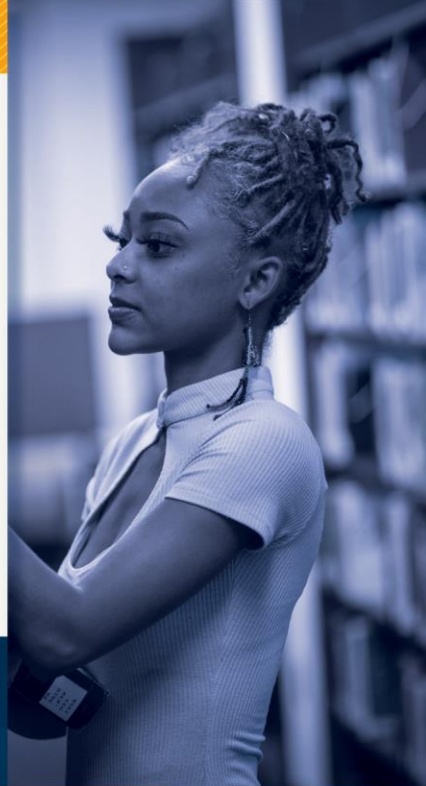


# Legislative Testimony

Presented to  
House Subcommittee on  
Education & Economic Development  
and  
Senate Subcommittee on  
Education, Business & Administration

