Alcorn State University is a Mississippi educational treasure. The university is forging ahead into its 151st year as the oldest land-grant university in the state and oldest historically black land-grant university in the nation. Thanks to the daring investments in the knowledge and character of our students, faculty, and staff through the 2022 Mississippi Legislative Session, the university was able to make a tremendous impact on the enduring success of our campus and the communities we serve. Alcorn greatly appreciates the legislature’s support of our shared goals to promote a prosperous economy, excellent education for students, and strengthened health, growth, and sustainability of our state.

Like many institutions of higher learning, calendar year 2022 presented unique challenges and opportunities for Alcorn State University. Despite the tests, Alcorn celebrated two significant graduating classes with 716 total degrees awarded in 2022, sustained our research capacity with over $24 million in external awards and funding, and our Men’s Basketball team won the SWAC 2022 Regular Season Championship. The university housed over 1,600 residential students on all our campuses. Our students represented nearly every Mississippi county and 37 states and 34% are enrolled as first-generation scholars. Of special note, 54% of our students are STEM majors seeking degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. In 2022, Alcorn raised over $3.5 million (a 5% increase over 2021) in private giving from alumni and friends, enhancing state appropriations and allowing the university to award scholarships and provide support services for deserving student scholars. This is the second consecutive year that Alcorn has received record giving.

Alcorn was ranked among premier institutions in the nation earning spots in U.S. News and World Report (#16 Most Innovative Schools - Regional Universities South, #23 HBCU, #24 Top Public Schools - South, Best Colleges for Veterans - South, Top Performers on Social Mobility - South, and #59 Best Regional Universities - South), Essence and Money Magazines (#9 Best HBCUs and Top Colleges for Black Students), and OnlineU’s (#9 HBCU with the Highest Payoff for Black Students) among many others.

As the 2023 legislative session advances, we will continue the hard work necessary to sustain a strong commitment from the Mississippi Legislature to Alcorn and higher education in Mississippi. For over 150 years, Alcorn has intensely focused on positively impacting our state by growing its economy, enhancing its workforce, and empowering those we serve with knowledge and character. Recognizing the unprecedented recent growth of the state, we have structured our requests around items we consider the most practical and highest priority. With your support we will do more for Mississippi. I look forward to working with you. Thank you for your continued support of Alcorn.

Always Alcorn,

Felecia M. Nave

Felecia M. Nave, Ph.D.
20th President
UNIVERSITY CAPITAL PROJECTS (BOND BILL)
UNIVERSITY CAPITAL PROJECTS
(BOND BILL)

1. $11,885,000 for Renovation and Expansion of Davey L. Whitney (HPER) Arena Complex and Wellness Center

Constructed in 1974, this project provides for the renovation and expansion of the University’s 136,000 GSF Health and Physical Education classroom and activity center. As an emergency evacuation and fall-out shelter, the Whitney facility requires renovation to better protect and serve students, employees, and the local community. This facility has not been significantly updated since it was built and sustained damage during Hurricane Katrina. Pre-planning design development documents have been completed. Additionally, the campus is in major need of a space for wellness activities to include specialty exercise rooms, an indoor walking track, academic instructional courses, and general use for the university community. The expanded facility would include a large arena for hosting large campus-wide academic convocations, student events, and similar activities. The project scope includes waterproofing the building’s exterior, renovation of interior finishes, windows, doors, roof replacement, replacement of light fixtures, ADA, safety, and security modifications, accreditation issues, electrical, and mechanical modifications.

2. $8,610,000 for Walter Washington Administration and Classroom Building Renovations - Phase 1

Built in 1974, the Walter Washington Administration and Classroom Building is one of the most utilized buildings on the campus with most student services including admissions, housing and business affairs occurring in the facility. The building also houses the School of Education and Psychology. Such a key building greatly needs funding to upgrade the mechanical and aesthetic life of the structure. This project will provide much needed renovations to portions of the six-story, 80,001 GSF building which has had no major renovations since it was built. The building has outdated mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, no sprinkler system and limited fire alarm systems. Building finishes are very outdated and in need of major renovation to include new carpeting, painting, and to address ADA accessibility concerns.

