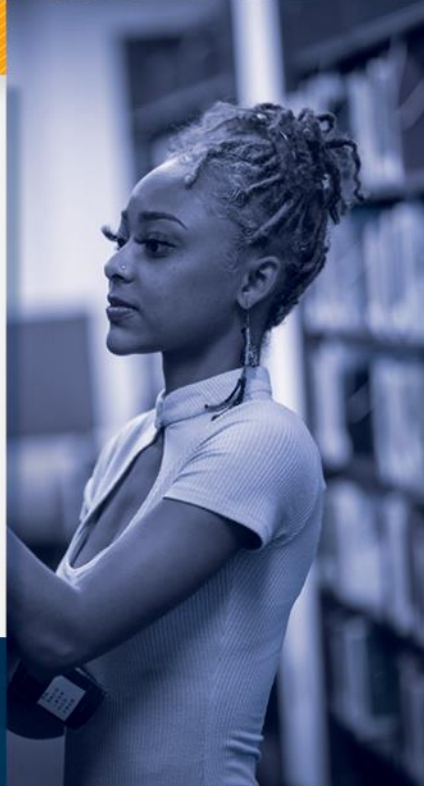





Testimony in Support of Proposed Capital Budget Appropriation for Coppin State University

Presented to
Senate Capital Budget Subcommittee

President Anthony L. Jenkins, Ph.D. MARCH 2022



COPPIN
STATE UNIVERSITY

Coppin State University
Testimony in Support of Proposed Capital Budget
Appropriation for Coppin State University
Senate Capital Budget Subcommittee
Chair: Senator Craig J. Zucker
March 15, 2022

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Senate Capital Budget Subcommittee:

On behalf of the students, faculty, staff, and alumni of Coppin State University, I would like to thank you for your diligent work in support of the University System of Maryland, in general, and Coppin State University in particular. Your unwavering support in serving the educational needs and aspirations of the well-deserving residents of this great State is appreciated. I share your commitment to this advocacy of higher education and, especially, to the advocacy of enabling Coppin State University to continue its mission.



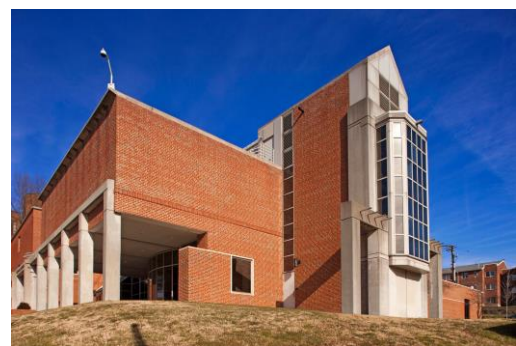
Percy Julian Building Renovation for the College of Business



Coppin's new home for the College of Business expects to open in 2022.

Coppin State University is now moving into the final phase of renovating the Percy Julian Science Building. The Percy Julian Science Building was originally designed as a science building. The university has sought to repurpose the Percy Julian Building with a focus on housing our College of Business, which is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). Our new College of Business will house the Center for Strategic Entrepreneurship, a Data Analytics lab, executive conference rooms, maker spaces, smart classrooms and serve as an economic development hub for West Baltimore.

As you are aware, this project has been fully funded through FY2022, however, due to construction market conditions and site-related issues, an additional \$2.5 million dollars in supplemental construction funds is necessary to bring the project to completion. The COVID-19 pandemic has created construction market conditions that have significantly altered the availability and pricing of many materials needed for completion. Additionally, as detailed in the Department of Legislative Services' Capital Budget Analysis, as contractors began excavation work, conditions were discovered that were not in accordance with the as built/record drawings that were previously on record. As such, it was determined that a reinforcement of the foundation is necessary. This reinforcement, coupled with modifications, and steel additions to the current footings and columns is required. The Department of Budget and Management, and the



Original Percy Julian Science Building on the corner of W. North and Warwick Avenues.

