

Legislative Testimony

• FY 2026 CAPITAL BUDGET •

March 10, 2025

House Appropriations Committee

Delegate Benjamin S. Barnes, *Chair*

Capital Budget Subcommittee

Delegate Mark S. Chang, *Chair*

March 11, 2025

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Senator Guy Guzzone, *Chair*

Capital Budget Subcommittee

Senator Craig J. Zucker, *Chair*

Dr. David K. Wilson, *President*
Morgan State University



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STATE UNIVERSITY



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TESTIMONY

Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Budget Morgan State University

David K. Wilson, President
March 2025



Chair and members of the Senate and House committees, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Governor's fiscal year 2026 capital budget allowance for Morgan State University (MSU).

I am extremely appreciative of Governor Moore's support for higher education and, specifically, his support for Morgan. I also thank the convened legislative committee members for their strong and continued support of Morgan State University. Our analyst, Ms. Kelly Norton, has once again done an outstanding job of analyzing our budget, and I will respond to her comments and recommendations as part of my testimony.

VISION STATEMENT

Morgan State University is the preeminent public urban research university in Maryland, known for its excellence in teaching, intensive research, effective public service, and community engagement. Morgan prepares diverse and competitive graduates for success in a global, interdependent society.

MISSION STATEMENT

Morgan State University serves the community, region, state, nation, and the world as an intellectual and creative resource by supporting, empowering, and preparing high-quality, diverse graduates to lead the world. The University offers innovative, inclusive, and distinctive educational experiences to a broad cross-section of the population in a comprehensive range of disciplines at the baccalaureate, master's, doctoral, and professional degree levels. Through collaborative pursuits, scholarly research, creative endeavors, and dedicated public service, the University gives significant priority to addressing societal problems, particularly those prevalent in urban communities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Morgan State University is guided by our Strategic Plan, “*Transformation Morgan 2030: Leading the Future*,” which details the University’s approach to continued growth and advancement for “Maryland’s Preeminent Public Urban Research University.” It includes six strategic goals:

GOAL 1	Enhance Student Success and Wellbeing Provide students with a comprehensive educational and transformative experience that actualizes their full potential and empowers them to emerge as confident and competent global citizens and dynamic leaders in their selected careers and communities.
GOAL 2	Implement Faculty Ascendancy and Staff Development Initiatives The University will implement a broad range of human resource development initiatives for the benefit of faculty and staff.
GOAL 3	Elevate Morgan's Status to R1 Very High Doctoral Research University Over the next ten years, Morgan will emerge as a R1 doctoral research university fully engaged in basic and applied research and creative interdisciplinary inquiries undergirded and sustained through increased research grants and contracts.
GOAL 4	Expand and Improve a Campus-Wide Infrastructure to Support Operational Excellence and Increase Overall Institutional Capacity Morgan will advance new construction, capital improvement, deferred maintenance, and campus safety projects in keeping with the University's evolving master plan.
GOAL 5	Serve as the Premier Anchor Institution for Baltimore City and Beyond Morgan will expand and deepen its role as a recognized anchor institution with broad social and economic impact.
GOAL 6	Accelerate Global Education Initiatives and Expand the University's International Footprint Morgan will enhance its study abroad program and promote global awareness and intercultural competencies through its diverse curricular and co-curricular programs and activities.

Morgan State University: A Rising Force in Higher Education

Morgan State University continues its remarkable trajectory of growth and excellence, making significant strides in enrollment, retention, academic innovation, research expansion, and global impact. In Fall 2024, Morgan's enrollment reached 10,739 students, surpassing its 2030 enrollment goal of 10,000 — six years ahead of schedule. This marks the fourth consecutive year of record-breaking enrollment and a 9.4% increase since Fall 2023. Since 2020, Morgan’s enrollment has surged by more than 41%. Our retention rates have remained above 70% for 14 consecutive years, and graduation rates continue to exceed 40%.

