



Office of the President

**Morgan State University Testimony
Dr. David Wilson, President**

Senate Bill 0841 (*Senator Ferguson*)

Morgan State University - Carnegie Classification - Doctoral University with Very
High Research Activity

Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

March 2, 2022

Favorable

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. We, at Morgan, thank you for the opportunity to share our position on Senate Bill 0841. The summary of the Bill states the following: *“Establishing a goal for Morgan State University to achieve the status of doctoral university with very high research activity as identified by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education by sustaining annual research expenditures between \$50,000,000 and \$75,000,000 and emphasizing research on issues that disproportionately impact communities of color.”*

Morgan State University embraces its mission to serve *“... the community, region, state, nation, and the world as an intellectual and creative resource by supporting, empowering and preparing high-quality, diverse graduates to lead the world.”* As we enter the third decade of the 21st century, designating the attainment of the R1 Carnegie Classification as a goal focuses our efforts on enriching and diversifying the scope and magnitude of our scholarship and creativity. Striving to attain R1 status requires reaching specific indicators shared by institutions who similarly seek or hold this status.

Why Morgan is pursuing Carnegie R1 Classification

The Carnegie Classification® has been the leading framework for recognizing and describing institutional diversity in U.S. higher education for the past four and a half decades. The U.S. News and World Report strictly maps its categories to The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education and are used for rankings and grant eligibility. Carnegie listings strongly shape how government officials, independent analysts and academic groups perceive more than 4,600 post-secondary institutions in the United States. To many, the Carnegie R1 classification is the pinnacle of higher education.

Since America's founding nearly 250 years ago, after each major crisis has come a period of innovation, ingenuity, and progress – often driven through investment in, and access to, higher education. During the Civil War, the development of Land-Grant universities came by way of the Morrill Act of 1862. However, institutions that provided training and education of blacks were not included in meaningful ways in those early efforts. A second Morrill ACT of 1890 was needed to bring about inclusion of institutions that educated the children of previously enslaved people. After the Second World War, in 1950, came the establishment of the National Science Foundation (NSF) to build powerful American research universities whose mission was “to promote the progress of science and advance the national health, prosperity and welfare of the nation.” HBCUs have only received tokens in research investments resulting in no HBCU being classified by Carnegie as R1.

Today, African American communities are disproportionately impacted by three (3) intertwined crises: health disparities (e.g., COVID 19 pandemic), sustained multi-generational economic disparities, and persistent police brutality and structural racism. Morgan's goal to achieve R1 status fully supports and embraces its role as Maryland's Preeminent Public Urban Research University to more fully address issues that disproportionately impact communities of color. Rising to the R1 classification will enhance Morgan's stature to serve as the premier Anchor Institution to the City of Baltimore, and beyond.

The State of Maryland currently has long had two R1 Universities (the University of Maryland College Park and Johns Hopkins University -- each having more than \$1B in annual research expenditures) and, until a couple of weeks ago, three R2 institutions (UMBC, Morgan, and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore) having less than \$10M, \$20-30M, and ~\$75M in annual expenditures. However, UMBC was classified as R1 by Carnegie in mid-February. So, we at Morgan know the path we must travel to reach this classification in the coming years. We use our path to achieving R1 Status as being unique and do not plan to compete with College Park, Hopkins, or UMBC in the Research Expenditures domain. We have developed a “digital twin” of the process that Carnegie uses to assess and rank universities and see a way forward to R1 Status with research expenditures of around \$50M-\$75M on a sustained basis.

While Morgan will certainly increase STEM-related research being conducted across its Science, Technology, and Engineering domains, a special emphasis will be placed on research across all of Morgan's Schools, Centers and Institutes that address the social and behavioral sciences needs of inner Baltimore and other urban communities in the State, Nation and beyond.

New Centers at Morgan will be focused on:

- Crime Reduction
- Health Equity
- Climate Change Effects and Mitigation
- Equitable AI and Machine Learning
- Educational Disparities
- Cybersecurity and the Internet of Things, to name a few

In moving into the very high research classification category, Morgan intends to remain true to its unique mission. We intend to do the following:

1. Use a balanced strategic approach to Doctorate, R&D, Post Doc and Faculty Metrics.
2. Strategically diversify Morgan's PhD program portfolio - especially in Social Sciences.
3. Enhance R&D grants across the university - especially in non-S&T R&D.
4. Incrementally and strategically increase new faculty hires over 10 years.
5. Increase Post Doc Non-Faculty Research Staff to support Faculty instruction and R&D.
6. Provide incentives and support to faculty (e.g., release time, grant writing, % IDC allocation).
7. Streamline grant infrastructure policies, procedures & systems to support R1 goal.
8. Expand Morgan's R&D reach (e.g., UARC, Research Foundation, Partnerships, SCIF Space).
9. Use sub-awardees/sub-contractors to perform selected R&D tasks and increase Morgan's R&D bandwidth and expenditures per year.
10. Link R1 Goal Objectives to the other Strategic Goals. For example:
 - Increases in Doctorates and Post Docs support student opportunity and success;
 - Increases in R&D funding provides student employment opportunities, experiential learning opportunities, and a bridge to advanced degrees & higher paying jobs; and
 - Increases in Doctorates and R&D drive Morgan's economic impact in the City & State.

It is because our vision in becoming a high research institution is to address many of the intractable challenges impacting urban communities in Maryland, and beyond, that we strongly support Senate Bill 0841.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. David K. Wilson
President, Morgan State University