



Legislative Testimony

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

President Anthony L. Jenkins, Ph.D. | FEBRUARY 2024



COPPIN
STATE UNIVERSITY

Contents

Vision	4
Mission	4
Strategic Priorities	4
University Administration	4
Introduction	5
CSU Forward	5
Using our Expertise to Transform Lives	6
Growing Coppin	8
Commitment to Affordability	9
21 st Century Student Centered University	10
Elevating Eagle Athletics	11
Engaging Beyond Our Campus	12
Student and Faculty Success	13
Coppin's Economic Impact and Value	16
Meeting the Needs of our Campus Through External Investments	17
FY2025 Operational Budget Request	18



Vision Statement

Coppin State University will 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.

Strategic Priorities

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.

University Executive Administration

Dr. Anthony L. Jenkins
President

Mr. Joshua Humbert
Vice President for Institutional Advancement

Dr. Pamela Wilks
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Mr. Steve Danik
Vice President for Administration and Finance

Mr. Derek Carter
Director of Athletics

Dr. Dionne Curbeam
Interim Vice President of Information Technology

Dr. Stephan Moore
Vice President for Enrollment Management &
Student Affairs

Ms. Ann-Marie Waterman
Chief of Staff

Ms. Stephanie Hall
Chief Government and Legislative Affairs Officer

Introduction

Coppin State University's reputation as a highly respected leader in urban higher education continues to grow, and Coppin continues to distinguish itself by combining innovative teaching, experiential learning, service, research, and scholarship to improve the wellbeing and upward mobility of both its students and residents of Maryland.

Coppin is a living laboratory of human relations, and as an anchor university, we view higher education as a public good, designed to improve the human condition ecosystem.

As Maryland's most affordable four-year college or university, Coppin educates the highest percentage of Pell-eligible students. We have an unmatched track record of expanding access and lifting low-income students into the middle-class. Our nationally recognized academic programs in Business, Healthcare, Social Work, Teacher Education, Psychology, Criminal Justice, and STEM attract students from 35 states, including the District Columbia, and 30 countries.

Coppin State University Forward

Coppin State University continues to prepare students for the future. Currently, Coppin offers 64 academic programs which include a doctorate, 14 master's, 34 bachelor's, and 15 certificate programs.

There were three (3) new academic programs introduced in Fall 2023 including the B.S. in Cybersecurity Engineering, the M.Ed. in Teacher Leadership (face-to-face and online), and the Certificate in Nonprofit Leadership. Additionally, with a commitment to expanding access, the university is now offering its existing B.S. in Data Science at the University System of Maryland Southern Maryland Center.

Helene Fuld School of Nursing Reaccreditation

The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) Board of Commissioners acted at its meeting on October 3-6, 2023, to grant accreditation to the baccalaureate degree program in nursing, master's degree program in nursing, and post-graduate APRN certificate program in nursing at Coppin State University for a maximum of 10 years, extending to December 31, 2033.

School of Education Accreditation

On November 9, 2023, the School of Education received notification from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) that they met all seven standards and that the school's accreditation had been renewed for a maximum of seven years.

Using Our Expertise to Transform Lives

Coppin has established ten (10) centers and institutes to support the strategic priorities of the institution. Each center is overseen by a dean, run by a faculty director, and is supported by external federal and state grant and contract awards. The most recent center established is the Charles Schwab Foundation Community Wealth Center, which opened during the ribbon cutting ceremony of the newly constructed College of Business.

The complete list of centers and institutes follows:

1. <i>Community Health Center</i>
2. <i>Center for Artificial Intelligence</i>
3. <i>Center for Nanotechnology</i>
4. <i>Center for Adult Learning</i>
5. <i>The Dorothy I. Height Center for the Advancement of Social Justice</i>
6. <i>Center for Organic Synthesis</i>
7. <i>The Bishop L. Robinson, Jr., Justice Institute</i>
8. <i>Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation</i>
9. <i>Center for Inclusive Excellence</i>
10. <i>Charles Schwab Foundation Community Wealth Center</i>

The Center for Inclusive Excellence (CIE) has been recognized as a national model for increasing teacher diversity while also boosting student success in high-needs urban and rural schools across Maryland. In 2023, the CIE introduced stackable credentials as model Career Ladders for Teachers. As one of the first of its kind, the innovative stackable credentials will help realize the goals of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, offering teachers with both the short-term advantage of earning one or more post-baccalaureate certificates, and the longer-term option of earning an advanced degree with salary incentives and national recognition.