Morgan’s rising prominence is reflected in its national recognition. For the first time in more than a decade, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Morgan among the top 10 HBCUs in its Best Colleges rankings. Our students are making their mark on the national stage, earning prestigious awards from organizations such as the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation, the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, and the Knight Science Journalism Fellowship at MIT. Two Morgan students were also named to the 2024 White House HBCU Scholars cohort.

Academic Innovation and Expanding Opportunities

Morgan’s commitment to academic excellence is demonstrated through our introduction of more than 32 new academic programs since 2021, including 11 bachelor’s, eight master’s, and 13 doctoral programs — the latest being a Ph.D. in Advanced and Equitable Computing. Our College of Interdisciplinary and Continuing Studies (CICS) is reshaping pathways for nontraditional students, offering 18 interdisciplinary degree programs through the “Morgan Completes You” initiative. Since its inception in 2022, enrollment in CISC has grown by 165%, from 62 to 164

students. Our partnership with the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC), the Degrees to Succeed (D2S) Program, provides dual admission, streamlining the transition from an associate degree to a bachelor's degree.

World-Class Faculty and Research Excellence

Morgan faculty are leading the way in research and innovation, making an impact locally and globally. Eight Morgan faculty members rank among the top 2% of scientists worldwide, while three have been elected as Fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) — the world's largest multidisciplinary scientific society. Morgan's Chair of Physics and Engineering Physics was named one of four 2024 Fellows by the American Physical Society's Forum on Diversity and Inclusion, recognizing his leadership in advancing diversity and mentorship in physics.

Morgan's Vice President for Research and Economic Development, Dr. Willie E. May, was appointed by President Biden to the National Science Board. The board governs the National Science Foundation and advises Congress and the President on STEM policy and education. Dr. May also previously served as President of AAAS, underscoring Morgan's growing influence in the scientific community.



Expanding Research and Moving Toward R1 Status

Morgan is advancing toward an R1 (very high research) designation, achieving record-breaking research funding. In FY 2024, the University secured \$88.5 million in new federal research and training commitments. By Q2 of FY 2025, Morgan had already secured \$86.5 million, outpacing previous years. These federal research investments — from agencies such as the NSF, Department of Defense, Department of Transportation, and Department of Education — drive critical advancements in microelectronics, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, STEM education equity, and career readiness.

Morgan also secured a \$20.9-million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to expand our Center for Urban Health Disparities Research and Innovation (RCMI@Morgan), focusing on chronic conditions disproportionately affecting minority populations in urban communities. In addition, Morgan now hosts 10 State-supported research centers, including the newly established Center for Urban and Coastal Climate Research, dedicated to climate change solutions.

Global Reach and International Recognition

Morgan's global footprint is expanding through growing international student enrollment and study abroad opportunities. Morgan also continues to lead all HBCUs in producing Fulbright Scholars and has been recognized for five consecutive years as a Fulbright HBCU Institutional Leader by the U.S. Department of State.

Morgan's renowned choir has achieved international acclaim, performing at venues worldwide. In 2023, our Magnificent Marching Machine marching band made history as the first-ever HBCU to perform at the D-Day Memorial Parade in France. Their next stop? The 2026 Rose Parade in Pasadena, California, further cementing Morgan's legacy of excellence on the global and national stage.

Morgan's Transformative Impact on Baltimore and Beyond

Morgan's commitment to Baltimore's revitalization is evident in our role as a catalyst for economic and community development. The University played a key role in the redevelopment of Northwood Commons, transforming what was once a deteriorating, crime-ridden shopping center into a vibrant retail hub. This public-private partnership now provides the Morgan community and surrounding neighborhoods with a safer, high-quality shopping and dining experience. The site also houses Morgan's new Police and Public Safety facility and the Morgan Barnes & Noble bookstore, anchoring the development.

Beyond campus, Morgan is establishing community-based research centers, further strengthening our engagement with local residents, policymakers, and organizations. These efforts, supported by state, federal, and private partnerships, propel Morgan toward academic preeminence and a place among leading world-class institutions.



