



Coppin State University
Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget
Response to Department of Legislative Services Budget Analysis
Senate Subcommittee Education, Business and Administration
Senator Craig J. Zucker
February 20, 2020

President's 2020 General Assembly Address

Good Afternoon Mr. Chair, and members of the subcommittee:

On behalf of the students, faculty, and staff of Coppin State University, I bring you greetings and salutations. I also bring you good news about the course in which our university is headed as well as its continuing commitment of service to the City of Baltimore in general, and the West Baltimore community specifically, as an anchor institution in the community. It is my pleasure to testify before you and share some of the wonderful things that are happening on our campus and ask for your continued support.

Coppin State University has played a critical role in Baltimore's history. It is our goal to continue and expand on that critical role far into the future. Historically, Coppin was established in 1900 within the Colored High School by the Baltimore City School Board to prepare African American teachers. Over the course of the 20th century, the school grew from a one-year training course, to a normal school, to a teachers' college, to its current status as a fully accredited university.

Since its inception, Coppin State University has played an integral role within the West Baltimore community. As an anchor institution we are committed to providing access and diverse opportunities for all qualified students while emphasizing our unique role in educating residents of metropolitan Baltimore and first-generation college students. As a Historically Black Institution in a dynamic urban setting, Coppin State University serves a multi-generational student population and provides educational opportunities while promoting lifelong learning. The university fosters leadership, social responsibility, civic and community engagement, cultural diversity and inclusion, and economic development. It is precisely our commitment to our mission and vision to be an exemplar of public, urban higher education that inspires and drives the students, faculty and staff toward excellence on a daily basis.

It is important to note that Coppin State University is an access institution that serves a non-traditional constituency. Our population is multigenerational, ranging in age from the traditional college age student to senior citizens. Much of our population is underrepresented, differently prepared academically and originate from lower income family structures. Given that a significant portion of our population are first generation college students, many are entering

into the higher education setting in ways that dramatically differ from those of the more “traditional” college population. However, despite those differences, our students continuously and diligently strive for and accomplish high levels of academic achievement and excellence.

I have been serving the institution on an interim basis since July 1, 2019. While my initial appointment was to expire on December 31, 2019, I agreed to an extension of that appointment until the University System of Maryland’s Board of Regents hired and appointed a permanent president for the university. On December 2, 2019, the University System of Maryland’s Board of Regents announced the appointment of Anthony Jenkins, Ph.D., as the new president of Coppin State University. Dr. Jenkins’ tenure as the president of the university will commence on May 26, 2020.

Upon my appointment, with an understanding that my tenure would be limited, I set a series of short-term goals. These goals specifically were: increase enrollment, improve retention, enhance the student-centered campus culture, and faculty support.

To those ends, the university has launched a number of initiatives which include:

- creation and staffing a student advising center, separate and distinct from faculty advising but intended as a complement to faculty advising;
- establishment of a Student Engagement System to support student retention and student satisfaction;
- analysis and utilization of a Campus Climate Survey that was conducted in spring 2019 and seeks to identify areas of opportunity for improvement and enhancement of the student-centered campus culture;
- conducting nine (9) customer service training sessions, to date, that have involved one hundred sixty-four (164) employees;
- implementation of our “Finish 4 Free” program designed especially for graduates of the Baltimore City Community College. The program offers eligible Baltimore City Community College graduates an opportunity to attend the university for free to earn a baccalaureate degree;
- continued work on the Percy Julian Building renovation project to allow for the development of a Living Learning Center in the Grace Jacobs Building to further address the need for increased campus housing;
- Working towards completion of the Appointments, Rank and Tenure faculty document;
- full implementation of the post-tenure process for Coppin State University;
- completion of updates to the faculty evaluation instrument and process; and,
- development of a faculty salary equity plan.

Fiscally, the university has made tremendous strides, and over the last four (4) years, significant improvements have been made in the reduction of the state supported Fund Balance

deficit. This reduction, from \$15,812,227 at the end of fiscal year 2015 to \$6,240,867 at the end of fiscal year 2019, represents an improvement of 60.8% in a four (4) year period. This substantial improvement is a testament to the university's sustained commitment to balanced fiscal prudence and responsible management.

ANALYST QUESTIONS AND UNIVERSITY RESPONSES

The President should comment on what steps are being taken to mitigate the enrollment headcount losses in the continuing student population and what steps are being taken to increase overall enrollment.

