



Alcorn
State University

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

FY 2026-2027

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



Alcorn State University is a Mississippi educational treasure. The University is entering its 155th year as Mississippi's second-oldest public institution of higher learning, the state's oldest land-grant University, and the nation's oldest historically Black land-grant University. Thanks to the daring investments in the knowledge and character of our students, faculty, and staff during the 2025 Mississippi Legislative Session, the University made a tremendous impact on the enduring success of our campus and the regional communities we serve. Alcorn greatly appreciates the legislature's support for our shared goals of promoting a prosperous economy, excellent education for students, and the health, growth, and sustainability of our state.

Like many institutions of higher learning, Alcorn State University faced unique challenges and opportunities in calendar year 2025. Despite the tests, Alcorn celebrated **two significant graduating classes, awarding over 730 degrees in 2025, and sustained our external research awards and funding, with nearly \$30 million in capacity.** The University **enrolled over 2,900 students in Fall 2025, with Graduate Programs up 21.6% from Fall 2024. More than 34% of our students are first-generation scholars.** Notably, **54% of our students**

are STEM majors pursuing degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. The university maintains a 16:1 student-faculty ratio, allowing for personalized instruction, student support, and mentorship. In 2025, Alcorn **raised over \$3.7 million** from alumni, friends, and organizations, thereby enhancing state appropriations and enabling the University to award scholarships, provide funding assistance, and deliver essential services to deserving student scholars.

Alcorn was **ranked the #2 Best HBCU in America for 2026 by Niche, the only Mississippi HBCU in the Top 10.** Our **Sounds of Dyn-O-Mite Marching Band** represented the state with pride as **the first Mississippi HBCU to participate in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City in November 2025.** We were also honored to receive a multimillion-dollar grant from philanthropist Mackenzie Scott, underscoring her continued support for investing in strategic campus priorities that benefit students and advance our mission to expand access.

As the 2026 legislative session advances, we will continue the hard work necessary to strengthen the Mississippi Legislature's commitment to Alcorn and higher education in Mississippi. For over 155 years, Alcorn has positively impacted our state by growing its economy, educating and enhancing its workforce, and empowering those we serve with knowledge and character. We have structured our requests around the items we consider most practical and of the highest priority. With your support, we will strive to do more for Mississippi.

I look forward to working with you. Thank you for your continued support of "old Alcorn dear".

Always Alcorn,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy M. Cook". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tracy M. Cook, Ed.D.

President

Alcorn State University is a premier, comprehensive land-grant university that achieves preeminence through transformative teaching and research excellence, collaborative partnerships, and innovative practices, so our communities thrive, and all our students have unlimited opportunities to engage and lead in a globally competitive world.





UNIVERSITY CAPITAL PROJECTS

(BOND BILL/CAPEX)

\$19,450,000 Total Request

UNIVERSITY CAPITAL PROJECTS

(BOND BILL/CAPEX)

\$19,450,000 Total Request

1. \$6,000,000 for Renovations of Davey L. Whitney (HPER) Arena Complex and Wellness Center - Phase 2

This funding will provide for Phase 2 of the renovation of the University's 133,000 GSF Health and Physical Education (HPER) academic classroom activity center and other facilities. The facility requires renovation to protect and serve students, employees, and the local community. This facility has not been significantly updated since it was built in 1974 and sustained damage during Hurricane Katrina. The planning, design, and development documents have been completed. Additionally, the campus is in dire need of space for wellness activities, including specialty exercise rooms, an indoor walking track, academic instruction, and general use by the university community. The expanded facility would include a large arena to host campus-wide academic convocations, student events, and similar activities. The project scope includes waterproofing the building's exterior; renovation of interior finishes, windows, and doors; roof replacement; replacement of light fixtures; ADA, safety, and security modifications; accreditation issues; and electrical and mechanical modifications.

2. \$500,000 for Walter Washington Administration & Classroom Building Renovations - Pre-Planning

Built in 1974, the Walter Washington Administration and Classroom Building is one of the most utilized buildings on campus, with most student services, including the registrar, information technology, financial aid, and business affairs, housed there. The building also houses the School of Education and Psychology. This key building urgently needs funding to upgrade its mechanical and aesthetic condition. This project will deliver much-needed renovations to a portion of the six-story, 80,001 GSF building, which has not undergone any major renovations since its construction. The building has outdated mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, no sprinkler system, and limited fire alarm systems. Building finishes are obsolete and require major renovation, including new carpeting, repainting, and ADA compliance updates.