3. $7,475,000 for K. L. Simmons Technology Building Renovation - Phase 1

Housing the University’s Advanced Technologies, Army ROTC, and Mass Communications departments, the K.L. Simmons Technology Building was built in 1981 and has not received any renovations since it opened. The building has an antiquated mechanical system and an outdated fire alarm system. It needs careful study to re-program some of the spaces to better facilitate the university’s current and future academic programming needs and research opportunities. Critical funding is necessary for modernizing the building as a state-of-the-art science, technology, and engineering complex. Additionally, rehabilitation of the mechanical, fire protection, and information technology systems will enhance interior space utilization changes and modifications.
UNIVERSITY CAPITAL PROJECTS
(BOND BILL)

4. $4,540,000 for ADA Modifications - Phase 2

Alcorn seeks critical funds for various construction, renovation, and repairs projects to comply with the American with Disabilities Act including replacing exterior entrances, ramps, access routes, stairs, doors, parking, sidewalk curb-cuts, and interior renovations to toilet facilities, doors, elevators, signage, technology enhancements, hardware fixtures, etc. in selected, high priority buildings.

5. $13,450,000 for Faculty & Staff Housing - Phase 2

Alcorn State University faces an imminently critical and expanding challenge with regards to housing and seeks funding to construct new faculty and staff housing. Alcorn employs over 700 faculty and staff to support its campus operations. Phase 2 of the Alcorn Faculty & Staff Housing Project would include the building of 30 new multi-family units and 5-10 new single-family homes to replace the severely dilapidated and condemned Mable Lott Townhouse Apartments, Residential Drive Houses, and Matt Thomas Apartments. The University has a waiting list of faculty and staff seeking to live on or near campus. In accordance with the 2023 Master Plan, this new housing complex would be situated near the entrance to the Lorman campus just off Highway 552 in an area known as the "New Access Road".
ALCORN AGRICULTURE RESEARCH & EXTENSION CAPITAL PROJECTS (BOND BILL)
1. Poultry Sciences Academic Research Center (SPARC) Building Pre-Planning, $465,000

The Alcorn School of Agriculture and Applied Sciences seeks funding to pre-plan and renovate and restore its poultry science facilities for broiler-type research projects, turkey research projects, laying-hen research projects and feed and nutrition and classroom space. Alcorn’s Poultry Academic Research Center’s mission is to provide facilities and resources for the education of animal science students interested in Poultry Science as a career and to conduct basic and applied research that will benefit the poultry producers of the State of Mississippi. The goal is to increase the number of students graduating with degrees in poultry science to better serve the state’s poultry industry and to help spur the growth of the poultry industry in the region.

2. Poultry Sciences Academic Research Center (SPARC) Building - Phase 1, $2,770,000

Funding to begin renovation and reconstruction of the poultry science facilities for broiler-type research projects, turkey research projects, laying-hen research projects and feed and nutrition and classroom space to provide facilities and resources for the education of animal science students interested in Poultry Science as a career and to conduct basic and applied research that will benefit the poultry producers of the State of Mississippi.

3. Agricultural Facilities Envelope and Infrastructure, $2,270,000

Agriculture facilities have needs for new boilers, chillers, roof replacement needs, and other critical infrastructure needs across the university. Funding would address those critical needs based on aging buildings and deferred maintenance including upgrading boilers, chillers, roofs, and other critical infrastructure in agricultural facilities on the Lorman Campus and at off-campus extension and research locations. Additionally, funding is needed to construct and equip a new Alcorn Experiment Station greenhouse with heating and cooling systems, exhaust hoods, and advanced microscopes. The new greenhouse will be vital to the fruit, nut, and vegetable research.
4. Hydroponics Research and Teaching Greenhouse, $3,470,000

The Alcorn State University School of Agriculture and Applied Sciences seeks funding to construct a state-of-the-art hydroponics research greenhouse. The hydroponics greenhouse is needed to replicate research under controlled settings such as: 1) growing environment temperature, 2) growing solution temperature, 3) pH, 4) nutrient concentrations, 5) humidity, 6) light cycle and intensity, 7) air movement, 8) pollination, 9) CO2 levels and 10) watering. Hydroponics greenhouse and related research will be developed to 1) increased research precision, 2) decrease risk of soil borne diseases and pests, 3) increase production, 4) yield higher quality products, 5) decrease water usage, 6) afford year-round growing season, 7) increased hands-on experiential learning for small farmers and students, and 8) expand capacity to develop mechanisms for increased yield and profitability.