**President Anthony L. Jenkins, Ph.D.**    FEBRUARY 2022



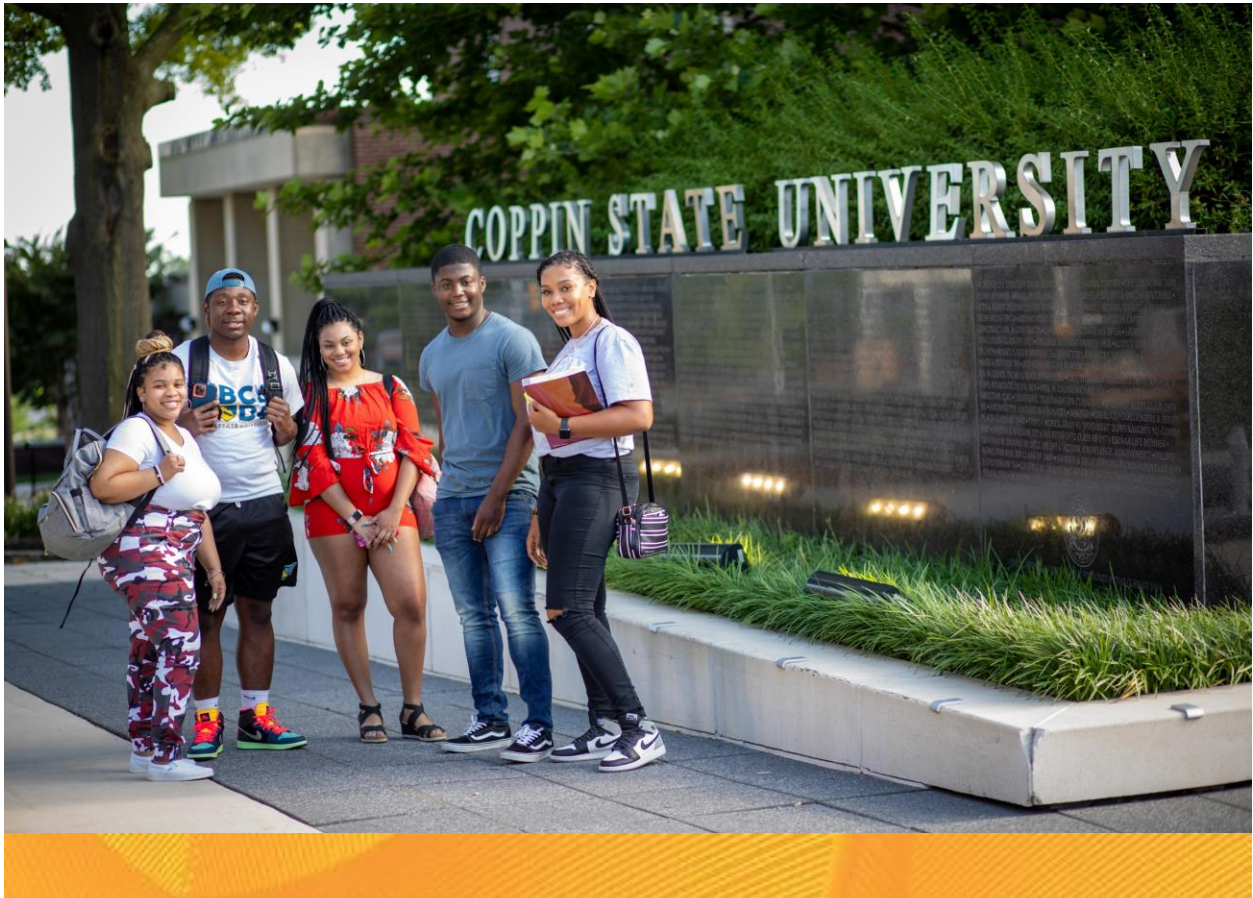


## Vision Statement

Coppin State University seeks to become a leader in urban higher education, recognized nationally for transforming the lives of students from all socio-economic backgrounds.

## Mission Statement

Coppin State University, a Historically Black Institution in a dynamic urban setting, serves a multi-generational student population and provides education opportunities while promoting lifelong learning. The university fosters leadership, social responsibility, civic and community engagement, cultural diversity and inclusion, and economic development.



## Introduction

Despite the pandemic challenges of the last two years, Coppin State University have achieved many historic milestones, from safeguarding our campus community during this global health threat, increasing our six-year graduation rate, improving our national rankings, launching several new high demand face-to-face and online academic degree programs, shattering fundraising goals, increasing alumni giving, expanding our research, improving our financial health, and strengthening our focus on student success. Today's testimony will illustrate our unwavering resolve and commitment, as well as showcase how we are reimagining Coppin State University and forging a future that elevates our relevancy, competitiveness, and sustainability so we can "nurture potential...transform lives" for generations to come.

## Global Pandemic

From the moment, the pandemic hit, Coppin State University illustrated great resiliency and began working to ensure the safety of our campus community. We made thoughtful decisions, true to our principles of shared governance, rooted in data, science, and expert insight. Our comprehensive COVID-19 Task Force and Shared Governance Council conducted thorough analyses of our campus footprint, our physical plant, and teaching and work schedules all with the goal of implementing the best short and long-term safety protocols that would be most suitable for the university. Our comprehensive plan of masking, daily health assessments, enhanced environmental protections, and aggressive testing and quarantine processes became our standard. Also, we built-in flexibility for students, faculty, and staff with varying levels of personal health concerns. Throughout the pandemic, the university's positivity rate never exceeded 1.2 percent, and currently stands at zero. Our collective engagement remains the cornerstone of our success.

## Coppin State University Forward: Expanding Our Academic Portfolio

In developing our academic strategic plan, our academic leadership and faculty launched several new high demand degree and certificate programs that provide pathways to high demand careers throughout Maryland and across our region. The programs include: *Bachelor of Science in Data Science; Master of Science in Health Information Management; Master of Science in Polymer and Materials Science; Master of Science in Applied Molecular Biology and Biochemistry; Upper Division Certificate in Entrepreneurship and Innovation; and Upper Division Certificate in eSports Management.*

In keeping with our mission to expand accessible and affordable education, we are also developing fully online degree programs that will launch fall 2022 and fall 2023; *Bachelor of Science in Management Information Systems (online), Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education Human Development (online).* These online academic programs are designed to support students needing to earn their college degree when and where it is most convenient for them. Establishing our online presences is critical to our growth, competitiveness, relevancy, and sustainability.



## Fostering Translational Research

Our quest to elevate the research arm of the university is a priority that we are focused on and actively working towards. A growing number of federal and state agencies are becoming more aware of Coppin State University's research capabilities. For example, Dr. Yi-Ping Huang of our Department of Teaching and Learning recently secured a \$1.8 million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Education to launch the Center for Inclusive Excellence. Dr. Huang aims to build a model center for preparing and sustaining a diverse teaching force for inclusive excellence in education and the workplace. Of additional significance, the Center will conduct specially designed strategies to recruit, retain, and promote Black male teachers.