A Bright Future Ahead

With exceptional students, world-class faculty, cutting-edge academic programs, record-breaking research achievements, and an expanding global presence, Morgan State University is firmly positioned as a premier anchor institution in Baltimore and as one of the fastest-rising universities on the national and international stage.

Impact of Capital Investments

The impact of state-of-the-art facilities on Morgan State University's growth and ascension cannot be overstated. Modern, cutting-edge spaces attract top students, faculty, and research funding, strengthening our position as Maryland's Preeminent Public Urban Research University. Facilities such as the Center for the Built Environment and Infrastructure Studies, the Morgan Business Center, home of the Earl G. Graves School of Business and Management, and the Calvin and Tina Tyler Hall Student Service Center have not only enhanced the student experience but have

also been instrumental in forging strategic partnerships with renowned institutions, including Purdue, Yale, Dartmouth, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Bank of America, Apple, Ripple, and Google. These partnerships provide unparalleled learning and research opportunities for our students and faculty.

Transformative Facilities at Morgan State University

Center for the Built Environment and Infrastructure Studies (CBEIS)

Opened in 2012, CBEIS is the home of our School of Architecture and Planning, Civil Engineering and Transportation Planning Departments, and National Transportation Center (NTC), including the Urban Mobility and Equity Center — one of only two Tier-1 HBCU research centers funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation.



- NTC researchers are engaged in numerous transportation-focused studies, including projects to improve mobility and circulation in urban areas.
- Engineering students are developing an autonomous wheelchair powered by machine learning and AI to assist passengers with disabilities in airports, hospitals, and other large public spaces.
- NTC is actively working to enhance safety at the Penn-North intersection in west Baltimore, one of the city’s busiest transit areas.

Morgan Business Center – Home of the Earl G. Graves School of Business and Management

Opened in 2015, the Morgan Business Center became the new home of the Earl G. Graves School of Business and Management (GSBM). The Graves School is among the top 5% of business schools worldwide, accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSB). It is the only HBCU business school recognized in *Bloomberg Businessweek’s* 2024–2025 Best B-Schools ranking.



- GSBM’s Capital Markets Lab and Business Incubator provide students with real-world financial and entrepreneurial training.
- Through Goldman Sachs’ 10,000 Small Businesses Program, 460 entrepreneurs have graduated, driving economic growth in the region.
- The facility also houses the Center for Data Analytics and Sports Gaming Research, focusing on the role of data in sports analysis and gaming industries.
- The National FinTech Center, established with a multimillion-dollar grant from Ripple, recently received an additional \$1.05 million grant for blockchain and financial technology research.

Martin D. Jenkins Hall – Behavioral and Social Sciences Center

Opened in 2017, our Behavioral and Social Sciences Center (BSSC) serves as the home of the James H. Gilliam, Jr., College of Liberal Arts, providing state-of-the-art facilities for behavioral and social sciences research, including:

- A Forensic Anthropology Lab, Psychology Labs, a Vivarium, and observation rooms, equipped to support innovative scientific studies:
- The Vivarium, accredited by the American Association for Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC), which enables researchers to conduct ethical and humane, cutting-edge research with the assistance of laboratory animals; and

- The Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center (EJ TCTAC), funded by the EPA and Department of Energy, is headquartered here. As the HBCU hub for Region 3, Morgan leads research and technical support across Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, DC, West Virginia, and seven federally recognized tribes.

Calvin and Tina Tyler Hall Student Services Center

Opened in Fall 2020, Tyler Hall serves as the gateway to the University. It is also a welcoming hub for student services and other vital University functions, including Admissions, Financial Aid, Records and Registration, Bursar, Human Resources, and Information Technology. Key features include:

- A three-story atrium, modern recruitment rooms, a rooftop green space with multiple gathering “pods,” and state-of-the-art office suites; and
- Bear Essentials (BE), a one-stop Student Services Center, streamlining student support from admissions to graduation.