3. \$5,500,000 for R&R Upgrades, Renovation, & Expansion to Existing Facilities

Alcorn seeks funding to repair, renovate, and upgrade various existing buildings and spaces across all its campuses to preserve structural integrity and enhance the living, learning, and working environments.

4. \$2,910,000 for Faculty & Staff Housing - Partial Funding of estimated \$13,500,000 Project Total

Alcorn State University faces a critical, expanding challenge with employee housing. It seeks funding to construct Phase 2 of the Alcorn Faculty & Staff Housing Project, which would include 30 new multi-family units and 5-10 new single-family homes. The University employs nearly 700 faculty and staff to support its campus operations and maintains a waiting list of candidates seeking to live on or near campus. Per the 2023 Master Plan, this new housing complex would be located within the current faculty and staff housing complex.



UNIVERSITY CAPITAL PROJECTS

(BOND BILL/CAPEX)

\$19,450,000 Total Request

5. \$4,540,000 for ADA Modifications - Phase 2

Alcorn seeks critical funds for various construction, renovation, and repair projects to comply with the Americans 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.





**ALCORN
AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH &
EXTENSION
CAPITAL PROJECTS**

(BOND BILL/CAPEX)

\$30,002,500 Total Request

ALCORN AGRICULTURE RESEARCH & EXTENSION CAPITAL PROJECTS

(BOND BILL/CAPEX)

\$30,002,500 Total Request

1. Poultry Sciences Academic Research Center (SPARC) Building, \$3,570,000

The Alcorn School of Agriculture and Applied Sciences seeks funding to renovate, reconstruct, expand, and restore its poultry science facilities for broiler-type, turkey, and laying-hen research projects, as well as 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 serve the state's poultry industry better and spur regional growth.

2. K. L. Simmons Technology Building Renovation - Pre-Planning & Phase I Funding, \$10,475,000

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 antiquated mechanical and fire alarm systems. It requires careful study to reprogram certain spaces to better support the University's current and future academic programming and research opportunities. Critical funding is necessary to modernize the building into a state-of-the-art science, technology, and engineering complex. Additionally, rehabilitation of mechanical, fire protection, and information technology systems will support changes and modifications to interior space utilization.

3. Agricultural Facilities Envelope & Infrastructure, \$570,000

Agricultural facilities require new boilers, chillers, roof replacements, and other critical infrastructure across the University. Funding would address vital needs related to aging buildings and deferred maintenance, including upgrades to boilers, chillers, roofs, and other critical infrastructure at 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 research fruit, nuts, and vegetables.

4. Hydroponics Research & 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) increase research precision, 2) decrease the 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) increase hands-on experiential learning for small farmers and students, and 8) expand capacity to develop mechanisms for increased yield and profitability.



ALCORN AGRICULTURE RESEARCH & EXTENSION CAPITAL PROJECTS

(BOND BILL/CAPEX)

\$30,002,500 Total Request

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, entertains, and enriches them 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 '27
AGRICULTURAL
LAND-GRANT
RESEARCH &
EXTENSION
APPROPRIATIONS**

\$3,150,000 Total Request

FY '27 AGRICULTURAL LAND-GRANT RESEARCH & EXTENSION APPROPRIATIONS

\$3,150,000 Total Request

1. Poultry Research & Extension:

Providing for an Appropriation of **\$550,000** from state general funds to the Alcorn State University Agricultural and Land-grant 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 10 years, and renovations to the poultry science laboratory, broiler processing unit, and feed mill are planned for the near future. The continued rehabilitation and development of poultry facilities reflect the needs of the state's commercial poultry industry. Poultry facilities will enhance university research, extension, and academic programs to support training for the state's poultry industry workforce. Poultry is the most popular protein source in the U.S. In Mississippi, poultry is the top agricultural industry, with an annual economic value of \$2.8 billion. The future and sustainability of the state's poultry industry require an innovative approach to overcome the current and future challenges.