## Across all disciplines, faculty are engaging in more grant writing. Last year, we secured \$6 million

in grant funding, from agencies such as the NSF, NASA, MSDE, MDH, USDA, USDOE, and NIH. This is the highest amount of external grant funding secured in the history of our university. To help foster the grow our research and provide more support to our faculty we are expanding our Office of Sponsors Programs and Research.

Understanding the importance that research has on a student's development, we are cultivating our culture of research and experiential learning at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Such an environment will prove significant in our efforts to attract talented students, increase retention, and grow our academic programs. In spring 2021, we established three Centers to foster student engagement and scholarship, and to further advance our research activities. The Centers, include: *Center for Nanotechnology*; *Center for Organic Synthesis*; and the *Center for Strategic Entrepreneurship and Innovation*.

## Growing Coppin State University

There are two major elements to growing our university population; increase the number of students entering the institution and increase the number of students retained. Our marketing team is finalizing our comprehensive marketing and branding plan that will highlight our face-to-face and online academic programs via social media, ad targeting, print publications, radio, and television. We have developed our first ever comprehensive enrollment plan focused on improving our internal admission's processes, expanding our recruitment footprint, strengthening our campus admission's events, developing dual enrollment partnerships with community colleges and high schools, to include our own Coppin Academy High School, secure external assistance to help recruit for our online degree programs, and increasing the number of our competitive merit scholarships.



The university is progressively developing strategies to help students increase their academic performance and decrease their time-to-degree completion. To this end, we are developing our new Eagle Achievement Center (EAC), located in the Parlett L. Moore Library. The EAC will house centralized advising, academic coaching, math and writing labs, career exploration, and other essential student support services needed to better help address our retention.

Another innovative endeavor that we are implementing in an effort to help students decrease their time-to-degree completion will begin in the fall 2022. The Summer Soar initiative will provide students who earn a total of 30 semester credit hours during the academic year, with the opportunity to take up to six credit hours over the following summer for free. Additionally, our Academic Affairs leadership is working to expand both our accelerated degree program options and our credit for prior learning process. In the end, these are but a few of our new efforts to foster a strong student-centered approach to our work.





In spring 2021, we established our Presidential Scholarship. The Presidential Scholarship is the most prestigious merit scholarship awarded by the university, and covers tuition and fees, room and board, and books. Its purpose is to strengthen our ability to target and recruit high performing students and serve to enhance the prominence of the university as a whole. In fall 2021, we enrolled our inaugural cohort of seven Presidential Scholars, and presented them with their Presidential blazer.

Coppin State University is also making progress towards our six-year graduation goal, of 38 percent, by 2026. Reaching 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.



## Coppin State University's Commitment to Affordability

We are keenly aware of the many challenges our students face to earn their degree, working, raising their families, and economic hardships. Therefore, our dedication to supporting our students remains laser focused – and we are expanding the range of wrap-around supports they need to succeed.

At Coppin State University, we believe, education should be equitable, more affordable, and more transformative. Further indication of our commitment to affordability is apparent in the way we are financially helping our students. Despite offering the lowest tuition of any four-year university in Maryland, we early on, determined to help all returning students and newly incoming students, for fall 2021, pay down their tuition. As such, utilizing our CARES Act funding, we provided a \$1200 tuition grant to over 2,000 students, awarding over \$2.4 million in financial support. Coppin State University was the first university in Maryland to provide this level of financial assistance to its students. In addition to this financial support, we also awarded nearly \$3 million in additional institutional merit and need-based aid to support over 860 students.

Furthermore, to assist our students living on campus for the 2021-2022 academic year, we awarded Pell eligible students a \$5000 grant to help cover the cost of living on campus. This historic initiative provided 150 students, a collective reduction in their total loan debt in the amount of \$100,000.

During these uncertain times, we know that financial challenges are not the only concerns facing our students – many of them are also dealing with childcare issues and food insecurities. Therefore, last fall, we opened our childcare center on campus, and are working to standup our on-campus food pantry, this spring.

