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October 3, 2024

To: City of Wilmington, Finance and Economic Development Committee  
Chris Johnson, Chair

From: Community Education Building  
Linda Jennings, CEO

Re: Responses to Committee Questions

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## **Background**

### **The Community Education Building**

The Community Education Building (“CEB”) was established in 2012 after Bank of America donated the former MBNA Bracebridge IV building to The Longwood Foundation. Living up to its history of increasing access to education, the Longwood Foundation created CEB as an independent entity, and transformed the space into a home for K-12 schools with an emphasis on providing equitable opportunity and world class public education for Wilmington’s children.

Today, CEB is an educational ecosystem that holistically integrates programs and resources for students and their families, ensuring that every student has an equitable opportunity to succeed. At the CEB, an array of comprehensive services are co-located in one building, including ChristianaCare Health Services, Family Resource Center services, life coaching and resources for families, Student Advocate one-one mentoring and navigation support, Delaware Guidance mental health services, Network Connect grass roots community organizing, Summer Collab out of school time programs, Delaware Institute for the Arts in Education supporting student and teacher outcomes through the arts.

CEB also serves as a hub for the entire family. Our Family Resource Center offers a food pantry, behavioral health counseling, benefits navigation, case management, workforce development, and parent education. This model leads to deeper family engagement in their children’s learning and allows schools to focus on teaching and learning. Everything we do is in furtherance of our ultimate measurable outcomes of seeing families thrive and students succeeding one year after graduating from high school.

CEB currently serves over 1,100 students in grades K to college attending schools in Wilmington’s central business district, many of whom are coming to school one to two grade levels behind and facing two or more adverse childhood experiences. Ninety-five (95%) of our K-12 students are African American or Hispanic, 70% live in Wilmington. Approximately seventy-five percent (75%) are Medicare eligible, and many reside in areas where 40% of the population live well below poverty level and only 8% of the reported households are two-parent households.

## **The Bridge—Project Description**

In 2021, Bank of America returned to the Longwood Foundation and CEB, Corp. with an offer to donate a second property, Bracebridge II. Over a three-year period, CEB has developed the concept of The Bridge through extensive communication with partners, Widener University Delaware Law School, Delaware State University, University of Delaware and multiple community organizations including Delaware Health Equity Coalition and others. The Longwood Foundation has funded this pre-development, proof of concept effort at a cost of more than \$500,000. The Bridge project is strongly supported by our academic and community organization partners and is feasible, if required capital funding is made available.

Development of The Bridge will require substantial renovation of the existing Bracebridge II building to convert office, bullpen, and meeting spaces into classrooms, laboratories, faculty facilities, and common areas. Existing building infrastructure—HVAC, fire suppression, elevators, and access points—will need to be updated and modified according to anticipated tenant activity/requirements and local code for educational structures. Dining, library, and information technology infrastructure will need to be added. The parking facility will need to be updated to accommodate faculty and staff usage. Tenant finishes, reflecting the individual institutions will add branding that will set The Bridge apart from all other academic institutions, because it will be the only facility in the country that combines a law school, an HBCU, an R1 land grant university, and community serving organizations focused on social justices, public health and economic advancement, specifically targeting the BIPOC community. Targeted academic institutions who are under Letter of Intent (LOI) to participate at The Bridge include Widener University Delaware Law School (entire school), Delaware State University (College of Public Health and Nursing, Early College and other programs), University of Delaware (Associates of Arts Program and other programs).

The Bridge, with its projected 2,600+ FTE student, faculty and staff activity, has been designed intentionally to serve a greatly needed educational and community revitalization mission. Opening of The Bridge immediately reduces Wilmington's commercial office vacancy rate from its current level of over 25%. Student and staff service and housing requirements will stimulate local retail and residential demand. Targeted community organizations will provide badly needed public health and social engagement services to local residents. The mere presence of the involved population will have a re-energizing effect on downtown Wilmington. Ultimately, The Bridge is part of a broader Wilmington "Campus Corridor" redevelopment vision encompassing the Central Business District from the Bracebridge complex to the Riverfront building now owned by DSU. The broader vision is to buy and renovate additional properties, greatly expand educational programming, and drive the revitalization of downtown Wilmington.

