FISCAL YEAR 2018
CAPITAL OUTLAY PROJECT REQUEST

Institution Name: **Ferris State University**

Capital Outlay Code:

Project Title: **Center for Virtual Learning**

Project Focus: ☒ Academic ☐ Research ☐ Administrative/Support

Type of Project: ☒ Renovation ☐ Addition ☐ New Construction

Approximate Square Footage: **100,000**

Total Estimated Cost: **$40,000,000**

Estimated Duration of Project: **2018**

Is the Five-Year Plan posted on the institution's public internet site? ☒ Yes ☐ No
Is the requested project the top priority in the Five-Year Capital Outlay Plan? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Project purpose.

The Center for Virtual Learning will provide a home for learning, and house five important programs of the University – Criminal Justice, Information Systems and Intelligence (ISI), Teacher Education, Career and Technical Education, and Digital Media. It will draw these programs together from locations across the University and replace Bishop Hall, an outdated residence facility with multiple health and safety challenges. Beyond this, the facility will provide support and preparation for faculty engaged in virtual education University-wide. It will do this at the core of the Big Rapids campus through the renovation of existing residence halls, creating a facility adjacent and connected to the resources of the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning in the Ferris Library for Technology and Education (FLITE).

Scope of the project.

The Center for Virtual Learning will replace Bishop Hall, a six-floor dormitory built in 1967, which was renovated to accommodate classrooms and offices in the early 1980's. Now outgrown, the facility forces programs within the college to be spread throughout the Ferris State University campus. Additionally, the five Bishop Hall classrooms and one computer lab are small and have support pillars which impede the students' view of instructional materials. Consequently, classes taught in Bishop Hall have to be kept small which is inefficient and expensive.

The proposed renovated facility is estimated to comprise approximately 100,000 gross square feet. The facility will be located in the core academic area of the campus, involving a major renovation of Vandercook Hall with a connection to the FLITE library. This facility will serve as one of the core

academic buildings on the campus quad, promoting students' access to University facilities and services, reducing traffic congestions and improving safety.

The construction will include the following academic and support areas:
- Classrooms, laboratories, faculty offices and administrative spaces
- Computer laboratories, including network support facilities
- Distance learning facilities
- Teaching auditorium and conference spaces
- Storage and archival spaces
- Television production facilities
- Faculty resource and workrooms
- Student and faculty/staff lounges
- Research laboratories

Program Focus of Occupants

Virtual Learning to include Digital Forensics, Teacher Education, Career and Technical Education, Digital Media and University Wide Virtual Learning

Additional Information:

1. **How does the project enhance Michigan's job creation, talent enhancement and economic growth initiatives on a local, regional and/or statewide basis**?

Ferris State University's School of Criminal Justice is the largest in the State of Michigan. Its graduates are chiefs, sheriffs, wardens, Michigan State Police post commanders, corrections officers and probate court workers. Citizens from throughout the state benefit from the efforts of these public safety workers. Law enforcement personnel from central west Michigan come to Ferris State University and the Criminal Justice program for continued professional development.

The Information Security and Intelligence program is considered one of the top programs in the nation, and is one of only six programs in the country to be designated as a Center of Excellence by the National Security Agency in all information assurance areas. Additionally, the program holds the National Center for Digital Forensic Academic Excellence designation from the Department of Defense Cyber Command Center (DC3) and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. Additionally the ISI program is the first university program in the United States to receive DC3 and Air Force Office of Special Investigations Center designation as a National Center of Digital Forensics Academic Excellence. As such, Ferris' ISI program facilitates national-level security expertise in business, industry and government operations. It is a node on the Michigan Cyber Range and can strongly support state efforts to create a Michigan Civilian Cyber Corps.

Digital Media alumni work at television stations, community colleges, school districts and businesses throughout Michigan. These students also provide television production work for Ferris State University, community agencies and businesses throughout central west Michigan, especially to communities in Lake, Mecosta, Missaukee, Montcalm, Osceola and Wexford counties.

