The state has appropriated $7 million in capital improvements funding to Lincoln University over the last decade, but $3 million, or approximately 43%, has been restricted or vetoed.
Capital Improvement & Facilities History

Over the past decade, the only state capital improvement funding Lincoln University has received is the 2016 Board of Public Buildings bond funding. With that funding, the university has addressed many deferred maintenance issues. In fiscal year 2015, Governor Nixon vetoed the $2.8 million construction of a campus recreation center to balance the budget. In fiscal year 2017, $200,000 was restricted for an analysis and evaluation study of the old St. Mary’s Hospital building to determine how it could best be used for future university programs. Without funding, the project did not progress.

Facility Challenges

Lincoln’s campus is distinctive and historic, with many buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. At the heart of the campus is a monument paying tribute to the institution’s founders, and the university features a new residence hall, newly renovated classrooms and practice space for exercise sport physiology classes, and other new or newly renovated spaces. These buildings were constructed with a variety of funds, including state and federal appropriations, bonds, and private donations.

The majority of Lincoln’s buildings are aging, however. Many were built during the 1920s and 1930s, or between the late 1950s and early 1970s. The university has struggled to maintain these buildings, and most are evidence of the fact that the university has been unable to allocate sufficient funds for maintenance and repair on a consistent basis. In addition, many of the university’s buildings are not ideally suited for their current use. Many of the systems that support the campus, such as the steam distribution system; life safety systems; roofs; and electrical, plumbing, and heating/cooling systems, are severely challenged. The likelihood that one of these systems will fail, resulting in major disruption and expense, increases every year.

Lincoln has other problems resulting from deferred maintenance. Many buildings have chipped, flaking, or otherwise compromised paint. In many cases, this damage is indicative of water infiltration or structural damage. The ceilings in many buildings are water-stained or have holes in them, suggesting that the pipes above leak or have burst. The mechanical systems are old and obsolete. It is difficult to find replacement parts for many HVAC units and electrical panels and devices. Most buildings have a brick masonry veneer that has

Lincoln University of Missouri is a historically black, 1890 land-grant, public, comprehensive institution that provides excellent educational opportunities including theoretical and applied learning experiences to a diverse population within a nurturing, student-centered environment.
Lincoln University has identified the following as the university’s top three capital priorities for the future. The total state request for these projects is about $136 million.

1. Campuswide Renovations

The university has several buildings that are in need of major repairs/renovations as they have had no major upgrades since their original construction. Schweich Hall, for example, is a high priority for Lincoln because it does not meet current requirements relating to teaching, public safety, or ADA accessibility. Other buildings not meeting these requirements include Elliff Hall, Founders Hall, Martin Luther King Hall, Mitchell Hall, and the Thompkins Center. The Founders, Elliff, and Martin Luther King buildings are major academic facilities; it is vital to upgrade these facilities into state-of-the-art classroom laboratory buildings in order to enhance learning and working environments and protect major building assets.

Lincoln appears to use every available square foot of space on its campus. Unfortunately, this means that many programs are housed in buildings not well-suited for their current use and are in need of significant renovation or repair. In some cases, this has resulted in deficiencies noted by programmatic accreditation agencies. For example, the National Association of Schools of Music cited Lincoln’s band program as in desperate need of appropriate practice space.

Another example is Elliff Hall, which a certifying agency cited as having deficiencies that undermine the mission of the nursing program. The current strategy of maximizing the use of space across campus also means that faculty and students in some departments are housed in different buildings, making it more difficult for colleagues to collaborate. This undermines the academic environment and the ability of Lincoln to provide current and prospective students with a high-quality learning environment.

Lincoln lacks adequate space for some critical programs and general education courses, both in terms of quality and quantity of space. Founders Hall, the building that houses most of the university’s science classrooms and labs, and Elliff Hall, which houses the university’s nursing program, do not have enough classrooms to accommodate student demand.

The department of life and physical sciences is currently housed in Founders Hall, which in the last decade has undergone a shift away from a focus on traditional lecturing and toward faculty-mentored undergraduate research. These research experiences provide students with valuable skills and hands-on experiences. Because Founders Hall’s facilities are outdated and the building’s electrical system is insufficient, however, research opportunities are limited and cannot expand. Lack of classroom and faculty office space in Elliff Hall limits the number of nursing students the university can accept below its demand. There is a waiting list with an average of two years before students can enter the program, undermining Lincoln’s recruitment efforts. Finally, the university needs more classrooms for lower-level general education courses taken by most students. The university plans to address this through the construction of a new academic building, which is discussed in more detail on the next page.

Capital Priorities

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2. New Science Building

A new science building will improve the quality of Lincoln’s science instruction space, enable more students to participate in ongoing research projects, and allow the university to use classrooms and personnel more efficiently. Because all undergraduate, degree-seeking students at Lincoln are required to take general education science classes and participate in one lab, the new building will impact most of the students on campus. It will have a particularly significant impact on science majors and faculty, as well as on nursing and agriculture students, who take many of their introductory classes in the general science building.

The new science building will house the biology, chemistry, and physics departments, which are currently located in Founders Hall. Founders Hall also contains classrooms used by many other departments, and the lecture rooms are generally booked solid throughout the day. There is often more demand for large lecture rooms than can be accommodated, and the result is that classes may be offered in smaller, less efficient settings. Some small classes are taught by adjunct faculty, who do not have space to meet with students or to prepare for lectures. Limited space means that Founders Hall cannot provide the kind of environment needed to offer high-quality undergraduate research opportunities; currently, research is conducted in converted storage space and darkrooms, preparatory areas, and other ad hoc arrangements. Finally, the electrical system in Founders Hall is at capacity.

3. New Academic Building

Lincoln needs additional classrooms in which to offer general education. The number of rooms available for instruction has declined over the years as classroom space has been converted to computer labs, offices, and other non-instructional space that is essential to providing a modern, accessible, and high-quality learning environment. Because all students are required to take general education courses, this project will impact almost every student on campus.

The new facility will also include faculty space, which is not currently offered for new faculty in the current building. Faculty spaces are an important means of encouraging faculty and student interactions outside the classroom and fostering faculty research and collaboration.

The new building will provide an additional 60,000 square feet, and will be constructed in accordance with the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED Certification Standards, with a goal of achieving at least silver certification.

Click here for campus map.
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