Committed to enhancing the quality of human life, the Center for Nanotechnology's major research focuses on clean energy generation and storage, along with on-going projects in the design and simulation of multi-junction photovoltaic cells for solar energy conversion. The research efforts also involve the preparation of gold nanoparticle-based contrast agents for imaging of cardiovascular disease using X-Ray Computed Tomography (X-Ray CT) and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI).

Through the Bishop L. Robinson, Jr., Justice Institute, Johnny Rice, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Criminal Justice, has garnered national recognition for his research on gun and youth violence. Appearing on CBS with Ted Koppel, Dr. Rice has discussed factors that increase gun and youth violence as well as methods that might modify behavior.

The directors of these centers and institutes, align with our research faculty, and staff have contributed significantly to the growth of our research and grant awards. The percent increase in research and grant awards from FY 2019 to FY 2023 is 1,266%. From FY 2022 to FY 2023, the percentage increase is 153%. The breakdown is below for each fiscal year:



Coppin is also leading in addressing the digital divide that is adversely impacting households throughout Baltimore. The “ConnectEagle Nation” initiative is a collaborative broadband internet pilot program that will improve connectivity and access for economically disadvantaged and underserved communities in West Baltimore. ConnectEagle Nation will serve communities along the West North Avenue Corridor, utilizing a \$3.9 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, to provide resources, training, and access to affordable broadband internet service.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded Coppin with a \$1 million grant to support and train educators to improve overall reading, math, and social-emotional outcomes for school-age children with disabilities in Maryland, including children of color and those who are multilingual. Project POSE (Preparing Outstanding Special Educators) will train and support nearly two dozen aspiring educators as they earn all certifications and credentials needed to teach students with disabilities in grades 1-8 in Maryland.

Growing Coppin State University

The Division of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs has designed a six-point enrollment model intentionally focused on several aspects of our internal framework to increase student enrollment and persistence. On the recruitment end, the Office of Admissions worked collaboratively across the entire campus to strengthen our recruitment process. The recruitment process was deliberately tailored to be more efficient, consistent, personal, and individualized. Other recruitment tools include our participation in the Common App, which highlights Coppin as a university of choice to the more than 1 million college students who complete the Common App annually. In addition, we are implementing the Slate CRM system for recruitment purposes. Slate is the industry-leading CRM platform for Admissions.

As a result of our efforts, Coppin's Fall 2023 entering class represented a 5 percent increase in overall enrollment at 2,101. This reversed a decade decline in enrollment and exceeded the campus and University System of Maryland enrollment goal.

Coppin also worked to increase its presence in high schools and the community to generate more student interest and increase the number of applicants. This led to a 62 percent increase in applications, from 4,115 – in 2022 to 6,668 – in 2023. There was a 67 percent increase in students accepted from 1,841 to 2,904, respectively. Finally, there was an increase in payment of the Enrollment Fee of 278 percent, from 160 students paying in 2022 to 606 students in 2023.

This increase in applications, admits, and increased payment of the Enrollment Fee garnered several areas of growth, including:



A significant focus of our enrollment strategy is to retain more of our students. The campus launched a pilot stop-out recruit back program called “Reimagine Yourself at Coppin” and returned 114 students, who had stopped out in previous years, to Fall 2023 out of 472 students, or 24 percent of the target group.

Our retention and persistence efforts are driven by our Eagle Achievement Center (EAC). The EAC was launched in Spring 2023 and serves as a centralized student support hub with the primary purpose of increasing students' holistic development, academic success, and retention. The services existing in one location allow more proactive use of data to inform early interventions, efficient sharing of information, referrals, and wrap-around consistent support. The outcome has resulted in an historic increase in our first-year, full-time student retention to 74 percent, in 2023, from 57 percent, in 2020.

Coppin State University Commitment to Affordability

By working to maintain affordability, our students graduate with an average loan debt that is lower than the national average, and we are committed to driving down the cost of a quality education even more.

Our Presidential, BGE, Fanny Jackson Coppin and transfer student scholarships are tools we are using to expand access and help families offset the cost of college tuition. We have witnessed more valedictorians, salutatorians and high-achieving students select Coppin as their university of choice, based on our affordability, academic reputation, and economic return on investment.