Because of the number of technical programs offered, Ferris State University has a unique state-wide responsibility and leadership position in career and technical education. An example of this is the Pro-Mo-TEd program, which allows working students to earn a Bachelor of Education degree in Technical Education and/or possibly Secondary Certification. It integrates an intensive two-week in-person summer program with online courses, followed by student teaching.

The doctoral program in Community College Leadership is the only program of its kind in the state, with an intensive in-person summer program and half-semester courses. Designed to meet the practical needs of professionals, each course is led by an experienced community college administrator.

Most graduates of the College of Education and Human Services prefer to stay and work in Michigan, specifically in rural mid-state communities. These graduates become members of their communities who, through their Ferris education, bring new ideas for economic and cultural advancement to the communities they know so well.

There is considerable demand for graduates in the Criminal Justice, Information Security and Intelligence, Career and Technical Education, and Digital Media fields. Support for the growth of these programs will help fuel the continued economic recovery in Michigan.

The Center for Virtual Learning will provide a home for online education at Ferris, bringing together efforts that are currently distributed across the University, thereby diluting their impact and increasing their cost. The approach to enhance internet-based learning at Ferris is to focus on the unique programs provided in industry, manufacturing, technology and health-care along with areas needed to support these efforts. The future of business, industry and health-care in Michigan depends upon the expansion of education-delivery options to everyone, independent of time and place. The Center for Virtual Learning will help meet these critical and growing needs.

2. How does the project enhance the core academic and/or research mission of the institution?

Digital Forensics - Ferris is a national leader in information and security intelligence, and is the largest educator of criminal justice students in the state. Over 1,800 students are currently enrolled in these programs, which continue to grow. There are significant space needs for ISI, and Criminal Justice is housed in the inadequate and antiquated Bishop Hall facilities. The intent is to bring these programs into the Center for Virtual Learning, and through this synergy establish a Center for Digital Forensics. This will create a unique high-tech laboratory and digital facilities to support this growing area.

Teacher Education - Ferris offers a broad range of programs in Teacher Education and a doctorate in Community College Leadership, enrolling more than 700 students. It is unfortunate that future teachers, who should be learning in state-of-the-art classrooms that support forward-looking pedagogies and learning styles, are taught in outdated and poorly adapted facilities. The narrow footprint and column structure of Bishop Hall make it impossible to have even a normal classroom arrangement. Beyond this, within the state K-12 curriculum, there is a requirement for each Michigan student to take an online course. Thus, there is a strong need to embed virtual learning within each of the Teacher Education curricula.

In addition, the University oversees charter schools and strict discipline academies. Housing charter schools and Teacher Education within the same facility will help foster greater collaboration between faculty, students, and charter schools. This mutually beneficial situation will help raise the academic performance of our charter schools while providing greater opportunities for Teacher Education students within these schools.

Beyond these efforts at the K-12 and bachelor and master degree levels, there is also a Community College Leadership doctoral program that is a mixed delivery curriculum with a strong online component. This addresses the significant need for terminally degreed community administrators.

Career and Technical Education - For many years Ferris State University has been the state leader for Career and Technical Education programs, hosting many of these resources in Michigan. There is a strong need to enhance this educational component, connecting it with technical education programs at the community college, M-Tec and secondary levels. Through a Center for Career and Technical Education, Ferris proposes to promote enhanced interest and enrollment in vocational programs, an educational area that has been devastated by cuts from previous state administrations. Within Michigan there is a strong need for leadership to promote this kind of education to help fill existing and future job opportunities with qualified workers.

Digital Media - This is the age of the video. The exponential growth of YouTube and other online video sites highlights the relevance of Ferris' Digital Media program. This program brings together studies in digital video, digital animation and game design, and software engineering. Housing the Digital Media program in the Center for Virtual Learning will help facilitate integration of these studies with online efforts, and provide much-needed space and facilities for this growing program.

