



Capital Budget Testimony
Michael Knapp
Chair
Montgomery College Board of Trustees
February 9, 2021

Thank you for your leadership during these troubling times.

Montgomery College is ready to help you get our County moving forward—to recover and rebound.

One way that the College can help with recovery is with thoughtful and fiscally prudent budget requests. The College’s capital budget is just that—a frugal request that keeps key projects moving forward while maximizing the use of existing funding.

For example, the only major new construction underway is the Catherine and Isiah Leggett Math and Science Building—at one point, there were three such projects underway. Additionally, we plan to use existing resources to fund a portion of the furniture and equipment needed to equip wholly the Leggett Building. Thankfully, the County Executive fully funded the balance needed from the County.

Additionally, the new student services center was delayed further to accommodate the revised library renovation schedule, which enables the College to seek State aid on the library projects, per your direction.

Unfortunately, despite the fiscal prudence evidenced in our request, the Executive Branch recommended a reduction of \$9.4 million. Information technology (IT) and deferred maintenance projects will suffer. Given the current state of affairs, such a reduction feels ill-timed.

IT funding is crucial while operating virtually and will remain so as we move into a post-crisis state. Even with onsite operations, hybrid classrooms (simultaneously instructing students online and in the classroom) may be required to continue to provide access to postsecondary education to those who need it. IT projects have lost \$14.5 million over the last five years for a 21 percent reduction. So, even a reduction of \$1.4 million will now put enterprise and student success systems at risk.

Additionally, the College cannot afford to lose monies that fund deferred maintenance projects. The College's total need is \$188 million, which far exceeds the funds in the capital budget. Therefore, we ask you to reject the \$8 million recommended reduction. The Planned Lifecycle Asset Replacement (PLAR) budget alone has been cut by 31 percent in previous years. PLAR provides funds to update HVAC systems—units like those on the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus, which are 44 years old.

The Board understands you face many challenges—thus, this frugal request. We hope that, as a result, you can help us protect our assets and keep our information technology moving forward.

Thank you.