New Health and Human Services Center

Morgan’s newest building is our Health and Human Services Center, which opened in Fall 2024. This modern, eye-catching, cutting-edge facility houses:

- The School of Community Health and Policy, including Public Health, Nutritional Sciences, Nursing, Pre-Professional Physical Therapy, and Health Education;
- The School of Social Work and Department of Family and Consumer Sciences;
- Medical Laboratory Sciences and the University Counseling Center; and
- Smart classrooms, fully equipped laboratories, and simulation environments to provide students with real-world training.



The Need for Continued Investment

Morgan’s record-breaking enrollment growth, expanding research enterprise, and increasing public-private partnerships highlight the University’s ongoing need for capital investment. Rapid growth, coupled with aging infrastructure, has placed a strain on our facilities, requiring new funding sources to meet demand.

To accommodate our growing student population, Morgan has:

- ✓ Leased off-campus housing and facilities to support student accommodations;
- ✓ Opened Legacy Hall, a new, 604-bed residential facility, in Fall 2024;
- ✓ Completed major renovations to Baldwin Hall and Cummings House, reopening them in Fall 2024;
- ✓ Revamped Hurt Gymnasium, providing updated athletic and recreation spaces;
- ✓ Constructed a new Police and Public Safety facility in 2022 to enhance campus security;
- ✓ Upgraded the Gilliam Concert Hall and Recital Hall at the Murphy Fine Arts Center; and
- ✓ Improved the air quality in multiple campus buildings.

Strategic Housing Plan

Morgan has developed a long-term housing strategy, incorporating:

- Renovations and replacements of aging residential facilities;
- Public-private partnerships, including with the Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO); and
- Capital investments from HBCU CapFin Loan programs, HEERF federal funds, and Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC).



Ongoing Commitment to Growth

Although much has been accomplished, Morgan’s need for capital investment remains critical to supporting our mission of academic excellence, research innovation, and student success.

Impending federal tariffs and immigration uncertainties are being discussed as they are anticipated to significantly impact costs, and timing in capital projects. We already see and experience labor shortages and lengthy delivery times on key pieces of equipment.

Continued investment will enable the University to:

- Expand and modernize academic facilities to accommodate growing programs;
- Develop additional student housing to support record-breaking enrollment;
- Advance research capabilities in areas such as STEM, public health, and cybersecurity; and
- Enhance sustainability initiatives to improve energy efficiency and campus resilience.

Capital investments directly contribute to our growth, competitiveness, and long-term sustainability, ensuring the University continues to serve as a premier anchor institution for Baltimore and beyond.

GOVERNOR’S CAPITAL BUDGET RECOMMENDATION

The Governor’s FY 2026 capital budget allowance for Morgan is \$104,236,000 in GO Bonds.

Project	Phase	Amount
New Science and Research Complex, Phase II	P,C	\$69,580,000
Campus-Wide Electrical Upgrades	P,C	\$15,000,000
Deferred Maintenance	P,C	\$13,400,000
Lake Clifton Demolition	P,C	\$6,256,000
Total		\$104,236,000

Key: C – Construction, E – Equipment, P – Planning

Capital Projects and Infrastructure Investments at Morgan State University

New Science and Research Complex – Phase II

Funding for this phase supports the design and construction of a state-of-the-art science facility, which will house the Biology and Chemistry Departments and the Dean’s Office. The new facility will be built on the former site of the Washington Service Center. To accommodate this project, the Department of Budget and Management has deferred additional funding for the renovation of Carter-Grant-Wilson and reverted a portion of a prior authorization.



Campus-Wide Electrical Infrastructure Upgrades

This project funds the design and construction of a new electrical substation, establishing a single point of service (SPS) for Morgan State University, in partnership with Baltimore Gas and Electric (BGE).

Key improvements include:

- Replacement of the Cold Spring substation and an upgrade of the Montebello substation, to expand power capacity; and
- Installation of new feeders and underground duct banks connecting BGE’s Clifton Park substation to the new SPS, ensuring integration with the Cold Spring and Montebello substations.

