



## **President Neufville – STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY**

### ***“Leading Change for a Better Coppin”***

University Day Address- August 15-16, 2013- Talon Center

## **STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY**

Good morning and welcome back to the start of a new academic year at Coppin State University!

I trust that everyone had a restful summer and that you are rejuvenated and ready to embrace the incoming class of 2017 to ensure that our new and returning students are ready to succeed and persist towards graduation.

When I came to Coppin just seven months ago I stated that my time here would be limited to 18 months, and while I am a man of my word, I also believe in seeing a task through to completion. It is in this spirit that I am honored to accept Chancellor Kirwan and the Board of Regents appointment to serve as your President for two-years. And I thank you the Coppin State community for your trust and confidence in me during this transitional leadership period.

Just as you have entrusted me for this important task, I have assembled a stellar team of professionals who I trust and value. Together, working with the entire university, we are leading the way towards a new Coppin.

Although you will hear from them later, I want to take a moment to acknowledge our newly appointed Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Sadie Gregory and our new Vice President for Administration and Finance, Mr. John Spinard.

Other members of the President’s Cabinet are here and I’d like them to please stand. I just mentioned our Provost Dr. Sadie Gregory and our VP for Administration and Finance. Mr. Doug Dalzell – Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Dr. Franklin Chambers – Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Ahmed El-Haggan – Vice President for Information Technology, Mr. Derrick Ramsey – Athletic Director, Ms. Luwanda Jenkins – Chief of Staff, Ms. Francine Stokes-McElveen – Senior Advisor for Legal Affairs. Ms. Sherie Johnson, Ms. Daphine Miller-Clarke and Ms. Poetri Deal.

I also want to take this opportunity to introduce the new Principal for Coppin Academy, and a Coppin State graduate Ms. Aisha Almond, who comes with impeccable credentials and a promise to increase the number of Coppin Academy graduates matriculating to Coppin State.

We are in the process of change as evidenced by the past 8-months. In life change is a constant and we are on a continuum...a ladder on which we are constantly climbing to reach new and different heights. At various rungs the trajectory may be steeper requiring an extra push, renewed energy and strength to persevere. You have been resilient and you have persisted for 113 years.

And in those 113 years Coppin has established its rightful place as a significant institution in this community. Coppin is regarded as the teacher education training ground for African Americans in education throughout Baltimore at a critical time in our civil rights history and as such, is largely credited with creating "Baltimore's Black middle-class." Coppin can take pride in providing access to higher education for multi-generations within families.

When we say Coppin, people immediately think of our stellar Nursing program, an emerging Criminal Justice program which bears the name of Bishop L. Robinson the first African American Chief of Police for Baltimore City. They think about the Social Work program, the Business School Program; and of course there's the Basketball legend that echoes throughout the local landscape.

These are some of the things that resonate at the sound of the name "COPPIN." They sound good but are we living up to these past accolades. Will our traditions define us now and in the future?

My charge as President is to provide leadership that will revitalize and move Coppin from a culture of dependency to one of interdependency. A culture that will enable us to be mission focused--learning from the traditions of the past and embracing the demands and expectations of the future. To do this, I'm excited about your enthusiasm for coming together as a campus to embrace and implement the change that is needed to produce better results for Coppin and reclaim its reputation as a significant institution of Higher Education in Maryland.

As a servant leader I believe that good leaders are first and foremost good listeners and followers who practice inclusion and collaboration. Our policy and practice of inclusion must and will therefore embrace the concepts of shared governance. However, it must be understood that shared governance requires leadership and accountability, but ultimately responsibility resides with the President & CEO.

Shared governance also requires listening so upon joining Coppin, I embarked on a series of listening sessions to learn as much as I could about Coppin its culture and challenges. Much of what I heard underscored the reality that "CHANGE" is needed in order to stabilize and move Coppin forward.

This was also the conclusion of the Special Coppin Review Committee and the Board of Regents who have accepted the Coppin Implementation Plan which we began executing over the summer. I will provide a status update on the Implementation Plan later on the University Day agenda.