The university has engaged in a number of initiatives and corrective measures aimed at specifically addressing these issues:

- intensifying admission and financial aid programing for new students
 - We are currently 3 weeks earlier with financial aid packaging than this time, last year
 - We have admitted 1571 for fall 2020 versus 1428, last year;
 - including faculty in efforts to improve enrollment and retention via faculty outreach;
 - implementation of retention ambassadors – staff assigned to serve as an additional resource to students;
 - launching a University Academic Advising Center;
 - hiring a Retention Director who is working with a committee to develop a retention plan for approval by 4/15/20 for fall 2020 implementation;
 - identifying internal and external options to gather data on student progression – such as meeting with Education Advisory Board on how to proactively address the needs of adult learners.
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- Strategies to address enrollment
 - Baltimore City Community College – Mayor's Scholars Program partnership
 - Place on-site staff at Baltimore City Community College to provide information to support seamless transfer for students to "Finish 4 Free" program at Coppin State University;
 - renewing and entering into new Articulation Agreements and Reverse Transfer Agreements with area community colleges to support seamless transfers with

multiple pathways. This includes course alignments and involvement with the University System of Maryland at Hagerstown Regional Higher Education Center to increase enrollment.

- working with Baltimore City Community College for multiple programs
- working with Anne Arundel Community College for multiple programs
- updating current agreements with the Community College of Baltimore County
- working with Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's and Hagerstown Community Colleges;
- serving needs of Adult Learners through Online instruction;
 - partnership with University of Maryland Global Campus to grow the number of faculty prepared to offer instruction through online modality – 59 faculty members have been trained to date;
 - grant and institution funding to support program offerings;
 - piloting hybrid offerings;
- Recruitment Strategies
 - diversifying approach to student services;
 - emphasizing proposals to address needed residential space;
- Graduate Recruitment – The university is actively seeking to hire a new recruiter to support the decrease in graduate enrollment;
- New Programs to support workforce demands (Blackboard Program Viability Study)
 - develop Graduate Programs in STEM – Applied Molecular Biology & Polymer Sciences
 - Post-Baccalaureate Certificates in same
 - Certificate in Entrepreneurship;
- Undergraduate degree in Data Science – launching the program; collaborating with Blackboard and Microsoft to build the curriculum – Harford, Montgomery and Prince George's County Community Colleges are demonstrating an interest in partnering with the university on a seamless transfer to our Data Science Program.

The significant changes in leadership over the last few years have provided additional challenges to preparing and implementing a sustainable plan to increase enrollment. The university has engaged in several initiatives to improve the support and inclusion of faculty and staff on the campus in addressing the low enrollment issue in many programs. There has been an extensive analysis and review of programs with several programs slated for suspension, so that the faculty may focus on enrolling and supporting students in the more popular programs. Additionally, the institution has expanded its transfer student articulation agreements with the

regional community colleges and the University System of Maryland at Hagerstown Regional Higher Education Center to increase enrollment.

With the arrival of a new President (Anthony Jenkins), we anticipate even greater focus on recruitment and retention of students from Baltimore and the surrounding counties, including first-time/full-time students as well as transfer students from the region's community colleges. With the ever-increasing need for graduates in education, nursing and health care support services, Coppin State University should be able to market its programs to help meet those needs.

The President should comment on what actions are being taken to increase the ratio of degrees per 100 full-time equivalent students (FTES).

It is important to note that the university offers a rigorous curriculum supported by all areas of the campus. These programs support enrollment, retention, and graduation initiatives and continue to yield positive results. Selected support programs and interventions designed to support the institution on this upward trajectory include:

- **Cohort Tracking and Outreach** - Housed within each of the four colleges, the **Academic Success Centers** include a staff of retention coordinators who monitor student progression, perform registration outreach, and direct students to support services needed for success. Qualitative evidence supports the need for a process for student outreach and monitoring.
- **Reenergizing Individual Student Excellence (RISE)** – This newly established program will support academic coaching and advising that will enable students to develop the academic skills and study habits necessary to graduate from Coppin State University. The three targeted subpopulations of students include those who: a) have been either on academic alert and/or probation, b) first full-time freshmen whose Cumulative GPA falls below 2.0, and c) those students who are suspended and dismissed and are now eligible to return.
- **Project Hope 2.0** – The program will provide proactive, targeted, and collaborative efforts to improve graduation rates among the near completers enrolled at Coppin State University. The three selected objectives are to: 1) enhance and improve existing outreach strategies to encourage near completers to re-enroll in college; 2) increase re-enrollment rates of near completers by offering an individualized plan of study to facilitate completion; and 3) increase re-enrollment rates of near completers by offering financial aid resources. This project is funded through the Maryland Higher Education Commission's *One Step Away* grant awarded to Coppin State University for fall 2019 implementation and serves cohorts 2014, 2015, and 2016.
- **University Academic Advising Center** –The Coppin State University Academic Advising Center (UAAC) is a centralized academic advising center available to students during the weekday with extended hours. The Center is designed to meet the academic advising needs of students and to support the institution's student retention and enrollment goals.

