



## **Budget Alignment to Address Strategic Needs NCSSM Budget Planning for FY 2019**

### **Executive Summary**

Through NCSSM's Strategic Plan, which was first developed in 2012 and updated in 2016, we have identified opportunities for growth and improvement in meeting our mission to educate talented students from across North Carolina to become leaders and innovators in STEM and to advance public education in our state. In order to accomplish our strategic goals, we have worked to align our budget to these priorities. In this document we have provided an overview of how we have used our resources over the past five years to meet our strategic goals.

#### **Strategic Educational Program Growth**

Over the past five years we have been able to expand opportunities to serve more students across North Carolina through our distance education programs. We have received enrollment growth funding from the state for this purpose. Over the past three years we have received more than \$500,000 in enrollment growth funding. Not only has this funding allowed us to expand course offerings to students in our virtual programs in strategic areas such as engineering and computer science, it has also allowed us to expand opportunities in these areas for our residential students.

Over the past five years we have grown our engineering and computer science staffing from four to eight faculty members. Through the use of enrollment growth funding in FY 2018 and anticipated funding in FY 2019, we will add two additional faculty in computer science and computational thinking to serve more students through our virtual and residential programs. We will also add additional faculty in mathematics in order to serve more students through our distance education programs. Expanding our opportunities to serve more students in computer science and mathematics is critical to allowing us to meet objectives in our Strategic Plan, as well as the goals we have that are aligned with the UNC System Strategic Plan. Along with increasing opportunities for students in computer science and mathematics, we plan to use FY 2019 enrollment growth funding to expand opportunities in the humanities, particularly in entrepreneurship and economics.

Another area identified as a goal in our Strategic Plan (Strategy 4) is expanding real-world learning opportunities for students through research, mentorship, and other real-world experiences. Over the past five years we have increased the number of students participating in research and mentorship by 80% (324 in 2011-12 to 588 in 2016-17). We have also been able to begin offering research opportunities to students in our online program. We have been able to accomplish this primarily through funding provided by the NCSSM Foundation to support this strategic goal, as well as by realigning state funding. Through continued enrollment growth funding and private support, we look forward to further expanding educational program options for NCSSM students and students across North Carolina.

### **Addressing Strategic Facilities Needs**

Another of the strategies (Strategy 2) in our Strategic Plan where we have made modest progress over the past five years is in improving our facilities. Through the limited R&R funding we receive each year, one-time capital funding (\$4 million), and private support from the NCSSM Foundation, we have made more than \$8 million in improvements over the past five years to address the highest priority capital and repair and renovation needs as identified in our Capital Improvement Plan. The improvements include:

- Peter T. Haughton Fabrication Lab
- New fiber optic network
- Renovations to Engineering and Physics classrooms and labs
- Upgrades to all 4 IVC studios
- Lighting and lighting control upgrades
- Bryan Lobby renovations
- Replaced some dormitory and student lounge furniture
- Begun replacing classroom furniture and instructional technology
- Replaced music suite flooring and replaced larger instruments

Even with the improvements we have completed, we have estimated repair and renovation and capital needs of approximately \$40 million. These needs include:

- Replacement of HVAC systems and controls
- Replacement of windows throughout campus
- Replacement of flooring throughout campus
- Renovations to dormitory living spaces and bathrooms
- Renovations to biology and chemistry labs
- Replacement of classroom furniture and instructional technology
- Renovation to ETC Auditorium
- Upgrades to campus security controlled access systems and replacement of vehicles

In our budget plan for FY 2019, we are asking for \$8.5 million in repair and renovation funding from the state to continue improvements to critical infrastructure needs such as: replacing windows and flooring across campus and renovating dormitories. We are also requesting from the state \$15 million of the \$20 million in capital funding necessary to fully construct the NCSSM-Morganton campus as conceived in the campus master plan. Given the nature of these specific facilities needs, we have identified state funding as the primary source of funding for these projects. It is also our goal to privately raise the additional \$5 million needed to fully build-out Phase 1 of the NCSSM-Morganton campus.

