



## TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

The Honorable Dan Benishek  
Michigan, 1<sup>st</sup> District  
U.S. House of Representatives  
514 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

June 26, 2013

Dear Mr. Benishek:

I am writing to respectfully request your support of H.R. 1612 involving the Tuskegee Campus of the Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System (CAVHCS) and Tuskegee University. Specifically, the bill involves the transfer of land and buildings from the CAVHCS to Tuskegee University.

Due to the merging of the Tuskegee VA campus and the Montgomery VA campus into one system, (CAVHCS), some of the functions formerly performed at the Tuskegee Campus have now been transferred to the Montgomery Campus. Thus, some of the buildings at the Tuskegee Campus are no longer being fully utilized or in some cases are not being utilized at all. Tuskegee University, on the other hand, is on the brink of exponential growth and global expansion. For the past two years, Tuskegee University has attracted a freshman class of nearly one thousand students from all over the country and internationally as well.

The University has plans for expansion. Our vision for the property includes classrooms, research labs and faculty offices for new degree programs in Public Health, Nursing, Educational Psychology and Counseling, Agricultural & Environmental Engineering, Civil Engineering, Mass Communications, Forensic Science, Bio-Ethics and Information Systems and Security Management, along with a number of other academic programs.

The following list outlines some of the intended uses for the proposed buildings. The specific functions will be determined subsequent to architectural site inspection, transfer approval and renovation schedule:

- First two years of a Medical School, jointly sponsored by Tuskegee University and Auburn University, with the subsequent two years of clinical rotations and specialization residencies to be scheduled at partnering hospitals throughout the USA, ideally with a primary focus on the network of VA Hospitals

- Masters of Public Health (MPH) and Masters of Science in Public Health (MSPH) degree programs, classrooms, and laboratories
- The Tuskegee University Health Disparities Institute for Research and Education (HDIRE)
- Department of Material Science and Engineering classrooms and faculty offices
- Expansion of the Tuskegee University ROTC Facilities (Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines)
- Housing for faculty, staff and students
- Ph.D. Programs in Integrative Biosciences; Material Sciences and Engineering; Public Policy and International Affairs; Agricultural and Environmental Engineering; Interdisciplinary Pathobiology
- Masters Degree Programs in General Psychology; Educational Psychology and Counseling; Humanities-BioEthics; Forensic Science; Math and Science Teaching
- The Center for Geoscience and Climate Change
- The Tuskegee University Advanced Computing Center (TUACC)

The buildings proposed for transfer are as follows:

BUILDING NUMBER	DESCRIPTION OF PREVIOUS USE	YEAR BUILT	SQUARE FEET
19	Personnel/Non-Personnel Quarters	1923	21,282
20	Apartments – Housekeeping Quarters	1923	21,166
21	Cottage – Housekeeping Quarters	1923	1,625
22	Cottage – Housekeeping Quarters	1923	1,733
23	Cottage – Housekeeping Quarters	1923	1,625
24	Cottage – Housekeeping Quarters	1923	1,625
25	Cottage – Housekeeping Quarters	1923	1,625
26	Cottage – Housekeeping Quarters	1923	1,625
27	Cottage – Housekeeping Quarters	1923	1,625
28	Cottage – Housekeeping Quarters	1923	1,625
29	Cottage – Housekeeping Quarters	1923	2,770
50	NHCU	1932	69,302
51	Dining	1932	22,495
59	Personnel Garage	1930	800
60	Personnel Garage	1930	800
62	Day Treatment Center	1932	78,722
63	Director's Quarters	1938	4,185
80	Grandstand – Ball Field	1957	2,274
94	Service Building for Softball Field	1960	296
96	Pavilion	1965	1,500
124	Transformer Building	1976	542
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>239,242</b>
		<b>SQ FT</b>	

Acres - 64.5

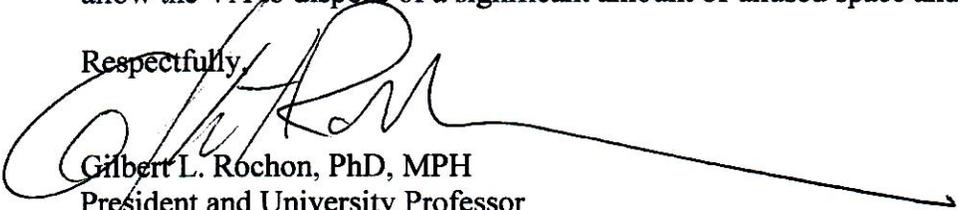
Currently, the VA Tuskegee campus contains over 500,000 excess square feet of building space. A significant number of buildings have been closed for over 10 years with additional reductions in space planned. In 2001, the VA contracted a consultant to study Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) opportunities at Tuskegee and the contractor concluded that the property had no real opportunity for EUL use. In 2009, the VA attempted to engage in a EUL for transitional housing at the Tuskegee Campus. The VA engaged in negotiations with a developer who was unable to secure financing for the venture. Tuskegee Campus underwent a 2001 Wilbur Smith Associates' enhanced use lease study resulting in limited interest. In 2010, a BURR review was conducted, listing empty and underutilized buildings. Initially, there was interest in one building but the homeless proposal was withdrawn on August 13, 2011. **This withdrawal removed any impediments to Tuskegee University's proposal for property transfer.**

Tuskegee University has agreed to fund the fencing consistent with that of our main campus to establish boundaries between the proposed buildings and all others for mutual security reasons, to add required roads and infrastructure to separate the properties, and to install our own utilities.

There is historical precedent for the transfer of land between these two institutions. In 1923, Tuskegee University donated 300 acres of land to the United States Government for the construction of the VA Facility. The Tuskegee VA Campus was originally created to serve Southern Negro Veterans during the period of racial segregation. Over the years, a number of land transactions have occurred between the University and the VA, the majority of which have the VA returning unneeded property back to Tuskegee University. It is now favorable to return these approximately 20 buildings and 65 acres of land back to Tuskegee University to enhance the historical community partnership that has existed between the institutions since inception, in a manner that is sensitive to both the cultural and economic concerns of the community. The transfer would allow CAVHS to provide these unutilized, empty buildings for which renovation funds are unavailable, for job creation in a severely economically depressed local community while at the same time providing CAVHS and the community access to future clinical interns for the CAVHS system, as well as to medical students and new residents and for the community.

According to CAVHCS administrators, the remaining Campus buildings have adequate capacity for any future needs as identified in both their Capital Asset Inventory and Capital Master Plan for CAVHCS. Local VA officials are also encouraged that the transfer would not only provide the partnership opportunities for the VA, the University and community but would allow also allow the VA to dispose of a significant amount of unused space and reduce overhead costs.

Respectfully,



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