## **Responses to City of Wilmington, Finance and Economic Development Questions**

### ***1. Please provide details of total project costs, hard costs and soft costs.***

Total project costs have been updated to \$59.9 million and escalated to reflect a Fall 2028 project opening. Hard cost estimates, now at \$38.9 million, are based on industry standard costs for renovations of the magnitude envisioned to convert the Bracebridge II building into a center for higher education, estimated at approximately \$155/sf. This number has been reviewed by consultants Grow America,

experts in adaptive reuse finance projects, and the local architectural firm Tevebaugh Architecture. Soft costs of \$5.8 million, are estimated at 15% of hard costs.

Sources and Uses	
<b>USES</b>	<b>Total</b>
FMV Real Estate	\$10,000,000
Acquisition	\$0
Hard Costs	\$38,906,000
Soft Costs	\$5,836,000
Contingencies/Reserves	\$5,229,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$59,971,000</b>
<b>SOURCES</b>	
Corporate Providers <sup>(1)</sup>	\$10,000,000
Foundation & Other Grants <sup>(2)</sup>	\$21,000,000
State of Delaware <sup>(3)</sup>	\$10,000,000
City of Wilmington	\$10,000,000
New Castle County	\$5,671,000
Individual Donors <sup>(2)</sup>	\$2,300,000
Crystal Trust	\$1,000,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$59,971,000</b>
(1) Includes Bank America Corp	
(2) Includes consolidated funding from Longwood Foundation following State's provision of \$13 million in funding for YDC project.	
(3) Includes State Bond Bill funding.	

### **2. Why is NCC being asked for only \$5MM and the City of Wilmington \$10MM?**

Our request to the City of Wilmington for \$10 million has never altered from our original communications. This amount is critical if The Bridge project is to move forward. Given the impact that this project will have on the City and the County (as well as the state), we have asked each entity to assess their financial priorities and capacity and provide the maximum possible to cover the costs of renovations. The projection of \$5.7M from the County reflects our anticipation of the county's contribution.

### **3. Please describe the commitment for Widener University Delaware Law School to move to The Bridge.**

The CEB has Letters of Intent with Widener University Delaware Law School, University of Delaware, Delaware State University, and Delaware Health Equity Coalition committing to move to and establish operations in The Bridge by Fall 2028, if the required project funding is realized. CEB has committed to completing lease negotiations with each organization by the end of December 2024. Commitment of funding from the Longwood Foundation is also contingent upon receipt of full required funding from public sources and commitment from the three academic institutions to sign leases at The Bridge.

**4. Please provide estimates for the number of jobs and students associated with the project.**

CEB, through Tevebaugh Architecture, has requested projected space requirements from each prospective tenant currently anticipated to operate at The Bridge. The table below reflects responses provided by expected tenants to CEB’s questionnaire.

THE BRIDGE				
Anticipated Student, Faculty and Staff Count <sup>(1)</sup>				
(Withink 3 years of opening)				
INSTITUTION	Students	Faculty	Staff	Total
Widener University Delaware Law School	750	112	33	895
University of Delaware <sup>(2)</sup>	1,200	80	20	1,300
Delaware State University	400	20	10	430
Community Organizations			30	30
Community Education Building (Incremental)			11	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,350</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>2,666</b>
<sup>(1)</sup> Based on inputs provided by respective tenants.				
<sup>(2)</sup> Includes 470 FTE student, faculty and staff already at CEB.				

**Additional expected community impacts by institution.**

**Widener University Delaware Law School “Delaware Law”**

Widener University Delaware Law School “Delaware Law” is deeply committed to developing community partnerships that grow opportunities for our students while strengthening local organizations. We are also committed to building meaningful relationships with our neighbors.

