



Academic Affairs Report November 22, 2024

Agenda Item: Capital Outlay Update

Information

Action

Discussion

Purpose:

The purpose of this action is to approve the Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Outlay Project Request to the State of Michigan for the renovation and expansion of the Center for Applied Science and Engineering Technology.

Background:

Each year the State of Michigan's Budget Office seeks proposals from Michigan's State universities for capital outlay projects. These proposals are the first phase of the capital outlay process. If capital outlay projects are included in the Fiscal Year 2026 Executive Budget, only planning authorizations are recommended in that phase. If chosen, the university will then enter the second phase and prepare professional preliminary design documents and secure support for construction. The university then provides the professional planning documentation to the State for a second round of approval and authorization.

Capital Outlay projects must be for academic buildings, excluding administrative buildings and housing. The state funding will cover a maximum of 75% of the total cost of the project. The university must commit to covering the remaining 25% through university resources and/or philanthropy. The State may choose to cap the dollar amount at a value less than 75%. Planning authorizations do not guarantee future construction authorizations.

Lake Superior State University is requesting Board of Trustees approval to request Capital Outlay funding to renovate and expand the Center for Applied Science and Engineering Technology (CASET Hall). LSSU would like to seek \$30.0 million in state funding support to assist with CASET Hall building renovations and to build an additional wing for that facility. This would require a \$10.0 million match through philanthropic initiatives.

Built in the late 1970s, CASET Hall is in need of major repairs. This project, which has been a priority since 2019, was elevated to the top of LSSU's capital outlay list in spring 2023 due to significant structural issues, including a weakened foundation, outdated plumbing and electrical systems, insufficient ADA access, and the need for enhanced hands-on learning spaces for high-demand programs. The urgency of this project escalated when CASET Hall was temporarily closed after a fire on September 27, 2023, which, while contained to the Robotics Lab, caused extensive smoke damage throughout the building. The insurance coverage brought CASET Hall back to pre-fire conditions, but that work identified opportunities for improvements to fire suppression systems and air handling.

CASET Hall currently houses the School of Engineering and Technology, the School of Computer Science and Mathematics, and the Paramedic and Fire Science programs, which are part of the School of Criminal Justice, Fire Science, and Emergency Services. The renovation will update hands-on learning spaces and address structural issues, while the expansion will allow LSSU to consolidate the entire School of Criminal Justice, Fire Science, and Emergency Services within the building. This will provide right-sized classrooms, advanced training technology, and increased capacity for all programs at the certificate, associate, and baccalaureate levels.

The renovation of the existing structure will include upgrades to both infrastructure and student learning focusing on:

- Repairs to the foundation of the building;
- Upgrades for existing HVAC systems, fire suppression/safety systems, and plumbing;
- Updates and rebuilds throughout the building to accommodate students with disabilities or special needs, including ease of passage walk-throughs, doorways, and access points to facilitate movement between classrooms, and a gender-neutral restroom;
- Redesigned classrooms with more inclusive ADA compliance in furnishings and spaces;
- Redesigned classrooms with more effective active-engagement learning configurations and furnishings;
- Updates to the IT infrastructure throughout the building for uniformity, including online instructional and video/audio capabilities, and in the computer labs that support LSSU's commitment to exploratory, active, and applied learning;
- Installation of cutting-edge instructional technology in classrooms for mathematics and computer science programs to expand their capacity to provide high-level course options to dual-enrolled high school and Early College students at regional locations—further expanding educational access to remote and rural locations in Northern Michigan;
- Installation of building security and safety measures, including improved fire suppression systems, swipe card entry scanners, cameras, and locking mechanisms;
- Enlarged doors into shop areas and added large safety window panels to lab and workspace areas to facilitate public viewing and increase awareness of these academic programs by visually highlighting those programs to campus visitors;
- Installation of sustainable features throughout the building, including solar windows, wind turbines, green roof system, and creation of an electric vehicle charging station in the building's adjacent parking lot; and
- Reconfiguration and expansion of the current Emergency Medical training lab to include state-of-the-art training spaces for first-responder programs with an ambulance simulator, a dispatch area to facilitate simulated emergency communications between students in Fire Science and Emergency Medicine programs, redesign of classroom spaces, addition of more storage spaces, and creation of a large training space where students can practice vehicle extraction, triaging, treatment, and transporting of patients in a realistic setting.

The project also includes plans for a new 2-story 64,000 square foot wing to provide additional learning spaces for three Schools, paving the way for enrollment growth in the critical skill degree programs offered by those Schools. Construction of a new wing for CASET Hall will highlight a new state-of-the-art Robotics Lab and a new Engineering Design Center. This development will also provide a single unified location for the School of Criminal Justice, Fire Science, and Emergency Services, which

currently operates in multiple locations across campus and at one rented off-campus facility. The new wing will house advanced driving and de-escalation labs, crime simulation labs, and updated modern fire science educational training labs, transforming LSSU into a state-of-the-art training facility for students and regional first responders alike.

If approved, the University must raise \$10 million through a capital campaign. Fundraising for the project would be the University's top philanthropic priority and require Foundation approval.

Suggested Action/Motion:

Request for Board Approval.

President's Recommendation:

Support the aforementioned Capital Outlay Project request to the State of Michigan