Last Fall, we launched our “Expand Eagle Nation,” initiative which allows students from more than 30 states and territories to receive in-state tuition. The innovative initiative specifically targets states and territories without an HBCU and provides students access to the culture and rich heritage of an HBCU, like Coppin. The “Expand Eagle Nation” initiative has received several rounds of national and local press for its innovative approach to



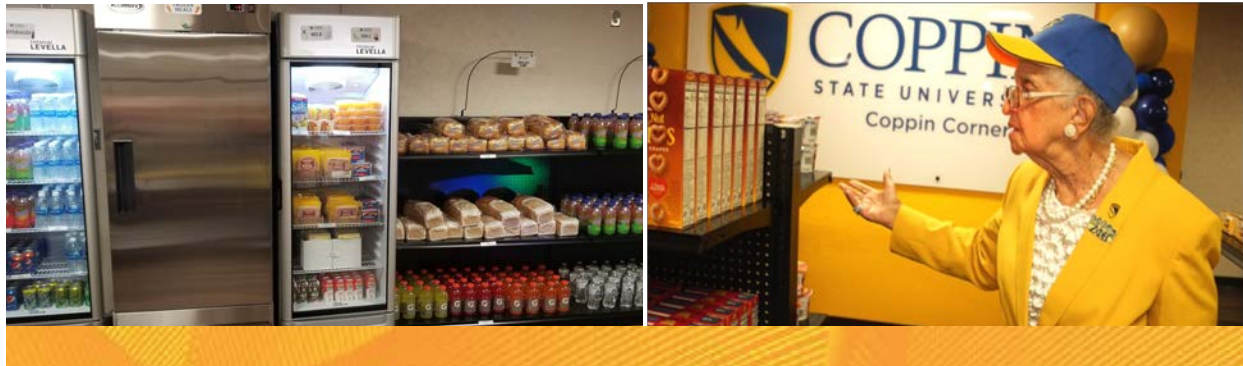
affordability. In addition, it has been leveraged to develop an agreement with the Colorado Community College System, and efforts are underway to mirror the agreement and partnership in California, Massachusetts, and Illinois.

An additional debt reduction strategy is our Summer SOAR program, which provides free tuition for up to six credit hours for students who complete 30 credit hours in the academic year, incentivizing students to stay on track and graduate in four years. Summer SOAR allows students to reduce their time to degree completion as well as save on their college education. In its first year, over 150 students participated in the first summer. The program is managed and executed by the Eagle Achievement Center.

A 21st Century Student-Centered University

A vital element of student success is meeting the basic hierarchy of needs for students. Unfortunately, food and housing insecurities affect too many students at Coppin and hurt their academic performance.

To address food insecurities, we developed “The Coppin Corner.” The Coppin Corner is open to all Coppin students. It is a resource center that provides students access to a wide variety of items including easy-to-eat and prepared meals, but also frozen food, fresh produce, bread, and even hygiene and cleaning items.



Coppin, under the leadership of Dean Parrish-Harris, partnered with the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) to help students facing housing challenges. The Student Housing Initiative, a first-of-its-kind program in Maryland is designed to provide low-income college students with vouchers to live in tenant-based housing.



Elevating Eagle Athletics

Coppin State University is where scholars and champions are made. Competing in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I, Coppin is home to 14 men's and women's varsity sports and has distinguished itself as a university where student-athletics excel in the classroom and on the field of competition. The impact of athletics on campus creates a shared experience for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and fans.

Academically, Coppin athletes have led the MEAC, with the highest graduation rate, for the third consecutive year (2021, 2022, and 2023). Our student-athletes have been honored for having the highest APR in the Conference at the 2023 MEAC Spring meeting. Fifty-nine student-athletes were selected to the 2023 MEAC Commissioner's All-Academic team for having earned at least a 3.0 GPA for the academic year. Our baseball team received its sixth straight American Baseball Coaches Association Team Academic Excellence Award, and women's track & field received U.S. Track and Field and Cross-Country Coaches Association All-Academic Team Honors.

On the field of competition, Coppin's have led the MEAC athletic teams continues to soar. Coppin has brought two consecutive MEAC Championships to Baltimore. The baseball team is the reigning MEAC Champions, defeating Delaware State University and advancing to its first-ever NCAA Regional.

In November, our volleyball team captured the MEAC Championship sweeping Howard University in straight sets. They advanced to the NCAA tournament for the first time in school history.

