthorization of \$75,094,000 in general obligation bonds to continue construction of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Communication Arts and Humanities Building.
RESPONSE: The University agrees with this recommendation.

4. Approve the preauthorization of \$16,342,000 in general obligation bonds to finish construction of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Communication Arts and Humanities Building.
RESPONSE: The University agrees with this recommendation.