



**SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE**

**Senate Bill 987**

**Racing and Community Development Act of 2020**

**February 25, 2020**

**Favorable with Amendment**

**Aminta H. Breaux, Ph.D., President**

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill 987. As president of Bowie State University, I fully appreciate the significant work that went into Senate Bill 987 and commend the General Assembly on its efforts to enhance the racing industry in Maryland and preserve the Preakness©. My interest in Senate Bill 987 relates to the provision that requires part of the Bowie Race Course Training Center to be conveyed to the City of Bowie. The training facility property is located less than two miles from the Bowie State University campus. Bowie State is very much interested in this property.

Early last fall, I became aware of the Stronach Group's interest in potentially donating a portion of the Bowie Racetrack property to Bowie State University as part of the overall plan to strengthen racing and preserve the Preakness© and, quite naturally, I was and remain, interested in such a donation. As Maryland's first historically black college or university, and the only one located in Prince George's County, Bowie State University would benefit greatly from having this property as it would allow us to enhance our academic programs and connect the university to the larger community.

Bowie State needs more land to continue to grow in this ever more competitive higher education environment. The fact that Bowie State is growing our enrollment while so many other universities across the state and the country are experiencing declining enrollment is both something to be proud of and should serve as a reminder of the need to continue to make smart investments. We need to offer our students the same opportunities as our peer institutions, including recreational and athletic opportunities. The Bowie Training Center property would allow us to locate these critical but more passive uses off campus and free up space on the main campus for additional student housing and academic uses. The university would build indoor and outdoor recreational facilities to enhance the experience of our growing student population and to deepen our connection to the City of Bowie and the surrounding community. Our desire is for multi-purpose athletic fields, which we would make available to the local community, consistent with our mission as a public university. We would also pursue innovative community-based initiatives connected to the environment and supportive of sustainable best practices in the areas of water quality, natural resource conservation, and "farm-to-table" programs to complement our academic programs in the

natural sciences. In addition, we would use this property to support our popular Sport Management program. We would also offer academic camps and sports camps along with other summer enrichment activities for families and local nonprofits.

We need to accommodate our growing Army ROTC program. Currently, our cadets have to travel up to two hours from campus, as far away as Virginia, to complete mandatory field training (at a cost of approximately \$9,000 per year) because we lack the appropriate outdoor spaces to meet their needs. This property would be a huge asset for our ROTC program.

The university utilized part of the Bowie race track property for overflow parking for our 2019 spring commencement ceremony which played a significant role in assessing the feasibility of bringing the ceremony back to our campus after years of holding it at the University of Maryland, College Park. This partnership with the owners contributed to our successful commencement, and I am extremely grateful for the owners' willingness to assist the university in this way.

We are proud of our history as a good neighbor and community partner. We would ensure that the neighboring community and the larger community have access to the various amenities this land would afford the university. This is part of our mission as a public university for the public good and we very much want to integrate our historic institution more with the community.

For over 150 years, we have continued to ensure access and affordability to a quality educational experience and with our vision and strategic plan entitled *Racing to Excellence*, the campus community is diligently working to keep pace with the rapidly changing workforce needs. As one of the nation's top HBCUs according to *U.S. News & World Report*, and one of the fastest growing institutions in the state of Maryland, Bowie State University is poised to contribute even more to the region. Our strategic priorities include ensuring the long-term viability of the institution. As a regional economic engine, Bowie State is one of the largest employers in the Bowie vicinity. We want to help create an environment that encourages businesses and organizations to see our community as a vital and innovative place to live, work and learn.

Acquisition of the Bowie Training Facility Property would help us fulfill our public purpose and transform the university from a hidden treasure in Prince George's County to an even larger educational and economic driver in the community. I am pleased to have the support of the Bowie State University National Alumni Association and the Board of Directors of our Foundation, as well as the head of our Army ROTC program. I urge your consideration for Bowie State to receive this gift.



REPLY TO

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
RESERVE OFFICERS' TRAINING CORPS (ROTC)  
BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY  
14000 JERICHO PARK ROAD  
BOWIE, MARYLAND 20715-9465**

January 16, 2020

Dear President Breaux,

I strongly recommend adding more land to the campus of Bowie State University. This addition would benefit the Reserve Officer' Training Corps (ROTC) Program by significantly reducing costs and enhancing training. By reducing costs and enhancing training, the BSU ROTC program will be able to better accomplish our mission of recruiting, training, and commissioning Second Lieutenants in to the United States Army, U.S. Army Reserves, and the Maryland National Guard. With better quality training, we can continue to grow and improve the BSU ROTC program, as well as surrounding Junior ROTC High School programs, to ensure our cadets and students are prepared for the challenges they will face either in the Army or in their civilian professional careers.