Delaware Law has nearly 13,000 alumni practicing in 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 45 countries and territories across the globe. From judges, politicians, and venture capitalists to community activists and champions of justice in all practice areas among them are current and past presidents of the Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey bar associations and 237 judges, including a sitting Justice of the Delaware Supreme Court and a sitting Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court.

DLS also has a global presence and we welcome foreign-trained lawyers and students from around the world. Our International programs attract students from Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America.

The idea of relocating our Delaware Law School to downtown Wilmington through this project is exciting, particularly when we consider how the Community Education Building has served the needs of K-12 students for more than a decade by empowering families, fostering student success, and supporting quality schools. Extending this passion for excellence into the higher education arena and joining Delaware Law in collaboration with other First State collegiate institutions would take this inspiring initiative to the next level.

Relocating from our current home on Concord Pike into downtown Wilmington would also put our Delaware Law students, faculty, and staff in the epicenter of the Delaware legal community, which is proudly known internationally for the strength of its courts and its hub for corporate law. The school would be situated near Lawyers Row in Wilmington and within walking distance of the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center, which houses state courts, the J. Caleb Boggs Federal Building, which houses federal court, and the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware. Such proximity would allow our law students a new level of access to the daily exercises of the bench and bar, renown for embracing a culture of civility, integrity and mutual respect. We welcome the positive influences that would have on our impressionable students!

A move would also put Delaware Law's six legal clinics, which provide no-cost, critical legal services across the region, into the heart of Wilmington's business district. Our clinics provide a substantial community impact. These clinics will allow local Wilmington residents to gain access to critical legal services where they will meet with student advocates, and the licensed attorneys who supervise the students' work. Specifically, Delaware Law operates the following clinics:

(1) The Delaware Civil Law Clinic (DCC). The DCC provides representation to survivors of intimate partner violence in the state of Delaware. The DCC provides free legal services to survivors of intimate partner violence seeking civil legal protection from abuse, as well as child custody, visitation, and divorce matters. In addition, interns engage in with public policy work which includes legal research, advocacy and drafting legislation. The DCC operates in conjunction with Delaware Volunteer Legal Services, Inc. (DVLS), the pro bono arm of the Delaware State Bar Association. Since 1988, the year the DCC began computer tracking statistical information on client representation in the State of Delaware, law students working with the DCC have assisted over 8,010 Delaware clients, contributing over 50,000 hours of pro bono legal services to the Delaware community, primarily in the family law area at an estimated value of \$6,250,000.00 (50,000 hours at a discounted rate of \$125 per hour);

(2) The Dignity Rights Clinic (DRC). The DRC provides legal services to partners to help shape the law's commitment to human dignity -- that is, the inherent, inalienable, and equal worth of every person, everywhere. Since 2021 DRC clinic students have contributed over 1,428 hours of pro bono legal services to the Delaware community, at an estimated value of \$178,500 (68 students x 21 hours per semester x \$125 per hour).

(3) The Environmental & Natural Resources Law Clinic (ENRLC). The ENRLC provides free legal representation to individuals and organizations confronting environmental issues arising under or implicating federal, state, and local laws. The Clinic handles matters including appeals of regulatory decisions, enforcement of environmental laws, and advising clients on legislative, policy, and educational efforts. The ENRLC is the only provider of legal services focused solely on public interest environmental legal representation in the State of Delaware. During its history, the clinic has provided educational and volunteering opportunities for more than 300 students, who worked more than 25,000 hours, on behalf of more than 250 clients with approximately 40% of this work in Delaware;

(4) Innocence Delaware Clinic (IDC). IDC provides indigent individuals who have been unjustly incarcerated in the State of Delaware for crimes they did not commit. Established in 2020, our

clinic has provided approximately 1,960 hours of legal services. At a discounted rate of \$125/hour, that is an estimated value of \$245,000.