## Intercollegiate Athletics Soaring

Athletics are an important part of our campus community and plays a key role in enhancing the college experience and lifting the profile of our university. Our student athletes serve as incredible ambassadors of Eagle Nation, and we are pleased to say they are excelling on the field of competition and in the classroom. Our student-athletes earned a mean fall GPA of 3.2 – one of the highest within the MECA conference. Twelve of 14 teams earned a mean GPA of 3.0 or higher, and 19 of our student athletes earned a perfect 4.0.

Each year, as part of the White House Initiatives on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, a select group of students are recognized for their accomplishments in academics, leadership, and civic engagement. This past summer, Coppin State University Women’s Tennis star Christy Turner was one of 45 students selected into the 2021-2022 cohort.



## Engaging Beyond Our Campus



Coppin State University is leading the way, in how urban anchor universities engage with their community. As the only Maryland HBCU with a community health center, we partner with a host of community organizations, to provide health and wellness to their constituents. During the pandemic, we expanded our outreach, utilizing faculty and students from our nationally ranked Nursing program to provide testing and vaccinations to thousands of residents from across Baltimore.

Senate Bill 783, sponsored by Senator Antonio Hayes and Delegate Marlon Amprey, was passed in the Maryland General Assembly, and signed into law by Governor Larry Hogan, to establish the West North Avenue Development Authority. The charge of the Authority is to work in coordination with community residents to create a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy for the West North Avenue area and its buffer zone that seek to address the decades long severe economic depression that has ravaged the targeted area.

The West North Avenue Development Authority is comprised of a host of State, local and neighboring Community Association officials, all with a devout and vested interest in the improvement of the demarcated corridor. The West North Avenue Development Authority is chaired by the President of Coppin State University. Coppin State University is the first HBCU, in the nation, to lead such an urban revitalization effort.

## The Mill on North Avenue

The Mill on North Avenue is a collaborative joint effort between Coppin State University, The Coppin Heights Community Development Corporation, and the Neighborhood Housing Services of Baltimore. “The Mill,” which is immediately adjacent to the university campus, is a mixed-use living and commercial/retail space. It provides affordable housing and will feature a food hall providing various vendors with the opportunity to service the neighboring community. The university’s component role in the project has been to operate as a requisite conduit for the project’s successful SEED funding application. Coppin State University was successful in securing over \$800,000 needed to complete “The Mill” on North Avenue project.



## Keys Empowers, Inc. Project

The University has engaged in a collaborative effort with Keys Empowers, Inc., to establish a multi-use facility, to be run by Keys Empowers, Inc., that will centralize, utilize, and augment the Keys Empowers, Inc. provision of mentoring, youth development, and mental health services to those members of the community that have been disadvantaged and have not had traditional access to those type of services. The university’s component role in the project has been to operate as a requisite conduit for the project’s successful SEED funding application. Coppin State University was successful in securing over \$1.2M to support the project.

## Coppin State University’s Economic Impact

Coppin State University is a valuable economic engine in its community, and our state, generating substantial returns year after year, with talents and skills that help drive the workforce of our state.

- Generating over \$170 million annually in total economic impact for its local and regional economies;
- Over 70 percent of our students, work in Maryland after graduation. Over 48 percent work in Baltimore City, after graduation. This is a huge win for our state and students.
  - 14 percent in Education
  - 14 percent in Health Care
  - 8 percent in Government
  - 4 percent in IT
  - 3 percent in Finance



## Increasing External Investments in Coppin State University

As of July 1, 2021, Coppin State University has secured over \$3.8 million in external funding. This is the highest amount raised in a single year, in the history of the university, and it exceeds the total amount raised in the previous three years combined. The university also made great strides in the growth of our endowment. In FY2021, Coppin State University saw its endowment exceed \$16 million, this is a record high for the university.

## Enhancing our Financial Health

The university has worked painstakingly toward becoming better stewards of its resources. The product of this sustained effort is reflected in the fact that for FY2021, all eight of the requisite indicators provided by the USM Financial Dashboard Indicators for FY2021 showed improvement. Coppin State University was the only constituent institution in the USM to improve in all eight of the financial indicators. Moreover, the university has met or exceeded our fund balance goal for the past five years and is now operating with a fund balance surplus. All these factors represent conclusive data that the university has steadfastly engaged in fiscal prudence and responsibility.