2. Animal Science Research & Extension:

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

Rationale:

Mississippi livestock producers have seen growing interest in adding small ruminants, such as goats and sheep, to their operations. The 2019 USDA Census of Agriculture reported that Mississippi experienced a 5% increase in goat production compared with the previous year. To sustain this growth, there is a critical need to conduct cutting-edge research to mitigate climate and production challenges associated with goat ranching in Mississippi. Alcorn is a leader in small ruminant research in the state. Additionally, beef cattle are a major component of Mississippi's agricultural industry. Alcorn proposes expanding its beef cattle research, training, extension, and outreach programs to assist Mississippi farmers in sustaining growing, productive beef businesses.

3. Environmental Science Programs:

Providing an Appropriation of **\$455,000** from state general funds to the Alcorn State University Agricultural and Land-grant 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.



FY '27 AGRICULTURAL LAND-GRANT RESEARCH & EXTENSION APPROPRIATIONS

\$3,150,000 Total Request

4. Horticulture Programs:

Providing an Appropriation of **\$430,000** from state general funds to the Alcorn State University Agricultural and Land-grant 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 with high potential to expand healthy food offerings for Mississippians and increase the incomes of small and limited-resource farmers. Research is expected to produce two new, high-yielding Climate Zone 8 fruit varieties, purchase equipment and supplies, and hire personnel, including a new pomology research scientist.

5. Shiitake Mushroom Research & 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 the Expansion of Research and Production of Shiitake Mushrooms.

Rationale:

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





ALCORN STATE
UNIVERSITY
EST. 1871

**PRIORITY
FUNDING
& GENERAL
LEGISLATION
REQUESTS**

PRIORITY FUNDING & GENERAL LEGISLATION REQUESTS

IHL FUNDING ALLOCATION MODEL

Currently, Mississippi's IHL Board allocates the state's higher education appropriation funding to its public universities. With assistance from external consultants, the board is considering several funding model options. These options include a) the current base plus model, b) one based on full-time enrollment numbers, c) focus on performance metrics, and d) a hybrid model that employs aspects of one or more of the first three.

9.7% ALCORN AGRICULTURAL LAND-GRANT RESEARCH & EXTENSION APPROPRIATIONS for FY 2027

IHL has approved the Agricultural units' FY 2027 request for a 9.7% increase over FY 2026. This represents \$797,629 above the \$8,222,984 funded in FY 2026.

SUSTAIN \$1,500,000 for STEM FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS for FY 2027

Through Section 39 of SB 3000, the 2023 Mississippi Legislature appropriated \$1,500,000 to Alcorn State University for Fiscal Year 2024 for "STEM-related programs and/or other programs as determined by the University". Alcorn enrolls and graduates more than 30% of its students in STEM fields. For FY 2027, the University seeks to sustain this funding stream to strengthen campus Science, Technology, Math, and Medical academic, research, and service programs and facilities. Funding will significantly help the University attract and develop student scholars for the most highly sought-after academic majors and careers.

17.2% IHL E&G BUDGET INCREASE for FY 2027

The FY 2027 IHL E&G Budget Request includes a 17.19% increase in General Support to restore \$5,026,680 in FY 2026 cuts for campuses and to fund a \$72,664,755 salary increase. The salary increase will bring state public university salaries closer to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) average, helping to close the competition gap for attracting and retaining talented faculty, staff, and researchers. Collectively, Mississippi higher education faculty salaries are currently at 77% of the SREB average.



PRIORITY FUNDING & GENERAL LEGISLATION REQUESTS

\$80,000,000 for R&R CAPITAL EXPENSE APPROPRIATIONS for FY 2027

IHL is requesting \$80 million in Capital Expense funds for campus repair and renovation, building on the historic funding received from the 2024 Legislative Session.