These upgrades will modernize campus energy infrastructure, enhance reliability, and support future construction projects by providing a dedicated, resilient, and redundant power source to prevent service interruptions. The new substation will be located behind the Student Center Garage, and the University is contributing \$500,000 in non-budgeted funds to support this critical initiative.

Deferred Maintenance

Morgan State University continues to address a significant deferred maintenance backlog, which has an estimated cost of more than \$200 million. Funding will support ongoing renovations, repairs, and infrastructure upgrades, with additional financial support from:

- State allocations;
- Federal HBCU Capital Financing Program loans;
- Energy Performance Contracts (EPCs); and
- Two National Park Service grants for University Memorial Chapel repairs.

For FY 2026, funding will prioritize:

- Murphy Fine Arts Roof and Exterior Door Replacements;
- Fire Alarm Upgrades; and
- Central Heating Plant Boiler Repairs.

In addition, \$10 million will replace FY 2023 general funds, which will be reverted to provide operating budget relief.

Campus Expansion – Multipurpose Convocation and Teaching Complex (Phase I: Demolition of Lake Clifton and Valve House Stabilization)

This phase provides funding for the demolition of the former Lake Clifton High School and stabilizing the historic Valve House. Demolition efforts are set to begin soon, marking a significant milestone in Morgan’s long-term campus expansion and revitalization efforts.

Closing

In closing, I once again express my sincere appreciation for your continued support of Morgan’s Capital Improvement Program. Our facilities serve as a first impression for prospective students, faculty, and staff, and your investment is transforming our campus, shaping the next generation of competitive, capable graduates, and attracting critical public and private sector partnerships.

As we continue to expand and modernize our learning environments, we remain committed to advancing cutting-edge research and community outreach. Your support is essential in helping us provide state-of-the-art facilities that enhance student success and academic excellence across all disciplines.

Therefore, I respectfully request your full support of the Governor’s recommendation for our FY 2026 capital budget allowance, ensuring that Morgan remains at the forefront of innovation, education, and research.

Thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to our mission.



RESPONSES TO ISSUES & RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Department of Legislative Services' Analysis

ISSUES

Comment 1 (Page 6): *The President should address how this Stadium Way project differs from the deferred maintenance slope stabilization.*

Response: The Stadium Way Slope Stabilization Project is one project funded by the deferred maintenance program. The Science and Research Center development project has a stormwater culvert that must cross Stadium Way and be coordinated with the Stadium Way Slope Stabilization project as it impacts the traffic flow on Stadium Way during construction. In addition, the water culvert's construction and water flow had to be approved by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), and the Stadium Way Slope Stabilization MDE permit was adjusted to accommodate the change.

Comment 2 (Page 7): *The President should provide an update on when design is expected to begin (Campuswide Electric Upgrades).*

Response: Design services are being procured. The engineering team is expected to be on board within the next few weeks. If the engineering is required to start before the capital funds are available on July 1, Morgan will utilize its operating or other non-state capital funds to keep the project moving.

Comment 3 (Page 9): *The President should comment on how HBCU Capital Financing funds have been and will be used to address the university's deferred maintenance needs. The President should also comment on whether the university has considered issuing its own debt to address these needs.*

Response: The University has participated in the Department of Education HBCU Capital Finance Loan Program (HBCU Cap Fin) as a self-directed supplement to the institution's capital needs. While the University appreciates the State's investment in Morgan, it has been well-documented that very little capital investment was made here, at Morgan, for many years. The University continues to manage a rolling deferred maintenance backlog of more than \$200 million, requiring additional investment to address longstanding deficiencies. The HBCU Cap Fin program has provided access to funding to address critical deferred maintenance and other capital needs as a supplement to the state's investment in deferred maintenance that could not fit into the funding schedule to address urgent needs. Through the HBCU Cap Fin Program, funding of \$23.5 million has been utilized for various deferred maintenance projects including Murphy Fine Arts theatre renovations, Rawlings PTAC, Fire Alarm upgrades, steam / condensate repairs and replacement, building controls upgrades, Hazmat abatement, and other projects. In addition, the HBCU Cap Fin Program has financed the Public Safety Building (\$16.5 million), the Thurgood Marshall Dining Hall (\$32.5 million), renovations of Baldwin and Cummings Student Housing facilities (\$30 million), and partial