## Experience the Transformation at Coppin State University

In furtherance of sustaining our mission, and seeking to pursue a more progressive path, we are reimagining our university and designing new strategic priorities that will guide our efforts. We will focus on five strategic goals:

- Become a university of choice;
- Improve the holistic development and completion rates of our students;
- Strengthen our brand and reputation as a leader in urban higher education;
- Become a great university at which to work; and
- Enhance our teaching and research excellence

Our sustained commitment of investing in our academics is reaping benefits for our students and faculty.

## FY2023 Operational Budget Request

As an anchor institution, Coppin State University plays a profoundly important role in creating upward mobility for so many deserving students. We educate students that many four-year universities in our state would deny admissions. Coppin has a proven track record of educating traditional and non-traditional students from all socio-economic backgrounds and transforming them into scholars, leaders, and change agents – some serve in this legislative body. Your continued investment in Coppin State University is an investment in residents of Baltimore City, and our state. It is my hope that you view my testimony as a clear indicator that Coppin State University is positioned in right direction.

On behalf of the students, faculty, and staff of Coppin State University, I would like to thank you for your diligent work in support of higher education, in general, and Coppin State University in particular. We share your commitment of advocacy of higher education and, especially, to the advocacy of enabling Coppin State University to continue its mission of educating the residents of Maryland and providing necessary service to the community. Accordingly, we would respectfully request that you adopt the Governor’s budget for FY 2023 and thereby continue to facilitate Coppin State University’s clear trajectory of accomplishment for the greater good of our public.



**1. The President should comment on why a shift was made toward spending more on athletic scholarships and less on need-based aid and the impact that this has had on low-income students.**

**CSU Responses:** There was no shift in the awarding philosophy of student-athletes. However, an adjustment in the cost of living did produce an increase in the amount of athletic scholarship awards. This may have seemed more inflated because we experienced a higher rate of attrition among our non student-athlete population, compared to our student-athlete population.

Due to the pandemic, the US Department of Education allowed institutions to shift federal work-study funds to supplemental education opportunities grants (SEOG). In accordance with this shift, colleges and universities were permitted to award these grant funds to all students, regardless of their work-study status. Coppin State University chose to award the reallocated federal work-study funds, before distributing any institutional aid to our low-income students, which resulted in an increase of total aid awarded to that population. To further support our students, using federal CARES Act funding we provided all returning and newly incoming students with a \$1200 tuition grant.

**2. The President should comment on actions that the University will take should revenue not meet budgeted levels.**

**CSU Response:** Coppin State University's projected revenue will not meet budgeted levels. Considering this, Coppin State University has a developed and implemented proactive processes that allow for more agility and places the university in a stronger position to forecast variances, in real time. Moreover, we have created a contingency plan that includes us taking actions such as implementing a hiring freeze and reducing discretionary spending. Understanding our current position, our budget office will continue to actively monitor actual to budgeted revenue and expenditures, on a weekly basis. We have successfully used this approach to improve the fiscal health of the university, over the last six years. Through January 31, 2022, such forecasting has allowed us to make the necessary adjustments and reduce spending, by \$1.0M, to avoid outpacing our actual revenue.

**3. The President should comment on the university's anticipated auxiliary revenue projections, identifying if those projections are realistic given the continued impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on enrollment and auxiliary service revenues.**

**CSU Responses:** Auxiliary revenue projections are driven, primarily, by room and board revenue. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we took actions that adversely impacted auxiliary revenue. The decision to reduce the density of our campus, during the pandemic, created a decline in auxiliary revenue typically generated by housing, food services, and campus wide activities. Prior to COVID-19, Coppin State University consistently experienced a 100 percent occupancy rate for housing. Based on this trend, we believe our projections are realistic. The expectation is that upon a full return to campus we will generate the level of auxiliary revenue witnessed, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To meet our projections, we are deploying new recruitment tactics to attract more residential students. We are continuing to attract and recruit Baltimore City students. Despite their proximity to campus, we have seen an increase in the number of local students who want to live on campus. We are



also attracting and recruiting more out-of- state students and offering scholarships to incentivize living on campus.