During the 2022-23 Academic Season, 66 players earned All-MEAC Honors with volleyball team receiving MEAC Coach of the Year, Setter of the Year, and Defensive Player of the Year honors. During the outdoor track & field season, four athletes, two men, and two women, qualified for NCAA East Regionals. Volleyball's Miajavan Coleman was named the MEAC's 2023 Woman of the Year which is awarded to the conference's top graduating student-athlete based on academics, athletics, service, and leadership. The bowling team finished 4th at the 2023 MEAC Championships, its highest-ever finish in the top league of the NCAA in the sport. The softball team, consisting mainly of freshmen, advanced to its first-ever MEAC Championship Game in 2023.



Leading Beyond Our Campus

The West North Avenue Development Authority (WNADA), created through SB 783/HB 1293, brings together state, local, and community partners to develop a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy. WNADA supports the development and approval of a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plan in the target area and buffer zone. The plan brings benefits to residents, housing, neighborhoods, economic development, and transportation (including motor vehicle and pedestrian) in communities located between educational anchor institutions, Coppin State University, and the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). It includes nine neighborhood associations.

Governor Wes Moore provided \$11.4 million in the FY 2024 budget. Of the total \$11.4 million, \$1.4 million was earmarked for operating funds and \$10 million in capital funds to “initiate” and “fund” housing, economic, transportation, and neighborhood development projects for non-government entities.



Student and Faculty Success

Student success serves as the foundation of our work. Several Coppin students have won state and national awards. Annalyse Belton ('24) of Trinidad and Tobago, and Tori Haynes-Harrison ('24), of Philadelphia, PA, were chosen as 2023 White House HBCU Scholars by the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence and Economic Opportunity through Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Annalyse and Tori, both rising seniors, want to address gaps and disparities they have witnessed in the fields of health and education.

Alumna Keylin Perez (BS'23), who is now a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps, was a guest on I Love my HBCU with Tosin Richard. Keylin, who is Guatemalan, spoke about feeling fully accepted at an HBCU, the connections she made at Coppin, and her reign as the 91st Miss Coppin State University from 2022-2023.

The Department of Criminal Justice in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (CBSS) continues to foster a healthy relationship with the Baltimore City Police Department.

Coppin Criminal Justice Department undergraduate student and Vice President of Forensic Science Club, Charron Thomas had the opportunity to complete her internship with the BPD Crime Scene Unit in Summer 2023. Charron experienced a real-world perspective of crime scene investigation, including the processing of crime scenes, the packaging of evidence, and the coordination between the crime scene unit, detectives, and other investigative personnel. She also experienced traditional and advanced crime scene investigative technologies with the demonstration of her supervisors. Charron built a good rapport with her supervisors and received meaningful advisement on the crime investigator position application. With the support from the Criminal Justice Department, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, Charron worked with Forensic Science Club President India Johnson, to have her BPD supervisor Ms. Evona Hebb and Mr. Travis Winder as the guest speakers for Criminal Justice Students Career Day. Charron Thomas demonstrated excellent communication skills, outstanding academic performance, and strong hands-on ability in her respected academic and internship programs.



Coppin Criminal Justice Students Career Day

On November 9, 2023, the Forensic Investigations Club successfully organized a Career Day, providing students keen on Criminal Justice and Forensics, with insights from field professionals. Distinguished speakers, including the Chief of the Baltimore City Forensics Division, Crime Scene Technicians from the Baltimore City Crime Scene Unit, Forensic Scientists from the Maryland State Police Department, Officers, a Crime Analyst from the Criminal Investigations Bureau of the Maryland State Police Department, and a Special Agent from the Inspector General, shared valuable information about their daily roles, internship opportunities, and educational paths. Students actively engaged by asking questions and networking with speakers who share their career interests.

Five Coppin State University Criminal Justice students and recent graduates had the privilege to work at the Baltimore Police Department as interns, as part of a paid internship pilot program for students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and joined Chuck Wexler, Executive Director of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF). Through this innovative partnership, our students spent the summer working in the Baltimore Police Department, learned about police operations, and offered suggestions, such as how Baltimore can be improved. Our students were identified to be critical to advancing the policing profession in a manner that reflects diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

The criminal justice students were Albert D. Johnson, Jr. ('22), Kayla T. Key ('22), De'Shawndra J. McDonald ('22), Wesley Rice ('24), and Jasmine S. Slide ('21).