Department of Legislative Services, have determined that the necessary additional construction, along with material price escalations and availability of materials, will delay the project schedule by seven months. Certainly, none of these factors could have been reasonably anticipated. However, at this stage, these unforeseen issues are manageable and correctable, and should not preclude the successful completion of this very aspirational and viable project for Coppin State University, its surrounding community, and the citizenry of the State of Maryland.

Coppin State University greatly appreciates and concurs with the recommendations of the Department of Budget and Management, and the Department of Legislative Services for the inclusion of \$2.5 million dollars in supplemental construction funds to finalize this project.

Residential Hall



Daley Hall is one of two residency halls currently on Coppin's campus.

Coppin State University is developing a new strategic plan which places greater focus on the college student experience. In an effort to enhance the student experience on campus, we are seeking to increase the number of residential students we house. We know that such actions will aid in our efforts to increase student success, enrollment, and retention and graduation rates. This practice is supported by higher education research, at the national and state levels.

Furthermore, Coppin State University is unique in that in the years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the student demand for on-campus housing far exceeded our housing capacity. In fact, between 2015 – 2019, we were unable to provide on-campus housing to nearly 600 students who were admitted to the University, because our housing capacity was at 100 percent. The demand for on-campus housing is increasing for both out-of-state and in-state students, to include many who reside in the Baltimore-Metropolitan area. Students and their parents also know the value in living on a college or university campus. For the



Coppin student studying in Daley Hall.

population of students we educate at Coppin State University, living on campus fosters profound benefits. These include: a greater sense of community, safety, access to resources such as wifi and technology, quiet study spaces, stable meals, and more - all of which provide significant enhancements to sustained, successful matriculation. While campus efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in restrictions requiring Coppin State University to substantially reduce its housing capacity in FY2021, as the deleterious effects of the pandemic continue to dissipate, the university is fully anticipating a return to its 100 percent housing capacity in fall 2022.

It is important to note the addition of residential housing supports our attempts to proactively impact student success, retention, and graduation rates; and therefore, Coppin State University is developing Living Learning Communities that will require our freshman and sophomore students to live on campus their first two years. Living Learning Communities are national best practices and will serve to advance Coppin State University's paramount strategy of supporting students through to graduation. To adequately effectuate this system of Living Learning Communities, additional housing capacity and availability is a requisite priority. These conjunctive actions will serve to strengthen the students' interactive campus life, experience, and engagement. The resulting impact will be significant increases in our growth, and retention and graduation rates.

The University trusts that the subcommittee will continue to recognize the University's compelling need to increase its residential housing capacity. Data clearly establishes that requests for on-campus housing have far exceeded housing capacity. To that end, in light of the University's efforts to increase enrollment, retention, and graduation, Coppin State University would respectfully disagree and oppose the Department of Legislative Services' recommendations as to deleting the \$864,000 dollars of GO bonds from the FY2023 budget. Coppin State University would also respectfully disagree and oppose the Department of Legislative Services' recommendation that the committees consider deauthorization of the \$3 million dollars of GO bond funds authorized in the fiscal year 2022 capital budget bill for this project.

In response to the Department of Legislative Services' articulated reasoning for its recommendations, Coppin State University would respectfully advance the following rebuttal.

The Department of Legislative Services' Budget Analysis Report indicates on page 3, that "...CSU has yet to submit a Part I Program Plan for this project... {and that} no funds may be expended until the Department of Budget and Management has approved a Part I program plan for the project." Coppin State University has completed its Part I programming and will be submitting it by the end of this month. Additionally, Coppin State University's programming Part II will be prepared and ready for submission once Part I has been approved. It should be noted that the Department of Budget and Management has advised the Department of Legislative Services that Part I is expected to be received in March 2022 and reviewed in early fiscal year 2023.

The Department of Legislative Services' Budget Analysis Report further indicates on page 8, that "...the State does not participate in the financing of USM dormitory facilities." However, we wish to remind the committee of the fact that the State has substantially participated in the funding of other auxiliary facilities at Coppin State University in the past. These projects have included the Talon Center and the Physical Education Complex.

