



Office of the President

December 14, 2023

Sen. Arthur C. Ellis (D), District 28

Sen. Michael A. Jackson (D), District 27

Del. Debra Davis (D), District 28, Chair, Charles County Delegation

Del. Kevin M. Harris (D), District 27A

Del. Edith J. Patterson (D), District 28

Del. C. T. Wilson (D), District 28

Dear Members of the Charles County Delegation,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the College of Southern Maryland (CSM), we are writing to express our endorsement of the recent recommendation put forth by the Board of Charles County Commissioners (BOCC) regarding the future of aquatic facilities in our community.

We extend our gratitude for the informative public briefing from the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism (DRPT) on November 28, 2023. Due to the complexities surrounding the repair and operation of the CSM swimming pool, we fully endorse the DRPT's recommendation to expedite their plan to create a competitive-level, multigenerational facility with a natatorium in Charles County. The recommendation underscores the county's commitment to providing enhanced recreational opportunities for our residents and acknowledges the significant expense that it will take to repair and operate a shared facility within the Physical Education building at CSM's La Plata Campus.

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In May 2023, CSM convened a meeting with members of the Charles County Delegation, Charles County Commissioners, and representatives from the county's Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism to discuss CSM's role in helping to provide aquatic services to Charles County residents and the challenges of doing so. CSM's leadership team has provided our state and county leaders with a feasibility study that offered three proposals for reopening the pool. One option involved repairing the current pool, and the other two proposals offered repairing and expansion options.

CSM greatly appreciates the \$1 million funding allocated from a legislative bond initiated by Sen. Arthur Ellis as part of House Bill 201 in the last legislative session to help support reopening the pool at the La Plata Campus. This generous allocation demonstrates his commitment to providing an aquatic facility for Charles County residents. However, in the feasibility study conducted to assess the reopening of CSM's 50-year-old pool, several substantial repairs were identified. Among the 19 areas of safety concerns are significant cracking in the pool shell plaster, expired drains, and replacement requirements for the circulation pump and chlorinator system. The cost for renovations and to address these safety concerns was estimated at more than \$3 million and would take approximately two years to complete. Capital costs associated with expanding the current pool into a more modern facility to meet the needs of a growing multi-generational and diverse community could range between \$9 million and \$21 million. Beyond the repairs, the ongoing operating costs are estimated between \$350,000 to \$600,000 per year based on the type of facility and the community's usage. Repairing the pool at CSM is not a viable short-term option due to its age, condition, and restricted use.

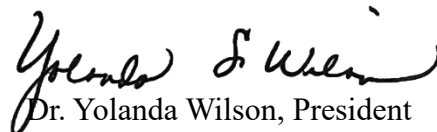
The BOCC's recommendation will allow CSM to stay mission-focused and provide resources that increase educational access to Southern Maryland residents; support current students in gaining momentum toward their educational goals; and further support our students and alumni to find sustainable wages that bolster their social and economic mobility. We appreciate the thoughtful conversations we have had with state and county leaders to identify a viable solution to address the community's interest in having an aquatic facility in Charles County. We are open to convening another meeting in the new year, if desired.

As we collectively strive to enhance the quality of life for Charles County residents, we commend the BOCC for their commitment to a comprehensive and sustainable solution for aquatics. We look forward to the continued collaboration between CSM, the Charles County Delegation, BOCC, and the DRPT to ensure that our community thrives in recreational and educational offerings.

Sincerely,



Shawn B. Coates, Chair
College of Southern Maryland Board of Trustees



Dr. Yolanda Wilson, President
College of Southern Maryland