Additional Criminal Justice Department students had the opportunity to intern with BCoPD this academic year. Four students, including undergraduate students Shawnee Ronyak, Sam Mensuphu-Bey, Wesley Rice, and graduate student Juanita Richard interned at BCoPD, Precinct One, Recruitment, Forensic Photography and Fingerprints divisions, respectively. During the internship, students had the opportunity to learn real-world policing and forensics.

One student, Sam Mensuphu-Bey, was interviewed by Baltimore local TV channel WJZ regarding his internship experience. During his internship, Sam helped to plan, and coordinate hiring events alongside his supervisor and attended and coordinated recruitment events within Baltimore County communities. He managed and revamped BCoP Recruitment Unit's Social Media Presence. The largest project that Sam worked on was planning a Baltimore County Police Recruitment event at New Town High School which was his old high school.



The BCoP internships provided Sam Mensuphu-Bey and other criminal justice students with the necessary skills needed in the workplace, helped them to build their resumes, and gained professional feedback from field professionals. Students also demonstrated their ability to advance the local policing profession.

Coppin Faculty Shaping the National and State Narrative

Coppin faculty are renowned leaders in their respective fields of academic study. As a result of their reputations and effective engagement they have been elected to regional and national leadership roles; thus, positioning them as major decision-makers and policy influencers. A few are highlighted below:



Dr. F. Michelle Richardson

*President, North American Society for the Sociology of Sport
Member, Board of Directors, Commission on Sport
Management Accreditation*



Dr. Ron Williams

*President and Chair,
Urban Manufacturing Alliance*



Dr. Oulwatosin Olateju

*Appointed by the Honorable Governor Wes Moore
Co-chair, MD Commission on Public Health*



Dr. Mona Calhoun

*President, American for Health
Information Management Association*



Dr. Danita Tolson

President, NAACP Baltimore County



Dr. Johnny Rice

Board Member, Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences



Dr. Melissa Buckley

*Appointed by the Honorable Governor Wes Moore
Member, Maryland's Commission on Caribbean Affairs*



Dr. Charlotte Wood

Past President, Maryland Nurses Association

Coppin's Economic Impact and Value

Relevance to local workforce needs and related job placement continues to be the strongest evidence that Coppin is fulfilling its mission and providing a high return on investment to the state, region, and beyond. On average, the University awards 450 undergraduate and graduate degrees annually, with 70 percent and 50 percent of graduates remaining in the state of Maryland, and Baltimore City, respectively. These Coppin alumni address important workforce and societal needs such as the opioid epidemic, many who obtain a Master's in Addiction Counseling provide direct assistance to residents within the local community and other parts of Maryland. Similarly, several education graduates teach within the Baltimore City Public Schools System. The School of Education graduates boast a 100 percent pass rate on the PRAXIS II Certification examination. Coppin's Helene Fuld School of Nursing was voted number one by Maryland students, according to Nursing.org. Graduates of the Helen Fuld School of Nursing also continue to pass the NCLEX, annually, at rates of 75 percent, or higher, and fill healthcare professions across the state.

A study conducted by GradReport, a national research organization, assessed Maryland's 4-year colleges and universities based on the median alumni earnings from the first year after graduation for each program to data from the same programs at other universities. Coppin was ranked number seven among the state's 4-year institutions.

For every \$1.00 in state investment, Coppin generates an additional \$4.00 in direct expenditures. We infuse over \$200 million annually in total economic impact for local and regional economies. This figure includes direct spending by Coppin faculty, staff, academic programs and operations, and students attending the institution. In addition, Coppin generates 1,431 director and indirect jobs for the local and regional economy.

Coppin has several Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with local businesses and higher education institutions that demonstrate fulfillment of the mission. Coppin's Ticket to Work program helps students who receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) return to work. The program provides job readiness skills to disabled and blind individuals and, through a collaborative process, valuable internship and practical training opportunities for students enrolled in the Rehabilitation Counseling Program. Ticket to Work is part of an official Employment Network with the Social Security Administration.

The College of Business partnered with Open Works to become an internship host and partner of economic development. Undergraduate students from Coppin's College of Business mentor young people on the basics of business administration. Faculty within the College of Business participate in research experiences with students at the university and members of the community.

Meeting the Needs of our Campus through External Investments

Our commitment to support our students throughout their collegiate journey is unwavering. We understand the needs of our students and campus community. We are also aware of the budget challenges before us. Our Division of Institutional Advancement is working to meet our growing need and help to continue our momentum.