Along with the critical repair and renovation needs we have on our Durham campus, we have also identified additional facilities improvements on our campus that we believe are critical for helping address not only the strategic priorities identified in Strategy 2 of our Strategic Plan, but also those identified in Strategies 6 and 7, which are focused on improving student health and wellness and promoting faculty and staff innovation and excellence. In our planning for the comprehensive campaign, it has become evident that improving our facilities can play an important role in both of these areas and may also present appealing fundraising opportunities. Specifically, we have identified the following facilities improvements as important to implementing our strategies for improving student health and wellness and for promoting innovation and excellence:

1. Construct a student commons that integrates dining, student gathering and meeting space, the library, space for an integrated student health and wellness center, and other multi-purpose space
2. Construct a new state-of-the-art STEM classroom, lab and demonstration facility

It is our goal to develop design concepts for each of the facilities improvements listed above. We will be working with Duda Paine Architects to review the campus master plan they worked with us to develop in 2008 to determine how we might be able to best accomplish these facilities goals. We will use Foundation funding for the development of these design concepts over the next three months (March-May). Once we have developed these concepts and determined cost estimates, we will then be able to test these projects with potential donors in the comprehensive campaign feasibility study.

### **Operating Funding for NCSSM-Morganton**

In our FY 2019 budget we are requesting \$495,000 in operating funding to support the continued development of our campus in Morganton. In 2016-17 we received \$500,000 in one-time planning funding for NCSSM-Morganton. Over the past two years this funding has supported our work to select the site, develop the campus master plan, and to develop the educational program vision for the campus. We have worked hard to stretch this funding over two years. As we begin our third year of planning, we are requesting recurring operating funding for the campus. This request will allow us to hire our first faculty member for the Morganton campus. This person will take the lead in the academic program development in alignment with the educational program vision developed by the Core Planning Team. This funding will also support hiring a business and industry relations staff person to help establish partnerships to support real-world learning for students in Morganton, as well as to help raise private funds to support the campus. In addition, this funding will allow us to hire administrative support for the Director of Project Planning. We have been using the one-time funding for this purpose. We will also use this funding to support the educational program planning process by using some of the funds to provide release time for NCSSM faculty, as well as to contract with faculty at universities and other educational institutions. It is critical that we receive additional funding to support the continued planning for NCSSM-Morganton in FY 2019.

### **Addressing Strategic Student Health and Wellness Needs**

In our most recent Strategic Plan update in 2016 a significant focus was paid to student health and wellness needs. Over the past five years we have seen an increase in the number of students exhibiting high levels of stress and anxiety. This trend is being seen across the university system, state, and nation.

In 2016, 13% of teens in the U.S., ages 12-17, had at least one major depressive episode. This is up 61% from 2006 (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration, 2016).

At NCSSM, a significant number of the visits students make to see their counselor are related to personal counseling. Having seen an increase in the number of student visits for personal counseling over the past several years, this year we implemented an electronic sign-in process for students when they visit counseling services so that we can better track the number of visits and the purpose of the visit. Of the 2,674 students who have met with a counselor so far this year, 71.4% of the meetings have been for personal counseling. We have also seen an increase in the number of students who exhibit significant levels of anxiety and depression that result in what we consider to be acute mental health emergencies, which include: significant anxiety, self-harm, eating disorder, suicidal ideation. These types of situations have more than doubled over the past three years. There were 16 students who had acute mental health needs in 2015-16. We have already seen 35 students who have acute mental health needs so far this year. Students who exhibit significant mental health needs almost always require regular therapy and medication management from a psychiatrist. From 2016 to 2018, 1 out of 5 NCSSM students who needed outside mental health services has not been able to access these services due to financial barriers. These barriers include: lack of health insurance or underinsurance, high deductibles, lack of providers who accept Medicaid from other counties.

In an effort to address the increased mental health needs of our students, in 2015 we restructured our counseling staff to hire a counselor who has specific experience working with students who have greater mental health related counseling needs. This counselor has a smaller caseload and serves as a case manager for students with more significant counseling needs. An unmet need is an ability to refer students to professional providers in the Durham community when they have a need for mental health services beyond what we can provide on campus. The challenge in getting students access to this support is that some students are unable to afford the services because they do not have insurance that will cover the cost, or their families are not able to pay the costs if they have no insurance. In our FY 2019 Foundation budget request, we are asking for \$20,000 in funding that will allow us to cover the costs for evaluation and outside counseling support for students we identify as needing these services, but are unable to afford the services.