Virtual Learning - Ferris State University offers a unique mix of career-oriented educational programs. Many of these are the only programs of their kind in the Midwest. Beyond preparing graduates for entry into these fields, they are also highly desirable for people looking to change careers or accelerate their existing career. For many of these individuals, education is their only viable route to a degree. Currently, Ferris offers 17 degrees and 16 certificate programs online. These include offerings in Automotive Technology; Facility Management; Geographic Information Systems; Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration; Dental Hygiene; Gerontology; Health Information Management; Nuclear Medicine Technology; Nursing; Vascular Ultrasound; E-commerce Marketing and International Business among others. Each of these degree programs also requires supporting coursework from across the University.

These are areas of rapid growth, with projections suggesting even more significant need for professionals. It is becoming increasingly cost-ineffective to provide pedagogical, technological and other support in a distributed fashion. The proposed Center for Virtual Learning will pull together these scattered support services in one location. Directly adjacent to FLITE, it will create an incubator to support the growing needs of education, business and industry. It will also provide opportunities for innovative inter- and intra-disciplinary curricula (i.e., partnerships between Criminal Justice and Digital Forensics, etc.) as well as opportunities to creatively revitalize, develop and refine curricula and programs that are unique to Ferris (i.e., Career Technical Education, etc.).

Creating a centralized location for this support will foster the development of other much-needed programs. Through this we will also encourage faculty members at our central campus and 20 locations across Michigan to embed mixed-delivery options throughout their course offerings.

3. **Is the requested project focused on a single, stand-alone facility? If no, please explain.**

The Center for Virtual Learning project is a single stand-alone project. It is currently envisioned as a renovation and expansion of Vandercook Hall.

4. **How does the project support investment in or adaptive re-purposing of existing facilities and infrastructure?**

In addition to replacing Bishop Hall, this project will repurpose another building, Vandercook Hall, by completely renovating and connecting that former dormitory to the new Center for Virtual Learning. By doing so, the University will extend the life of an increasingly outdated building by transforming it into a state-of-the-art academic facility located in the academic core of the institution.

5. **Does the project address or mitigate any current health/safety deficiencies relative to existing facilities? If yes, please explain.**

Bishop Hall was not originally designed with air conditioning. The building's retrofitted systems cause water to drip from pipes, wet ceiling tiles to fall in the classrooms and offices, and mold to form. The antiquated system breaks down repeatedly, and is difficult and expensive to maintain. The condition of Bishop Hall is a serious problem for those who learn, teach and work there. Not only is there equipment damage, but faculty members have lost vital teaching and research records due to water damage.

Additionally, the elevators, which were not designed for the heavy usage of a classroom/office building, are old and in constant need of repair. Consequently, their maintenance is expensive and continuous. Windows on the west stairwell leak severely during storms, to the extent that personnel in the Dean's office post signs warning people not to use the stairs.

Bishop Hall is situated away from the academic core of Ferris State University. As a result, students have limited access to the library, other classroom buildings, and administrative, health and extracurricular services. This more remote location also requires students and faculty to travel between classes, causing traffic congestion and dangerous walking conditions as pedestrians must cross a major thoroughfare. These challenges are most severe during the cold, snowy, icy winter months.

6. **How does the institution measure utilization of its existing facilities, and how does it compare relative to established benchmarks for educational facilities? How does the project help to improve the utilization of existing space and infrastructure, or conversely how does current utilization support the need for additional space and infrastructure?**

Using standard utilization measures both in terms of weekly hours used (20 to 35 hours per week, depending upon the specialty lab) and station occupancy percentage (85%), current facilities are fully utilized. The current layout of Bishop Hall restricts class sizes, while the new Virtual Learning Center will

allow for larger classes and more flexible configuration, both of which will make the facility more learning-friendly and greatly increase its utility.

7. How does the institution intend to integrate sustainable design principles to enhance the efficiency and operations of the facility?