- **Streamlined Clearance Process** – Upon application for graduation, chairs conduct a curriculum audit and the audited details are shared with students resulting in a plan of action to support program completion.
- **Campus Management CampusNexus Engagement System** – Fall 2019 marks the launch of the implementation phase of the new student engagement system, Customer Relationship Management, through Campus Management. Once in place, this system will transform the way we engage with our students by beginning to track them from first interaction through the enrollment lifecycle. This Customer Relationship Management will allow us to automatically assign success teams to provide personalized interactions with each student. Through robust workflows and individualized communications, we anticipate that we will be able enhance the student experience resulting in increased enrollment, retention, and graduation rates
- **Institutional Aid** – Collaborate with the Financial Aid office to use institutional aid (private donor scholarships and Institutional Advancement financial support) to support students' enrollment, especially for seniors who struggle to meet financial needs to maintain continued enrollment.

The President should comment on how CSU plans to finance the faculty salary equity plan, specifically identifying if additional State funds will be needed to address the salary inequities.

One of the initiatives of President Maria Thompson was to work with faculty to remedy salary inequities that had become manifest over the years and which were having adverse effects on morale and productivity. We have continued that work during my tenure and made it a high priority. A faculty committee has worked assiduously and completed a merit-based plan to begin to address some of the most egregious inequities. That plan requires the expenditure of \$300,000 in continuing funds which will come from internal reallocation. No additional state funds will be needed to implement this plan. Coppin State University has approximately \$357,000 in state supported costs that are in their final year, i.e., FY2020. The removal of these items in the FY2021 budget will more than make up for the \$293,000 projected reduction. In addition, there are \$375,000-\$400,000 of funds that will be freed up in FY2021, for reallocation, to support faculty increases resulting from the work of the Faculty Salary Equity Work Group. In short, resource reallocation and fiscal prudence will fund this initiative. These increases are above and beyond the 1% COLA provided on January 1, 2020 and the projected 2% COLA in January 2021.

Finally, this year, Coppin State University will commemorate 120 years of educating students, maintaining academic excellence and community service, since its inception. Continued and adequate funding and commitment by all parties interested in our success are the

only means by which these preeminent standards may continue to be achieved. Thank you for your continued support.

Mickey L. Burnim, Ph.D.
Interim President
Coppin State University



**February 20 & 26, 2020
Coppin State University
University System of Maryland FY 2021 Budget Testimony
System Office Response**

Page 19 -The University System of Maryland Office should comment on whether CSU’s State fund appropriation is appropriate given its size and mission when compared to other USM institutions and if steps are needed to decrease the ratio of State funds per FTES.

USMO Response:

First and foremost, it is important to note the University System of Maryland fully supports the Governor’s allowance and acknowledges the historical state support from the legislature. The University System of Maryland (USM) shares the state’s vision and supports Coppin State University (CSU) as a vital institution for the City of Baltimore as an anchor institution for West Baltimore.

The student mix on Coppin’s campus is different than most USM’s institutions. Coppin serves differently prepared, multigenerational students, from a variety of cultural and racial backgrounds, and the average age of the Coppin undergraduate student (26) is much higher than most traditional institutions. In addition, the majority of its students are Pell grant recipients, which means there is no family financial resources for higher education. However, as noted in the analysis, graduation rates have improved for the first-time students, and over 60% of the transfers graduated.

The student success improvements could not have been possible without the state-subsidized access to higher education. Coppin serves this low-income community with the lowest tuition rates. As Maryland’s most affordable four-year institution, this accessibility requires an investment in state appropriations because of the limited tuition revenue generated.

Per the analysis, the result of Coppin’s state funding per student is higher when compared to other institutions. However, the proportion of low-income students at Coppin is also higher than most institutions. Coppin’s goal to provide affordable high-quality education requires appropriating the state funds necessary to accomplish the mission.

As stated in Coppin’s mission statement: “The University continues to take the leading role in the economic revitalization of its immediate West Baltimore community. Coppin is an oasis for the educational, economic, recreational, and cultural needs of the citizens of Baltimore and the State of Maryland by sharing access to its facilities and expertise in the academic disciplines, professional fields, and the fine and performing arts.”

Again, the USM recognizes the value of Coppin to Maryland and fully supports the state funds appropriated by the Governor and the legislature to accomplish Coppin’s mission.