Additionally, the university's offering of innovative academic programs and promotion of living-learning communities will highlight the personal, academic, and holistic development benefits of living on campus.

**4. The President should comment on if there is a breakeven point for enrollment and revenues and, if so, what will happen when enrollment drops below the breakeven point.**

**CSU Responses:** The identification of a breakeven point for enrollment and revenues is a difficult question to address given the number of uncontrollable variables involved in developing such a position. For example, tuition and fee revenues are driven by the enrollment mix of full-time and part-time, in-state and out-of-state, undergraduate, and graduate students. While enrollment strategies can target specific students, it is difficult to predict what the mix will be in any given fiscal year. In addition, Coppin State University has the lowest tuition and fees of all USM institutions, including Morgan State University. As a result, our state appropriation comprises over 65 percent of unrestricted revenues. Given this fact, reductions to our state appropriation, such as the reduction that occurred at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, has a greater fiscal impact to Coppin State University than other USM institutions, and Coppin State University has little to no control over these reductions.

Coppin State University will continue its internal processes of closely monitoring budgeted spending to actual revenues to ensure expenditures do not exceed revenues. This process will be strategically monitored, over time, to ensure there are no long-term impacts to students or the delivery of academic programs. The university's proactive approach to fiscal operations will allow for continued strengthening of financial resources and a solid financial foundation that the university has developed, over the last six years.



**UNIVERSITY SYSTEM  
of MARYLAND**

**University System of Maryland  
FY 2023 Operating Budget  
Coppin State University  
Chancellor's Response to the Department of Legislative Services' Analysis**

**Senate Budget & Taxation  
Subcommittee on Education, Business and Administration  
Senator Nancy King  
Friday, February 25, 2022**

**House Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Education and Economic Development  
Delegate Ben Barnes  
Thursday March 3, 2022**

***Page 22*—The University System of Maryland Office should comment on whether CSU's State fund appropriation is appropriate, when excluding Chapter 41 funding, given its size and mission when compared to other University System of Maryland institutions and if steps are needed to decrease the ratio of State funds per FTES.**

**USMO Response:**

First and foremost, it's important to note that the University System of Maryland (USM) endorses the governor's allowance and appreciates the legislature's historically strong support of the USM's mission and work. Moreover, we share the state's vision of Coppin State University (CSU) as a vital anchor institution for West Baltimore and its people.

The USM is responsible for—and committed to—ensuring that Maryland residents have access to System institutions and to a high-quality education at an affordable cost. CSU is critical to our access obligation.

The student mix at Coppin is different than at most USM universities. Coppin serves differently prepared, multigenerational students, from a variety of cultural and racial backgrounds. The average age of a Coppin undergraduate (26) is much higher than it is at traditional universities, and many of CSU's students must meet full-time work and family

obligations alongside their education. In addition, the majority of CSU's students are Pell grant recipients, which means they have no family wealth to pay for higher education.

As noted in the analysis, despite these challenges, CSU's six-year graduation rate has steadily improved for first-time, full-time students. In fact, its 2014 graduation rate nearly doubles the rate recorded seven years earlier. Additionally, Coppin's eight-year graduation rates for both Pell-eligible and ineligible students surpassed 50 percent.

These improvements in student success would not be possible without state-subsidized access to higher education. Coppin serves its low-income community with the System's lowest tuition rates. It is, in fact, Maryland's most affordable four-year institution. As such, the tuition revenue CSU generates is limited, and it therefore requires an investment of state appropriations.

As the analysis shows, Coppin's state funding per student is higher than it is for other USM institutions. However, the proportion of low-income students at Coppin is also higher than at those institutions. Coppin's ability to provide affordable, high-quality education requires appropriating the state funds necessary to accomplish its mission.

And Coppin's mission *is* important. CSU plays a central role in the economic revitalization of its West Baltimore community. It serves as "an oasis for the educational, economic, recreational, and cultural needs" of Maryland's people by sharing its expertise in academic disciplines, professional fields, and the fine and performing arts.

Again, the USM recognizes the immense value of Coppin to Baltimore, to Maryland, and to its citizens, and fully supports the state funds appropriated by the governor and the legislature to accomplish Coppin's mission.