5. STEAM Outreach Center, $11,917,500

Alcorn seeks funding to construct a Science, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture and Math (STEAM) Outreach Center to engage youth from surrounding school districts and community-based organizations in Southwest Mississippi. The STEAM Center will provide area students with an experiential education that excites, engages, and enriches through a hands-on, learn-by-doing approach. The center’s programs will inspire the next generation of STEAM leaders by developing a passion for STEAM careers at a young age and maintaining interest throughout middle and high school thus increasing student success, recruiting and retaining majors in STEAM areas and preparing them for careers in STEAM fields, such as teaching, research and industry.
FY ’24 AGRICULTURE RESEARCH & EXTENSION APPROPRIATIONS

$3,100,000
FY ’24 AGRICULTURE RESEARCH & EXTENSION APPROPRIATIONS

$3,100,000

1. Poultry Research and Extension:

Providing for an Appropriation of $525,000 from state general funds to the Alcorn State University Agricultural Programs, to strengthen support of poultry science research, extension, and academic programs.

Rationale:

Alcorn State University’s Agricultural and Land-Grant Programs recently completed a renovation of its poultry research facility for broiler trials related to nutrition, performance, and management. The facility has been offline for nearly ten years and renovations to the poultry science laboratory, broiler processing unit and feed mill facility are currently planned for the near future. The continued rehabilitation and development of poultry facilities reflects the needs of the state’s commercial poultry industry. Poultry facilities will help enhance university research, extension, and academic programs in support of training the state’s poultry industry workforce. Poultry is the most popular protein source in the US. In Mississippi, poultry is the top agricultural industry with an annual economic value of 2.8 billion dollars. The future and sustainability of the state’s poultry industry requires an innovative approach to overcome the current and future challenges.

2. Animal Science Research and Extension:

Providing for an Appropriation of $715,000 from state general funds to the Alcorn State University Agricultural Programs, for the support of animal science research and Extension programs.

Rationale:

Mississippi livestock producers have seen a growing interest in adding small ruminants like goats and sheep to their operations. The 2019 USDA Census of Agriculture reported that Mississippi saw a 5% growth in goat production over the previous year. To continue this growth, there is a tremendous need to conduct cutting-edge research to mitigate climate and production issues associated with goat ranching in Mississippi. Alcorn is a leader in the state in small ruminant research. Additionally, beef cattle are one of the most significant components of Mississippi’s agriculture industry. Alcorn proposes to expand its beef cattle research, training, extension, and outreach programs to assist Mississippi farmers to sustain growing and productive beef businesses.
3. Environmental Science Programs:

Providing for an Appropriation of $430,000 from state general funds to the Alcorn State University Agricultural Programs, to strengthen environmental science research and extension programs.

**Rationale:**
Alcorn’s School of Agriculture, Research, Extension and Applied Sciences seeks to enhance and strengthen its wildlife, forestry, and fisheries research and extension programs with additional research associates, scientists, technicians and specialists in the areas of Natural Resource Management, Forestry, etc.

4. Horticulture Programs:

Providing for an Appropriation of $430,000 from state general funds to the Alcorn State University Agricultural Programs, for the support of horticulture research and extension programs.

**Rationale:**
Funds will be used to re-establish fruit and nut research orchards and vineyards, construct and procure additional biotechnology equipment and hire research personnel. Horticultural research, extension, and teaching will support healthy food production, outreach, and training focused on value-added crops that have a high potential to improve healthy food offerings for Mississippians and increase the incomes of small and limited-resource farmers. Research is expected to produce two each of new, high-yielding Climate Zone 8 varieties of fruits, purchase equipment and supplies and hire personnel including a new pomology research scientist.
5. Shiitake Mushroom Research and Production Expansion:

The Mississippi Development Authority shall make available to the Mississippi Small Farm and Agribusiness Center (MSFAC) at Alcorn State University in partnership with the Mississippi Natural products Association (MNPA), appropriated funding in the amount of $1,000,000 for Expansion of Research and Production of Shiitake Mushrooms.