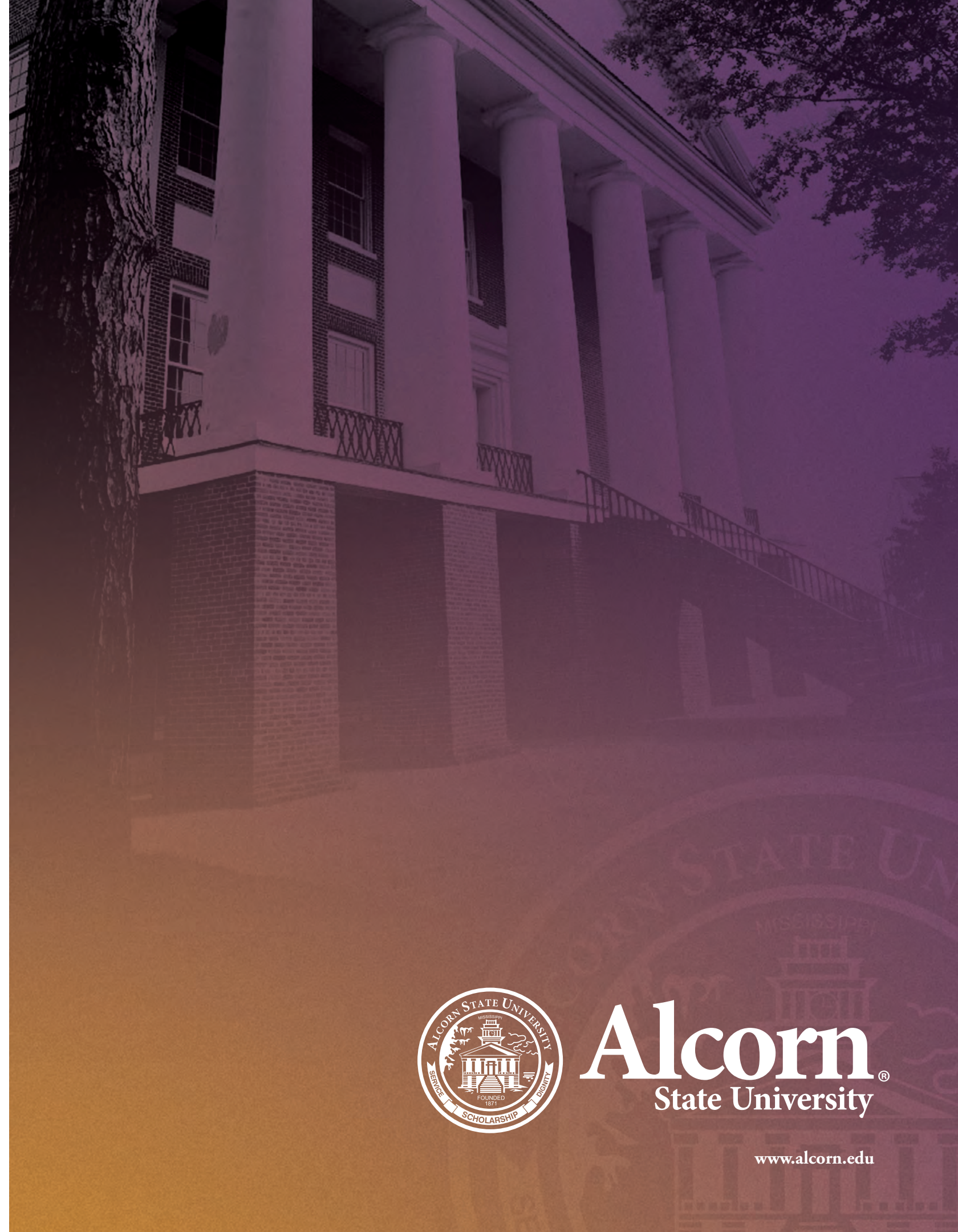
\$5,000,000 to Complete the Repair and Renovation of Classic Student Residence Halls

During the fall of 2023, Alcorn State University solicited bids to begin the renovation of Revels Hall (1968) and Robinson Hall (1964) using \$5,000,000 in bond funds provided by the Mississippi Legislature. The average bid received from the five responding contractors was \$10,000,000. The University requests an additional \$5,000,000 to provide full funding to complete repairs and renovations to the two “classic” student residence halls and Albert Lott Hall.

\$65,000,000 for New Regional Academic Healthcare and Medical Sciences Facilities

Through Section 46 of SB 3000, the 2023 Mississippi Legislature appropriated \$5,000,000 to Alcorn State University for Fiscal Year 2024 for ‘capital needs, construction, and/or repair and renovation projects.’ This funding is intended to jump-start the planning, design, construction, repair, renovation, expansion, and equipping of the University’s academic healthcare and medical sciences research and education facilities on the Natchez campus (Nursing). For FY 2027, the University seeks to sustain and increase this funding stream to strengthen and expand its efforts with the City of Natchez to grow healthcare and medical sciences in the Southwest Mississippi River Region.





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State University

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