renovation of the Hurt Building (\$15 million); with additional funding from the University's operating funds (\$2.5 million) and HEERF funds (\$12.5 million). In addition, several campus-based projects, primarily student housing facilities, have been developed through a close relationship with the Maryland Economic Development Corporation on a project financing basis.

Our analysis, with assistance from a university-retained Bond Advisor, indicates that the HBCU Cap Fin Program is more efficient utilization of capital for the university than the open bond markets, with as much as a half-percent savings in interest cost as well as the general cost of issuance savings. The University's legislatively mandated debt limit is \$140 million which is currently substantially utilized with the HBCU Cap Fin Program loans.

Comment 4 (Page 9): MSU should consider the use of a facility condition index (FCI). An FCI would look at the cost to repair an issue, for example, an HVAC system, versus the cost to replace the building that houses the HVAC system. FCI is an industry standard and would allow MSU to compare its FCI with other institutions, as well as set goals.

Response: As with other institutions, Morgan is required to apply a Facility Condition Index to each of our facilities in our SGAP Report, which is submitted annually. However, we would like to note that the Facility condition index is only one component used to evaluate systems and buildings with respect to renovation vs. replacement. Future uses, capacities, the totality of system conditions, and timing are also considered in evaluating repairs vs. renovations vs. replacements. Morgan plans to have the campus' building systems re-evaluated in the near future, as the last evaluation was completed about five years ago.

Comment 5 (Page 10): The President should comment on the status of this report and how the institution will ensure reports are submitted timely in the future (Lake Clifton).

Response: Lake Clifton was acquired for Morgan's long-term development since the main campus is limited in its ability to add many more buildings.

Morgan is taking a multi-pronged approach to developing the Plan for Lake Clifton. These actions include developing a new ten-year master plan for the main campus, which includes determining the types of programs/functions that should be located at Lake Clifton. This process will be followed by a Lake Clifton master plan and a developmental master plan. Research programs, a convocation center, student innovation spaces, educational and administrative functions, and collaborative programs with the state, city, and federal government are being considered. Morgan will partner with the private sector as much as possible.

The master plan process will be collaborative and involve the communities and the City of Baltimore's Planning Department. The site will be studied, and discussions will include the communities, parks, roads, business considerations, and paths to the main campus. This process will take several years.

In February 2025, the construction manager was hired to document, design, and demolish the high school and site. Separate contracts will be secured to preserve and stabilize Valve House until the use is determined.

While working through these processes, the nonprofit farm and a city high school football team continue to use the field. Morgan is also taking advantage of this time and utilizing the open space for its research with a weather station (launching weather balloons) and the rocketry program.

In terms of the timely submission of reports, the University has identified and refined our procedure for identifying, assigning, completing, and submitting mandatory and JCR reports to the DLS library. Our Federal and State

Government Relations Office will take the lead in ensuring the process is executed internally and that reports are properly submitted in a timely fashion.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommendation 1 (Page 4): Reduce general obligation funding for the New Science Center by \$9,000,000 from \$69,580,000 to \$60,580,000 to be replaced by special funds from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund. The proposed funding reduction represents costs attributable to the sustainability components. A related recommendation adds language to use pay-as-you-go special funds from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund energy efficiency account to fully replace the reduced GO bond authorization.

Response: The University concurs with this recommendation.

We Produce Leaders.



Growing the Future, Leading the World is more than our motto. It is our mission. Build your future with Morgan, Maryland's Preeminent Public Urban Research University and largest HBCU. Our graduates are primed for the work of the future and the future of work.



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