

Testimony Presented To

The House Capital Budget Subcommittee

The Senate Capital Budget Subcommittee

By President Janet Dudley-Eshbach, Ph.D.

March 2015

Salisbury
UNIVERSITY



Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Governor's proposed Fiscal Year 2016 Capital Budget. I greatly appreciate the support Salisbury University (SU) has received from the General Assembly for capital projects that have been completed during my tenure as President, as well as for the Patricia R. Guerrieri Academic Commons currently under construction. While fully appreciating the fiscal challenges the State of Maryland faces, I take this opportunity to also share with you SU's most pressing capital needs in the hope that you will support those projects as soon as the State's fiscal condition improves. As always, I hope you will continue to regard SU as an exceptional investment in the education of Maryland's citizens to meet workforce demands.

The Academic Commons

You can only imagine the excitement on SU's campus now that construction of this 221,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art signature facility is underway. As we enter our final year of construction, I urge the legislature to maintain the Governor's full Capital Improvement Program (CIP) appropriation for the Academic Commons so that we can complete this project on schedule by summer 2016. Delay would not only increase costs to the project, but also would significantly affect our academic support service operations as we transition to this new facility.

We appreciate the General Assembly having approved, during the last legislative session, our request to reallocate \$10 million from FY 2016 to FY 2015 to ensure that we have sufficient



Patricia R. Guerrieri Academic Commons



Construction progress to date.

funds to keep the project on schedule. I also noted in last year's testimony our concern that the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) had reduced the overall allocation by \$4.45 million, and I am very happy that almost all of those funds, \$3.3 million, have been restored by DBM in this year's request. In addition, approximately \$2.4 million in private funds have been added to the project for the purpose of including a 48-bell carillon in the tower.

While I know we are here to discuss



Guerrieri family members join President Janet Dudley-Eshbach at the beam-signing celebration for the Patricia R. Guerrieri Academic Commons

capital needs, I need to highlight our concern regarding DBM's recommended staff reduction for this facility. We have requested 32 positions in order to fully staff this facility; however, DBM has only allocated 4.2 FTE positions. These positions will be critical if we are to adequately maintain a building that will be more than 150,000 square feet larger than the existing Blackwell Library. We also must provide support for extended hours of operation for around-the-clock study space and anticipated heavy use by student project teams and faculty groups. Additional librarians, housekeepers and maintenance staff will be necessary. SU is known for its efficient operations, but we are very concerned, if DBM's recommendation holds, that we will have insufficient operating funds to hire needed personnel.

This project has been an economic boon for the Lower Eastern Shore. The Academic Commons is estimated to have a regional economic impact of \$238 million dollars and support some 350 local jobs. I appreciate the foresight that members of this committee have shown in understanding the important role of projects like these as we recover from the economic recession. Thank you for your investment in SU and in the economy of the entire Eastern Shore.

Future Campus Capital Needs

An investment in Salisbury University arguably provides the State with the "biggest bang for the buck." The University continues to enjoy high demand and has the second highest graduation rate in the University System of Maryland, just behind the University of Maryland College Park, while producing degrees at the lowest cost in the State in terms of State-support revenue and time-to-degree. Although the Academic Commons will play a vital role in providing an optimal learning environment for our students, ongoing capital investments will be critical if we are to continue our success as *A Maryland University of National* – and increasingly international – *Distinction*. As President, I



must continually look to the future to other capital priorities. Three of these that will appear in future capital improvement programs are as follows:

Maggs Physical Activities Center Renovation (1)

The Maggs Physical Activities Center, built in 1977, serves academic, athletic and campus recreational needs. While we were able to install air conditioning in our main gym in 2011 as a result of your generous support, with the exception of a few offices, the building is still not air conditioned. Of greater concern is the fact that its other HVAC systems are at the end of their life cycle and the building does not comply with current building codes. Planning funds for this project have been requested for FY 2019, but they have not been included in the Governor's CIP.

Fine and Performing Arts Complex (2)

Other than the Maggs Physical Activities Center, which can seat approximately 2,000 on bench seating in the main gym, the largest gathering space on campus is the Holloway Hall Auditorium that seats 711, grossly inadequate as our enrollments approach 9,000. Our Facilities Master Plan (FMP) has just been updated and is currently awaiting approval by the Board of Regents. The FMP outlines the need for a Fine and

Performing Arts Complex consisting of a Performing Arts Building and an addition for Fine Arts on the site of two existing residence halls, Chesapeake Hall and St. Martin Hall. These projects would provide appropriately-sized and more modern facilities for our student body and the larger community, as SU serves as the cultural center for our region.

Dresser Property Purchase (3)

The University continues to wait for environmental concerns to be resolved so we might acquire this 11-acre former manufacturing site adjacent to the University's East Campus. Expected to accommodate future campus growth, the University will take the steps necessary to acquire this key property.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you today and for your ongoing support of our CIP. These capital projects have been, and will continue to be, essential to the success of Salisbury University as a premier comprehensive Maryland public university.

President Janet Dudley-Eshbach, Ph.D.



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Responses to FY16 Analyst Comments



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Given that the university has identified several projects to pursue in the near future but that no support is programmed in the CIP, the President should comment on the sources of funding to be used for demolition or repurposing of other buildings on campus and what the Blackwell Library will be used for in the immediate future after the Academic Commons opens.

SU's projects for the near future will need to be funded from a variety of sources. The Maggs Physical Activities Center Renovation has been in the capital projects queue for many years, and we will continue to request that it be included in the Governor's Capital Budget. Similarly, once the environmental concerns have been resolved, the Dresser Property purchase will be a part of the CIP. The Fine and Performing Arts Complex is also a priority for the campus as identified in our new Facilities Master Plan. SU will continue to look for donors and other fund sources to help offset the State funds necessary to make that project a reality.

The Guerrieri University Center (GUC) renovation will be funded

through the use of Auxiliary Bonds. Surge space will be required during the GUC and Maggs renovations; once the Academic Commons is completed, it may be possible that Blackwell Library and the Nabb Center in the East Campus Complex can provide that space with minor renovations. A thorough evaluation of this option has not yet been performed, but, if found to be feasible, internal funds can be utilized to cover those costs. The optimal long-term uses of Blackwell Library and the Nabb Center after the Academic Commons is complete have not yet been determined. Our Facilities Planning Department continues to evaluate the options.