(5) The Veterans Law Clinic (VLC). The VLC serves low-income, disabled veterans and their dependents residing throughout Delaware and in surrounding states for appeals to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. The clinic handles cases regarding disability compensation, needs-based pension, Section 1151 claims (malpractice-type claims against the VA), VA overpayment waivers, and dependency and indemnity compensation (survivor benefit). The VLC began as part of Delaware Volunteer Legal Services in 1997 and became a law school clinic in 2006. In 2010, the clinic began tracking cases and student and staff hours in a cloud-based case management system. Clinic students and staff have assisted approximately 1,000 veterans and their dependents, logging over 106,000 hours since 2010, at an estimated value of \$13,250,000 (106,000 hours at a discounted rate of \$125 per hour). The clinic currently has 157 active cases. Some of the clinic's cases are active for up to ten or more years, due to VA delay and the complexity of the issues and the appeals process.

(6) The Criminal Defense Clinic (CDC). The CDC provides representation to indigent individuals charged with misdemeanor crimes in state court in Chester County. Students represent clients through all phases of cases: initial client interview, investigation, plea bargaining, preliminary hearing, pretrial motions, trial, and appeal.

In addition to our clinical offerings, Delaware Law's community partners are also expected to transition with us to Wilmington. These include Project New Start which "provides a comprehensive cognitive behavioral change/workforce development initiative for individuals transitioning out of state and federal institutions." 100% of Project New Starts' participants reside in New Castle County and 60% reside within the 19801, 19802, 19805 zip codes of the City of Wilmington. Since October 2013,

- 149 justice-involved individuals have been enrolled in the New Start program
- 104 individuals have graduated
- 95 of the 104 graduates have secured employment (91% placement rate)
- 78% of program graduates have not been reconvicted

At the cost of approximately \$36,000 per year to house an inmate in Delaware's prisons, the graduates who are sustaining success are saving the State of Delaware approximately \$3M per year and are now contributing, taxpaying citizens.

Delaware Volunteer Legal Services ("DVLS") is another community partner that operates within our foot print. DVLS "assists clients who are facing critical civil legal issues ranging from family law for victims of domestic violence, adult guardianships, wills-powers of attorney- advance healthcare directives and other areas." Their work is transformative and their presence will help to provide support in a critical area of need for the City.

Finally, we also house the Beau Biden Foundation whose central purpose to protect children from abuse, thorough education, legal representation, and legislative engagement

### **Delaware State University**

Delaware's history of residential segregation and its lasting impact on health is apparent in the ways in which health inequities can be viewed geographically (Knight, McDonough, and Johnson, 2019). According to the researchers a dissimilarity index is commonly used to measure residential segregation, and the City of Wilmington has the highest dissimilarity index compared to New Castle, Kent and Sussex counties. Delaware State University being co-located in the city of Wilmington and offering a high quality and equitable education for individuals assist with improving health disparities for black, indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) while promoting gainful employment opportunities.

Delaware State University is the only 1891 land grant historically, black, college and university in the State of Delaware with a population of more than 60% African Americans and have quality allied health programs that train students to be scholar-practitioners. The nursing, occupational therapy and physician's assistant programs will be offered at The Bridge in Wilmington, Delaware. These programs will assist with producing more healthcare providers and researchers in the city of Wilmington and State of Delaware. Having more healthcare providers in the State of Delaware will assist with addressing the known health disparities, identifying evidence-based prevention strategies and improving life expectancy rates.

### **University of Delaware**

The University of Delaware has been located in the current CEB building for several years through our Associates in Arts program. That program currently serves approximately 470 Delawareans in that location. We are exploring whether an expanded presence in Wilmington, co-located with other higher education institutions, might be a strategic next step in bringing in students and programs that address some of Wilmington's most pressing needs. Our Associates program in elementary teacher education and early childhood education have already joined our general associates in arts program. Further possible expansion opportunities include a program in nonprofit management and leadership and pre-law. Discussions have also started to develop a partnership with Widener's proposed co-located law program with UD's small business development center, to support entrepreneurs in Wilmington and the region.