

Office of the President

MEMORANDUM

January 13, 2016

TO: The Howard University Community
FROM: Wayne A. I. Frederick, President
SUBJECT: Howard University to Participate in the FCC Broadcast Incentive Auction

I deeply appreciate all of the interest expressed by the Howard University community as the University continues to consider options provided under the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Broadcast Incentive Auction. We received many thoughtful comments expressing views on all sides of the issue. After careful consideration, the Howard University Board of Trustees voted to apply to participate in the auction, which will be held in spring 2016, and the University has filed its application.

Howard University holds an FCC issued noncommercial license to utilize broadcast spectrum to operate WHUT-TV. Under the incentive auction, also referred to as the reverse auction, the University has options to 1) sell the spectrum and relinquish its broadcast license; or 2) move from UHF (ultra-high frequency) to VHF (very high frequency) spectrum; or 3) partner or channel share with another television broadcaster. The Congressionally mandated auction is being run by the FCC to help meet the nation's accelerating spectrum needs. Most television stations in the United States are eligible to participate. The FCC reserves the right to accept or decline a station's request as to how it chooses to participate. Applicants are able to withdraw from the auction at any time before they accept a winning bid.

The Board of Trustees considered the many opinions expressed by students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the WHUT Community Advisory Board and its loyal viewers. It examined the University's unique position as a public television broadcaster, the value that WHUT adds to experiential learning opportunities for students and faculty, and the program and public service opportunities provided through WHUT to its broadcast audience. It also considered alternative ways to accomplish these goals and the significant financial opportunity presented with the incentive auction. Over the next months, we will continue to develop an overarching Media and Communications strategy that realizes our content, academic, and broadcasting opportunities.

The incentive auction likely will not conclude until summer or fall 2016. As stated on the FCC website under FAQs on the Spectrum Auction and as required by the Spectrum Act, the FCC "will maintain the confidentiality of information submitted by all broadcast licensees that apply to participate in the reverse auction until the results are announced." Additionally, Section 1.2205(b) of FCC rules provides that until the results of the incentive auction are announced by public notice, all applicants are prohibited from communicating directly or indirectly about their bids or bidding strategies.

Therefore, the University will not provide any further comment about its participation in the auction until the results are announced by FCC public notice later this year. Questions about how the auction will be conducted and the associated timeline should be made directly to the FCC. Information is available at www.fcc.gov.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our mission of academic excellence, scholarly research and public service.