Rationale:
Mississippi Natural Products Association is a rural farmers’ cooperative located in south central Mississippi that provides an alternative crop for farmers and adds value to that crop by marketing and selling it at the retail level. Farmers who are members of the Co-op grow our mushrooms on substrate blocks manufactured at the cooperative headquarters. The process involved in manufacturing the blocks includes substrate mixing, sterilization, inoculation, and incubation. This process requires expensive equipment as well as specialized facilities and would be cost prohibitive for most farmers. By providing this service, Alcorn is able to offer more farmers the opportunity to grow specialty mushrooms.
PRIORITY FUNDING REQUESTS
PRIORITY FUNDING REQUESTS

SUSTAIN $1,500,000 for STEM FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS for FY 2024

Through Section 43 of SB 3002, the 2022 Mississippi Legislature appropriated $1,500,000 to Alcorn State University for Fiscal Year 2023 for “STEM related programs and/or other programs as determined by the University”. Alcorn enrolls and graduates over 30% of its students in STEM-related fields. For FY 2024, the University is seeking to sustain this funding stream to strengthen and enhance campus Science, Technology, Math and Medical-related academic, research and service programs and facilities. Funding will significantly assist the university with attracting and developing student scholars for the most highly sought academic majors and careers.

19.35% BUDGET INCREASE for FY 2024

The FY 2024 IHL Budget Request includes an 19.35% increase in General Support (E&G) to fund an increase in faculty salaries to move salaries closer to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) average. Collectively, Mississippi higher education faculty salaries are currently at 80.5% of the SREB average.

$75,000,000 for R&R CAPITAL EXPENSE APPROPRIATIONS

IHL is requesting $75 million in Capital Expense funds for campus repair and renovation to build on the historic funding received from the 2022 Legislative Session. This request represents an increase of 1.1% for FY 2024.

$175,000,000 in ARPA CORONAVIRUS FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS

IHL requested $200 million in ARPA funds during the 2022 Legislative Session. The Legislature appropriated $25 million of ARPA funds to the Department of Finance and Administration for eligible projects at universities for FY 2023. For FY 2024, IHL is requesting $175 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Coronavirus Fiscal Recovery Fund to address the water, sewer, and broadband projects as the balance of last year’s request.
GENERAL LEGISLATION
GENERAL LEGISLATION

UPDATE UNIVERSITY NAME IN VARIOUS STATUTES

The Mississippi Code of 1972 Annotated § 37-121-3 entitled “Applicability of laws dealing with the Mississippi State University of Agriculture and Applied Science” and the Mississippi Code of 1972 Annotated § 37-121-5, entitled “Establishment of branch of agricultural and forestry experimental station” currently reference “Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, Lorman”. The university is requesting to update its name in these two statutes to reflect “Alcorn State University”. In 1974 Governor William Waller signed legislation into law granting “university” status to all state institutions of higher learning and thus renamed them. Recent reviews of matters related to these two statutes, identified these errors, and determined the need for the update.

PROCUREMENT OF WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICES FOR STUDENTS

Currently, Mississippi Code of 1972 Annotated § 25-53-191 prohibits Mississippi’s institutions of higher learning from purchasing wireless communications devices like MIFI or WIFI for their students. In 2020, this issue was exacerbated when campuses were forced to immediately shut down and send students home to prevent the highly infectious COVID-19 coronavirus from spreading. As students hurriedly migrated into a virtual or remote learning environment, it became evident that many did not have the necessary broadband accessibility, technology tools and resources to continue their education. Under state law, universities were also prevented from spending federal emergency CARES Act funds on purchasing these devices for students. In the immediate response to the pandemic, the Mississippi Legislature passed a law granting emergency authority to public K-12 school districts to procure devices for their students. Unfortunately, this authority was not granted to public higher education. IHL has worked with the Mississippi State Department of Information Technology Services (ITS) to amend this law to allow the purchase of wireless communication devices for university students for future pandemics and public emergency situations.