This past fiscal year, we achieved a historic milestone, raising over \$6 million in external funding. These funds will support student scholarships, one-time projects, athletics, and faculty research. We also made tremendous strides in growing the university's endowment. Over the past three years, we have increased our endowment by 34 percent.



Enhancing Our Financial Health

Coppin State University continues to progress in strengthening the fiscal foundation of the university. Coppin's annual external financial audit is part of the overall USM audit. As such the "clean" audit opinion of the USM represents all constituent Universities. Over the last eight fiscal years, Coppin's Total Fund Balance has increased from \$3.2 million to \$25.8 million. The fund balance is the excess or deficit of the year's revenues less expenditures.



The President should comment on the high number of vacancies and the efforts to fill them.

As of February 15, 2024, Coppin State University has 63 vacant positions; down from 76 in December 2023. Although we are making progress filling our positions, it has been slow and concerning. If these vacancies continue, they could create a potential impact on teaching, learning and the support services we provide our students.

Like many colleges and universities, Coppin entered the pandemic with vacant positions that we were trying to fill. The pandemic has only exacerbated our recruitment matters, and as it did the entire landscape of higher education. Therefore, altering the traditional manner in how faculty and staff approached their work. Post-pandemic it has become increasingly difficult to recruit candidates across every division of the university. For example, we have lost IT workers because we could not compete with current market salary demands and flexible remote and hybrid work models. Many faculty became comfortable teaching online, during the pandemic. Post-pandemic they have sought to permanently transition their teaching modality. From a mental health and well-being perspective, we saw senior faculty and staff members apply for retirement, and new faculty and staff request “unreasonable” accommodations. Furthermore, there is a declining pipeline of talent seeking these positions. And while these challenges are not unique to Coppin, all these factors have contributed to the vacancies we currently have.

We understand this challenge is not going away anytime soon, so we are continuing to assess and expand our recruitment efforts to include: a review of current vacancies to explore combining positions, broaden our position posting options across more publications, better use of social media and professional online hiring platforms, professional listservs and national associations career centers, placing salary scale information in job postings, increasing our offerings around professional training and development, and expedite the hiring process. As president, I believe the steps we are taking will better position us to navigate these challenges effectively and strengthen our efforts to attract the right talent for Coppin.

The President should comment on the progress of the committee. The President should commitment on CSU's approach to the HEERF grants and any policies that the institution has or will implement to ensure that financial aid programs are not used improperly prior to the completion of the committee's work.

A university-wide scholarship committee was established as the result of a comprehensive review that revealed inconsistent processing, vetting, and posting scholarships to students' accounts. The committee is composed of representatives from various divisions across campus.

The committee is also responsible for developing policies and implementing controls that ensure the administering of scholarships is fair, timely, consistent, and fosters better coordination, communication, and efficiency.

The committee's work is ongoing, and their recommendations are due at the conclusion of the spring semester, with a goal of full implementation for Fall 2024.

Under the CARES Act, Coppin State University was awarded \$13 million in Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds. Based on mandated requirements from the U.S. Department of Education, \$6.9 million of these funds were earmarked as student grants, and we were required to disburse these funds to students based on their enrollment status as a full-time and/or part-time undergraduate and/or graduate student. After administering the \$6.9 million in accordance with the government mandate, we still saw students struggling with life's hardships (i.e., tuition, books, job loss, rent, medical situations, etc.). We then made the decision to use our HEERF institutional funds, \$6.1 million, to award each student a one-time \$1,200 grant. Coppin was the first institution in the state to take this action, and others followed.

It is important to note, Coppin State University followed the guidelines provided by the federal government related to the distribution of supplemental grant funds for students. In one specific section of the guidelines, it reads "The Secretary does not consider these individual financial aid grants to constitute Federal financial aid under Title IV of the HEA." Hence, we concluded, there is no requirement to follow established criteria for distributing student aid. In addition, the Department of Education provided this language "HEERF-student share dollars are to aid students for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to the coronavirus; this is different than a change in a student's financial need." At Coppin, we believe this language further differentiates these funds from financial aid dollars.

The pandemic was a global crisis that required leadership, and sound decision-making in real-time. As president, based on the language above as well as other guidelines provided by the federal government as it related to HEERF Funds, I am of the opinion our decision to award these funds in the matter we did was within the permissible guidelines and was not dependent upon other financial aid criteria.



COPPIN
STATE UNIVERSITY

BE
MORE.

2500 West North Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21216

www.coppin.edu