Currently, the BSU ROTC program must travel outside of campus to conduct required training to prepare our cadets to be commissioned officers. Due to the limited land on campus to conduct most military training, we typically travel to either Gunpowder Military Reservation (1-hour commute) or Marine Corps Base Quantico (2-hour commute). We use these two training areas approximately 7-8 times a year due to our land constraints on the Bowie State Campus. The ability to train on campus would save the program approximately 2-4 hours of transit time that can be used for additional training or quality of life for the cadets. Additionally, the BSU ROTC program is required to pay for administrative and transportation costs to these locations. These expenses typically cost the program approximately \$9,000 a year to train our 86-cadets.

With additional campus area, we could begin using the campus for our critical training events, reducing the costs to the program, as well as the cadet's time traveling to and from distant training areas. Additionally, the program could reinvest those transportation and land use costs to enhance training for the cadets and build necessary military training aids such as obstacle courses and rappel towers. These enhancements and training aids would better prepare the cadets for other ROTC training, and most importantly, for their careers as Army officers.

In summary, additional land will immensely benefit the BSU ROTC program by saving time, money, and resources that will be applied elsewhere. Please consider ROTC in making this key decision.

If there are any additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me at 301-323-3341 or [wknight@bowiestate.edu](mailto:wknight@bowiestate.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wesley N. Knight". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and "K".

WESLEY N. KNIGHT  
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army  
Professor of Military Science



February 24, 2020

Honorable Bill Ferguson, President of the Senate  
Honorable Adrienne Jones, Speaker of the House  
Maryland General Assembly  
State House  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

President Ferguson and Speaker Jones:

As you may be aware, the Bowie State University Foundation's (the "Foundation") primary purpose is to facilitate fundraising programs and contributions from private (and public) sources to promote and support Bowie State University's (the "University") academic and programmatic goals. As such, I am writing on behalf of the Foundation's Board of Directors to express our strong support for the current proposal being debated before the General Assembly to transfer -- what is commonly referred to as -- the "Bowie Horse Training Facility" to the University. As discussed in greater detail below, we strongly believe that the land transfer aligns perfectly with the University's goals and, most importantly, enable it to enhance program offerings to current students, which is a key objective for the Foundation's activities.

The University has made great strides in recent years. The physical plant continues to improve with the addition of the new Center for Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Nursing building. At the same time, there are still areas for improvement. For example, it is our understanding that a portion of the land will be used to support the University's Reserve Officers Training Corps ("ROTC") program. Currently, ROTC candidates travel over 50 miles to the Quantico Marine base for certain aspects of their training. If the current proposal is approved, the University plans to develop a ropes course which will eliminate the need for students to travel for this key component of their training. Though a new ropes course may appear to be a small thing, the ability to train on campus and minimize disruptions to other academic pursuits will be invaluable to those future defenders of our nation. This is just one worthy example of how the University will use the land transfer to make Bowie State a first-class institution in our great state.

*14000 Jericho Park Rd, Bowie, Maryland 20715  
P: 301-860-4314 F:301-860-4159*

Again, all of the Foundation's programming is dedicated to providing the University with the resources it needs to be successful, and, in our opinion, this current land transfer proposal is an important piece of the overall strategy for success. Thus, in the end, it is our hope that the General Assembly will do its part to help President Breaux and her team as they "Race towards Excellence" and support the land transfer proposal.

Thank you in advance for your attention and consideration of this letter and, if you have questions regarding the letter on any aspect of the role that the Foundation can play in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

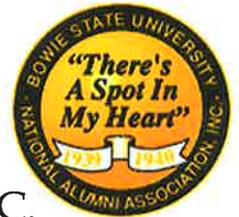
Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gordon Sampson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

Gordon Sampson  
Foundation Chair



BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY  
NATIONAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, INC.



February 3, 2020

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Honorable Bill Ferguson, President of the Senate  
Honorable Adrienne Jones, Speaker of the House  
Maryland General Assembly  
State House  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Bowie Horse Training Facility

Dear President Ferguson and Speaker Jones:

The Bowie State University National Alumni Association (BSUNAA) fully supports all efforts by Bowie State University to acquire and develop the property known as "the Bowie Horse Training Facility" in connection with the plan to keep the Preakness Stakes in Baltimore. Donation of the Bowie facility would further the mission and goals of the University by allowing it to enhance student academic and recreational programs and increase the University's outreach to the community.

BSUNAA encourages unified efforts by the Bowie State University Administration, City of Bowie, Prince George's County and the State of Maryland to maximize the opportunity to make this property available to the broader community in support of programs, facilities and functionality that will allow for uses that support the goals of the University and increase community quality of life.

Sincerely,

*Ricardo C. Mitchell*

Ricardo C. Mitchell, President  
BSUNAA, Inc.

Cc: Honorable Angela Alsobrooks  
Honorable Tim Adams  
Honorable Guy Guzzone  
Honorable Maggie McIntosh  
Prince George's County Delegation  
Dr. Aminta H. Breaux