Ferris State University has actively practiced sustainable and energy-efficient design in its capital construction projects for more than two decades. In 2000, the United States Green Building Council created the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system that established various levels of sustainable performance. Since the inception of LEED, Ferris State University has modified its design processes to follow LEED protocols. All of the University's most recent capital projects have achieved LEED certification, and five of our most recent projects, including new construction of the West Campus Apartments, renovation of the University Center, new construction of the East Campus Suites, new construction of the Michigan College of Optometry building in Big Rapids and the restoration of the historic Federal Building in Grand Rapids, achieved Gold-level LEED certification. It is the expectation of the University that all construction projects achieve LEED certification. Ferris has challenged the design team for the Center for Virtual Learning with the goal of attaining Gold-level certification.

Additional sustainable design items will include high-efficiency lighting, high-efficiency HVAC units and interior-finish materials (such as carpets) that feature highly recycled content and low-emitting volatile organic compounds. Toilet rooms will incorporate low-water consumption fixtures.

8. Are match resources currently available for the project? If yes, what is the source of the match resources? If no, identify the intended source and the estimated timeline for securing said resources?

The University is prepared to provide its twenty-five percent capital outlay funding match upon project approval, made possible in part by cost-savings through elimination of the costly upkeep of outdated and inefficient facilities, fundraising activities, and if needed, University reserves.

9. If authorized for construction, the state typically provides a maximum of 75% of the total cost for University projects and 50% of the total cost for community college projects. Does the institution intend to commit additional resources that would reduce the state share from the amounts indicated? If so, by what amount?

The University is prepared to provide its twenty-five percent match of the capital outlay funding upon project approval. Additionally the University will aggressively move forward with planning activities when approval seems likely, but before approval is received. For the Swan Annex Expansion project the University invested an additional $1.6 million in planning activities before funding was approved, amounts that were beyond the required match. Planning in this fashion assures that the capital outlay request is as accurate as possible and reduces the time from approval to construction to instructional use.

10. Will the completed project increase operating costs to the institution? If yes, please provide an estimated cost (annually, and over a five-year period) and indicate whether the institution has identified available funds to support the additional cost.

No. Current operating support for the facilities to be razed/renovated as a result of this project will be allocated to the Virtual Learning Center.

11. What impact, if any, will the project have on tuition costs?

None. The University is strongly committed to affordability and reducing student debt. As a result tuition is not used to cover construction costs.

12. If this project is not authorized, what are the impacts to the institution and its students?

Were this request not funded, the programs would continue to be taught in their present locations. However, the current facilities (Bishop Hall, Southwest Commons, and other classrooms across the campus), hinder learning, limit enrollment growth, inhibit student recruitment, create considerable maintenance challenges, are expensive to keep open, and have life/safety issues for the faculty and staff who work there and the students who are educated there.

13. What alternatives to this project were considered? Why is the requested project preferable to those alternatives?

The University considered renovating and expanding Bishop Hall; however, the existing building has many shortcomings that cannot be remedied through renovation. Very low floor-to-ceiling heights make the installation of necessary mechanical and life-safety equipment virtually impossible. The renovation of Bishop Hall for instruction was done within the narrow footprint of the existing residence hall facility. These size limitations coupled with support columns in a building of six floors create a very poor learning environment. Because of the nature of the Bishop Hall site, the cost to add space and create the necessary academic space would be prohibitive, while the overarching challenges of the building would continue to exist. The proposed renovation of Vandercook Hall, a low-rise building, will include creating a more broader footprint. These considerations plus a more appropriate facility located in the heart of the academic core of the campus is required to meet the programmatic needs of the University.

Ferris' Center for Virtual Learning represents a bold and innovative vision for educating the knowledge-workers of the 21st century. By bringing together programs that have shared interests and objectives, this state-of-the-art environment will encourage innovation and cross-disciplinary collaboration. By creating a home for online learning at Ferris, the continued growth of flexible, innovative and adaptive educational delivery methods will be supported, providing access to education to citizens across Michigan, when and where they need it.