

Budget cuts push building repairs to the wayside

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With deep and extensive budget cuts in the state, the university system has seen its annual funding take a hit. This has resulted in a need to determine which priorities are more important than others. Unfortunately, many buildings that could use repair have taken a second seat to other more important things. Faculty salaries, lower tuition costs, and research investments are just a few of these things thought to be more important than updating buildings.

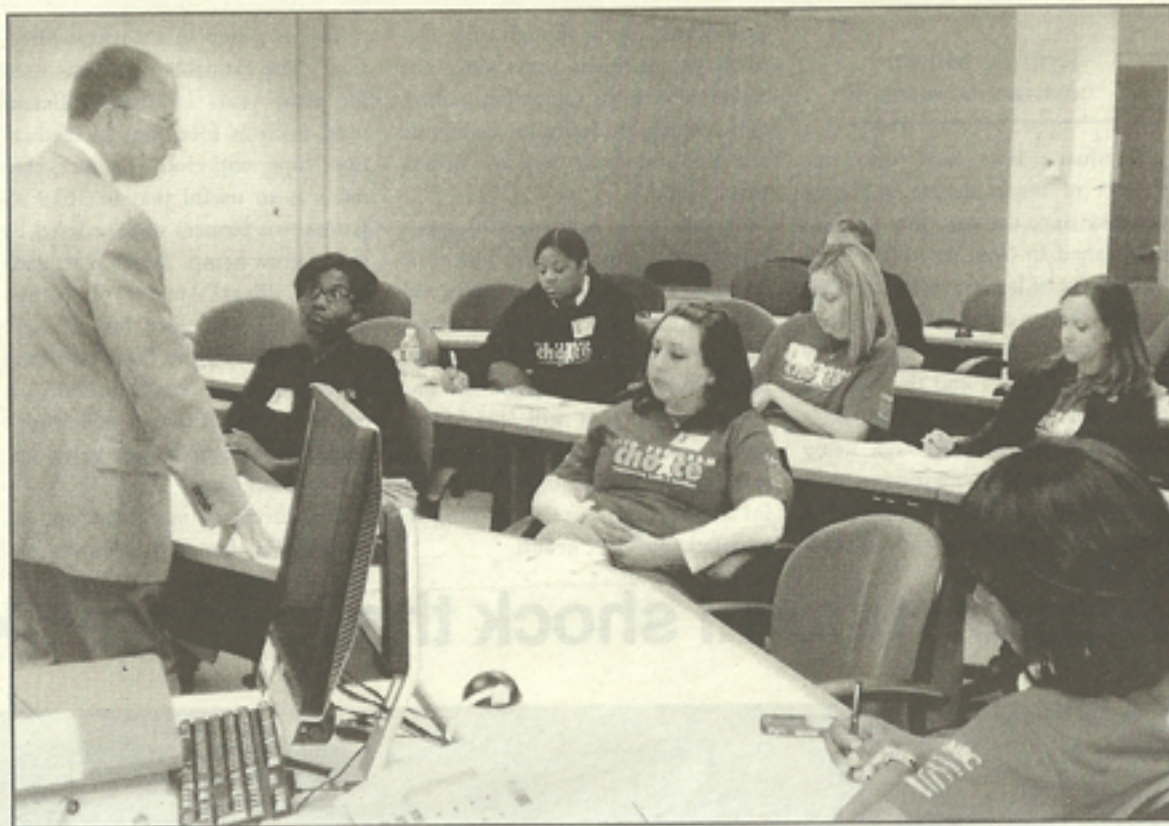
In his February 2009 legislative testimony, Dr. Freeman Hrabowski stated, "With your help, we have been able to expand student access and success by continuing to strengthen the quality of teaching and research, as well as academic and general support for students." Even in this economy, students have been able to achieve a good education.

Are the buildings on campus not important? It really just seems like many other things take a higher priority. I would like to keep tuition costs low (or as low as possible), but I also want to get what I am paying for. Besides the fact that many things (like the gym, for example) are free for students, I am more concerned with getting my

money's worth through my education. That not only means that I want my instructors to be good at their jobs, but I also want my instructors to get paid appropriately for their efforts. After all, they are not only teaching, they are also doing their own research.

Research appeals to companies like NASA and the NSA. Others, including these two, are helping to provide more opportunities to students. Not only do students receive benefits in research and job offers, but also those same companies often help to fund programs offered only at UMBC. I'd like to see the state be solely responsible for what private companies provide us.

So it seems like by taking a hit on the quality of my lecture hall - a lecture hall that has ceiling tiles falling apart (and missing, yikes), I am actually making a greater investment in my education. That still doesn't explain to me why we (as a campus) can afford to start a new construction project. What am I talking about? To my understanding, Patapsco is receiving an addition to the building. I get that it was the result of the Prove It! campaign, but if that's the case and the money is there for that, why wouldn't the money be equally available to renovate the buildings we already have. I find it confusing to be engaging in construction for new build-



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UMBC puts academics over aesthetics. That's right, our university is like that nerdy kid with the bad acne that no one talks to that always gets straight A's.

ings for students who are not even here when the lecture halls are crumbling. It seems that the university might have its priorities mixed up.

I guess overall it's a matter of thinking about what's most important right

now. We have to ask ourselves: do we want the advantages of a research institution with great instructors, or would we rather sit in brand new chairs in our dorms with nice new walls? As fun as that would be, I would quickly notice

how terrified I would be to find that, after I graduated, my potential value to employers was not optimal.

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