



Belmont Abbey College Receives \$9 Million in State Funding for New Performing Arts Center

Belmont, N.C. (October 9, 2023) – Belmont Abbey College receives \$9 million in funding from the North Carolina General Assembly in its 2023-2024 budget towards the total cost for the construction of a new performing arts center. With the help of this investment, the college can begin to plan for the construction of a new performing arts center which will allow the college and the surrounding region to enjoy theater, musical performances, art exhibitions, dance, along with other educational and cultural events in a beautiful, welcoming, first-rate facility.

"The Performing Arts Center at Belmont Abbey College will greatly enrich the lives of the people in our community," said NC Senator Brad Overcash. "I am proud of the \$9 million appropriation to create this important community resource." NC Representative John Torbett echoes this sentiment, stating, "I am extremely proud to be a part of the building of Belmont Abbey College's success through the building of a world-class cultural destination. This performing arts center will assist in growing the talents of our youth as well as presenting the talents of professional artists. I am especially honored to have played a part with so many others in support of the Abbey."

The construction of a fully outfitted performance space will provide opportunities for theater and stage productions, as well as dance competitions, art exhibits, and conferences, making Gaston County a desired destination for large, high-quality events and performances.

The project promises to be a major economic development agent for Gaston County and will provide new opportunities for students and the community alike. Gaston County Manager Dr. Kim S. Eagle has expressed support for the project, stating that "The new performing arts center would directly connect to the County's adopted strategic plan by supporting two of our own strategic focus areas: Economic Development and Planned Growth, and Recreational, Cultural, and Life-Long Learning Opportunities. Taken together, our community strategic plans and visions would directly benefit from the addition of this community asset and would advance our goals to provide a warm and welcoming community that is the premier destination to live, work, and play in the Charlotte region."

Chris Peek, President and CEO of CaroMont Health, has also emphasized the economic benefits of the new facility, stating that "this new facility will not only support students in their quest to learn, grow and perform, but will also serve as a major economic development agent for Gaston County and the region." Patrick Mumford, President and CEO of the Gaston Business Association (GBA) shares a similar viewpoint: "The GBA recognizes Gaston County's artistic and cultural assets, such as the proposed performing arts center on the campus of Belmont Abbey College (BAC), are essential to sustaining economic growth. We are encouraged by the recognition of this facility's ability to address arts events and performance needs of not only BAC, but also those of the broader Gaston arts community."

The college launched its \$100 million Made True capital campaign earlier this year. As part of this campaign, the college hopes to secure additional philanthropic support from alumni, parents, and the broader community for the new performing arts center on campus. President Thierfelder remarked, "This project helps realize the college's mission to bring the true, the good and the beautiful to as many people as possible and thereby culturally enriching the state of North Carolina and beyond."

The Abbey will be developing a Community Leaders' Advisory Committee to give input for the study, programming, and conceptual design for construction of the performing arts center. The committee will solicit and collect input from the college's constituents and other subject matter experts in the community to formulate recommendations that will be developed into a report that will include conceptual drawings and suggested programming in the Center.

About Belmont Abbey College: Founded in 1876, Belmont Abbey College is a private, Catholic baccalaureate and liberal arts institution. Our mission is to educate students in the liberal arts and sciences so that in all things, God may be glorified. Guided by the Catholic intellectual tradition and the Benedictine spirit of prayer and learning, we welcome a diverse body of students and provide them with an education that will enable them to lead lives of integrity, to succeed professionally, to become responsible citizens, and to be a blessing to themselves and to others. Our beautiful and historic campus is conveniently located just 10 miles west of Charlotte, N.C., and is currently home to more than 1500 students. For more information, visit <https://belmontabbeycollege.edu/>.