It is important to highlight that Coppin State University has a proven track record of educating academically ill-prepared students that many four-year universities in Maryland would not admit. At present, Coppin State University has a Pell-eligible student population of 77 percent, the highest of any four-year university in the State of Maryland. There is no question that it requires more resources, time, and dedication to help Pell-eligible students complete their journey. And while our task may seem difficult to some, we take great pride in transforming these students into scholars and helping them achieve their educational dreams. Their commitment to success is distinctive, recognizable, and phenomenal. Coppin State University is also making progress towards our six-year graduation goal of 38 percent, by 2026. Having reached a six-year graduation rate of 32 percent last year was Coppin's highest graduation rate ever, in comparison to 24 percent four-years ago. Additional housing is crucial in our efforts to foster this trend.

The Department of Legislative Services' Budget Analysis Report introduces a Peer Institution Housing Capacity comparison at page 6. What is not reflected in the Department's institutional comparison is the fact that each of the respective articulated peer institutions referenced in Exhibit 2 of the Budget Report has a higher enrollment, retention, and graduation rate than Coppin State University. This glowing variance, across the board, is directly reflective and attributable to the fact that each of those institutions have higher on-campus capacity. National studies across the nation reveal that colleges and universities with higher commuter student populations have lower retention and graduation rates. As previously referenced, countless studies have concluded that the availability of on-campus residency significantly enhances enrollment, retention, and graduation. A critical analysis, beyond the mere surface façade that is presented by the Budget Analysis' Exhibit 2, bears out the inextricable fact that increased availability of on-campus residential housing yields increased enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. Coppin State University is currently positioned, adequately prepared, and more than deserving of the opportunity to expand its breadth through enhanced enrollment. Increased on-campus residency represents the most viable conduit to achieve this goal.

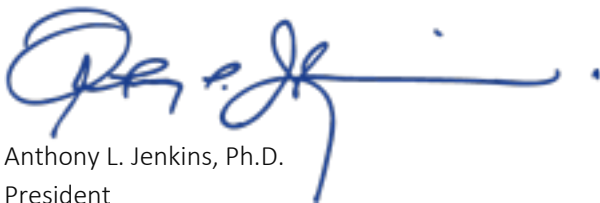
Contrary to the estimation represented in the Department of Legislative Services' Budget Analysis Report at page 7, since the establishment of the University's Science Technology Center in 2015, our freshmen enrollment

in STEM-based disciplines has increased by 84 percent. This cognizable data point directly contravenes the Department of Legislative Services' Budget Analysis Report's assertion that "...growth has not come to fruition." The issue that we face and are working diligently to address is retention. Between 2015 – 2019, our freshmen cohort has increased by nearly 12 percent. However, our retention has decreased at a higher rate; thus, we face a retention issue, not an enrollment issue. We believe increasing our housing capacity, along with several new retention strategies, will profoundly help improve our retention challenges.

Without State funding, the University estimates that annual residential rates would increase from approximately \$6,300 dollars annually to \$9,500 dollars annually, or by 50 percent. This would have a profoundly adverse impact on a student population entering college already facing numerous economic challenges. We believe that increased housing is a sound investment for our state. Coppin State University has an annual economic impact exceeding \$170 million, and over 70 percent of our graduates remain in Maryland, with over 48 percent remaining in Baltimore City after graduation. This is a huge economic win for our state and students. Increasing the residential housing capacity is a cornerstone to the University's ongoing efforts to increase enrollment, retention, and graduation. These factors are critical to the University's mission and its vision. Increased residential housing is a very necessary component in furthering these goals that have overseen and guided our respected institution since its inception in 1900.

Accordingly, Coppin State University respectfully requests a favorable report from this subcommittee adopting the recommendations of the Department of Budget and Management, and the Department of Legislative Services as to the Percy Julian Project. With regard to the Department of Legislative Services' recommendations regarding the Residential Hall project, Coppin State University would respectfully request that this subcommittee allow this project to continue to move forward by adopting and maintaining the funding allowances that are reflected in the Governor's FY 2023 budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Anthony L. Jenkins", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anthony L. Jenkins, Ph.D.
President



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