



Virginia Department of Planning and Budget  
**Project Request Justification**

2004-2006

Biennium

Date: 10/12/04

**A. General Information**

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|---|--|---------------------|------------|
| 1. Agency Name:                               | <u>Virginia Tech</u>                   | 2. Agency Code:     | <u>208</u> |
| 3. Project Title:                             | <u>Performing Arts Center Increase</u> | 4. Agency Priority: | <u>7</u>   |
| 5. Name of Person to Contact about this Form: | <u>M. Dwight Shelton, Jr.</u>          |                     |            |
| 6. Contact Person's Telephone Number:         | <u>(540) 231-8775</u>                  |                     |            |
| 7. Contact Person's E-mail Address:           | <u>mdsjr@vt.edu</u>                    |                     |            |

**B. Proposed Project**

1. Description (include project size, capacity, and purpose):

The Performing Arts Center project was appropriated in Chapter One under project code 16758 with a \$40 million appropriation of debt authorization. The Performing Arts Center is envisioned to be a 68,000 gross square foot core facility that will replace the existing, aging auditorium in Burruss Hall for hosting performance events and traveling theater companies. This new facility will be located near Henderson Hall and the Squires Student Center on the eastern (town) edge of campus. This location provides an ideal site for these programs: it supports the needed inter-activity of the facility with the resident performing arts academic programs housed in Henderson and Squires; it will foster increased interaction with the Blacksburg community; and it will enable the University to achieve a fine arts precinct for the campus. The building will include a state-of-the-art performance theater with approximately 1,300 seats, including balcony seating, back-of-house-space, dressing rooms, and a fly loft for live theater productions. The actual seating capacity will depend on the final program and site costs.

Virginia Tech is already well known for its scientific, engineering, and technology strengths. While elements of the arts program, such as Theatre Arts, are recognized as strong programs, this project is needed to establish a broad-based humanities and fine arts presence on campus to ensure the academic and program balance expected of a national research institution.

The master plan for the performing arts center includes a display gallery to showcase permanent and traveling art exhibits. The gallery can not be accommodated in the existing scope or budget of the Performing Arts Center project as authorized. The gallery is estimated to require approximately 10,000 additional gross square feet beyond the existing project scope with an estimated additional cost of \$5 million. The gallery is considered a critical element of the university's fine arts program and should be included as part of the overall Performing Arts Center. This request to increase the existing project will bring the total cost to \$45 million and will bring the total gross square footage to 78,000 square feet. The funding plan for the proposed display gallery requires a nongeneral fund authorization of \$5 million to project code 16758, with the increase covered by private funds.

2. In approved Master Site Plan: Yes  No   
If not, explain:

3. In current Strategic Plan: Yes  No   
If not, explain:

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## C. Project Justification

### 1. Programmatic:

The University Unions and Student Activities (UUSA) mission is to complement the academic program of studies and enrich the quality of campus life. Integral to this mission is enriching the social and cultural life of the University community by providing a wide variety of programming, including musical and theater entertainment. The 3,000-seat auditorium in Burruss Hall is the University's single performance theater in which the UUSA scheduled about 200 performances last year. The auditorium has many significant drawbacks that prohibit attracting and staging regionally and nationally noted performers and performing arts events. Visiting artists have complained that the Burruss auditorium facility compromises the quality and therefore the intrinsic value of their performance. Some performers will not return to this facility.

The authorized Performing Arts Center with the gallery addition will enable the university to create a state-of-the-art performance setting to provide a wide range of programs and exhibits that otherwise would not come to the University or the region. An increase in the quality and diversity of performance events and gallery displays are an important element in improving the artistic activity on campus and ensuring a quality, well-rounded educational environment for the students. The proposed increase to add the display gallery is an integral component of reaching the programmatic goals of the arts programs.

The Performing Arts Center supports the University's Strategic Direction 3.1 to "help all students to reach their full potential by providing a multifaceted learning environment." The fundamental purpose of Strategic Direction 3.1 is to build a comprehensive land-grant learning community that supports educating the "whole person" to include all of a student's experiences while at Virginia Tech. The Center will also support Strategy 4.6 to "enhance our preparation of students for careers and their roles as educated citizens by reaffirming the principles of liberal education."

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### 2. Existing facilities:

The approved Performing Arts Center project will replace the out-dated Burruss Hall auditorium facility. The University Unions and Student Activities (UUSA) program schedules performance shows in Burruss Hall auditorium, the single theater on campus capable of handling major performance events. This 3,000-seat, 25,000 gross square foot auditorium is 65 years old. The theater is not adequate for the majority of performance events and traveling venues because it does not have sufficient back-of-house space, direct loading access, lights, acoustical features, efficient seating arrangements, or fly loft. These shortcomings and inadequacies compromise the potential of the UUSA to attract the quality, diversity, and quantity of artistic venues expected by students, faculty, and staff of a comprehensive institution. In addition, the University does not currently have a display gallery with the proper environmental controls, lighting, or display features to exhibit or house delicate artistic works or natural artifacts.

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**D. Options Considered (include as an option delaying this project until future biennia)**

Deferring the project to future biennia was not a selected option because improving the performing arts presence on campus is a top priority for the University and the display gallery needs to be incorporated into the planning and design along with the performing arts theatre. A delay of moving forward with the display gallery would delay the entire center.

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**E. Project Scope Changes:**

The University is proposing to add 10,000 gross square feet to the existing Performing Arts Center component of the project, project code 16758. This space will be utilized as a display gallery for art exhibits.

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**F. Project Cost Changes:**

The proposed increase in scope and square footage to the project has been estimated at \$5 million.

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**G. Project Schedule Changes:**

The proposed increase in scope and square footage to the project will have no impact on the project schedule if approved and incorporated into the project plan at the outset.