As a result of the increased demand for counselors to address the personal counseling needs of students, there is less time for counselors to support students and families in the college planning and application process. Nearly 100% of NCSSM students attend four-year colleges and universities. NCSSM students have many outstanding college options and many are competitive for significant scholarships. It is our goal to be able to better support students and their families in the college planning and application process, as well as to be able to effectively address the personal and mental health needs of students. To meet this goal we will be restructuring our counseling department so that we can have three counselors dedicated to working with students who have greater mental health needs and four counselors who will focus on personal, college, and career counseling. By allowing counselors to have a greater focus on specific needs, we believe we can provide better and more directed support to meet individual student needs. With the new structure of the department, counselors will be able to benefit from more specialized professional development opportunities focused on the support they are providing. In order to restructure our counseling services, we need to hire one additional counselor. For the FY 2019 budget, we are realigning funding from our state budget (\$50,000) and requesting \$30,000 in the FY 2019 Foundation budget, which will allow us to hire one additional counselor.

### **Promoting Faculty and Staff Excellence and Innovation**

In alignment with Strategy 7 in NCSSM's Strategic Plan, we are working to promote innovation and excellence in our faculty and staff. These efforts include providing professional development opportunities for faculty and staff that allow individuals to grow professionally in their field and in turn, bring their increased expertise into the classroom or to the work they do on campus. Also, we are working to provide professional development for members of the NCSSM community targeted to institutional strategic goals such as student health and wellness, campus climate and diversity, and effective use of instructional technologies. We have limited funding to support professional development opportunities for faculty and staff. We currently allocate approximately \$15,000 from the Foundation and \$10,000 from state funding annually for faculty and staff professional development.

We are requesting an additional \$70,000 in Foundation funding in the FY 2019 budget which will support campus-wide professional development and training in: mental health awareness; campus, culture, climate, and diversity; and instructional technology use (\$30,000). This funding will also support professional development grants for faculty and staff (\$40,000). These professional development funds will be provide to faculty and staff professional development opportunities aligned to their professional growth and/or the strategic needs of the school according to an institutional professional development plan.

We are also working to enhance academic offerings for students by encouraging faculty and staff to develop new interdisciplinary courses and other instructional opportunities. Through our curriculum review process and our innovative course design initiative, we are working to identify curricular areas where we can enhance and create new learning opportunities for students. In particular, we are working to develop more interdisciplinary learning opportunities for students. We currently allocate approximately \$30,000 annually from state and Foundation Funds to support our curricular review and course development work. We are requesting \$30,000 in additional Foundation funding in the FY 2019 budget, which will support up to 10 teachers or 5 teacher teams to develop new curricula and/or courses as a part of our curricular review process and our innovative learning opportunities plan.

### **Summary**

Over the past five years we have taken a strategic approach to align our resources to the objectives and strategies identified in our Strategic Plan. With thoughtful stewardship of the resources provided by the state for operating and capital needs, along with generous support from the NCSSM Foundation, we have been able to make progress in addressing some of our greatest facility needs, as well as a number of our strategic programmatic goals. We now provide more opportunities for students to participate in research and mentorship, more learning opportunities in engineering and computer science, and we have significantly increased the number of students we serve across North Carolina through our virtual and extended learning programs. We must continue our efforts to align our resources in order to meet our strategic goals and the new strategies identified in our most recent Strategic Plan update: improving student health and wellness; faculty and staff excellence and innovation; continuing to expand opportunities for students across North Carolina, particularly in computer science and computational thinking; and planning our second campus in Morganton.

Our FY 2019 budget reflects our effort to align our resources from the state, the NCSSM Foundation, and receipts to help us best meet our strategic priorities. We are fortunate to have generous support from the NCSSM Foundation that has allowed us to move forward in meeting our strategic needs while we have been living with constrained state budgets. Also, the receipts that we now generate from our Accelerator summer programs are allowing us to support more of our strategic summer programming. We look forward to the comprehensive campaign that will launch in the next 12 months as another source of funding that will help us meet our strategic needs.

We will discuss budget planning at our March 16 Board of Trustees meeting and we look forward to your feedback regarding the FY 2019. We are also working with the NCSSM Foundation regarding the FY 2019 Foundation budget and look forward to finalizing our FY 2019 budget at our May meeting. Please let me know if you have any questions.