For now I want to provide a synopsis of the past year in review:

Because so many of us here at Coppin have made the choice to embrace change and are committed to working together to produce better results for Coppin, I can stand before you today and say that we are in fact making significant progress and we are moving in the right direction.

As we began the 2013 Academic year we were faced with a number of challenges as highlighted by the Legislative auditors, our State Legislators, the USM Board of Regents and our various constituents.

Number one on the list was our ongoing operational deficit. I am proud to report that as a result of everyone working together, we were able to reduce our spending. Thanks to the leadership of our Budget and Finance and Controller's Departments, we ended FY 2013 under budget and stopped the cycle of yearly deficits. Other accomplishments include improving our energy efficiency on campus which resulted in a 22% energy reduction, totaling \$500,000 in annual utility costs savings.

We broke ground to begin construction on a new Science and Technology Building that will transform the south end of our campus as well as the surrounding community.

We restructured our Academic Enterprise to efficiently focus on high performing, high demand programs and majors. We have eliminated several undersubscribed courses and dropped underperforming majors. We have integrated graduate programs into their respective departments.

Instead of six-schools we now have four-Colleges which are positioned to greatly elevate our academic offerings and stature. The College of Business, The College of Behavioral and Social Sciences and the College of Health Professions have recently cleared critical accreditation hurdles.

We recognized the graduating class of 2013 at Coppin's Spring Commencement for succeeding in having the highest number of class members with GPAs exceeding 3.0 in recent Coppin history.

We continue to provide experiential learning opportunities for many students as well as study abroad experiences to produce graduates who can compete in the global market place.

The graduation rate for our student athletes is 75%, the highest on record for Coppin and the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest graduation rate in the MEAC conference. Numerous CSU honors students were accepted and offered scholarships to several prestigious graduate schools including; Drexel Law, Univ. of Maryland Law School, Johns Hopkins, Loyola College and Loma Linda School of Medicine, to name a few.

Our Division of Student Affairs is making real progress in preparing our student for leadership and life-long success. Our Center for Career Services facilitated a record number of internships to prepare CSU students for today's workforce. Internship opportunities have increased by 20%. Student Leadership on campus is on the rise. This past year, (58) CSU students completed the Charles B. Wright Leadership program and are officially certified student leaders.

We've made improvements in our food service operation with the addition of ARAMARK as our new vendor; and I understand the students in our SASA summer program gave the new food service an enthusiastic "thumbs up."

In addition to providing more internships, leadership training and better food service for our students we continue to live up to our reputation for cutting edge IT services by providing Microsoft Cloud services, and offering our students free access to web apps from anywhere on campus. We also launched Coppin's first Mobile App-EagleMobile.

Speaking of firsts, our Division of Information Technology and our College of Business joined forces to host the first HBCU Connect Summit which was sponsored by Diversity in Higher Education and PEARSON. Several HBCU Presidents and Provosts attended the 2-day summit held in Baltimore and on our campus.

Coppin's Office of Institutional Advancement surpassed the goal set for FY 13 by raising \$2.3 million, the highest amount raised in any single year at Coppin. Alumni giving generated over \$130,000, an increase of 62%. We are just beginning to scratch the surface of our fund raising potential for Coppin.

#### So what's on the horizon starting this fall?

The most challenging issue for us is increasing our 6-year graduation rate, while at the same time maintaining an optimum student enrollment. And what is that number? My projection for 2020 is 5,000 students. There are two basic premises to achieve this.

1. Identify the barriers
2. Develop appropriate strategies to achieve growth and acceptable graduation attainment.

My recommended approach is to organize teams that can identify and effectively address the barriers which affect four areas.

1. Recruitment contact with prospective students through to the application stage
2. Application process through to admission
3. The point of admission through actual enrollment and attendance
4. Attendance through to attainment and completion

While it seems like so much of our focus has been on Coppin's challenges, I continue to be inspired by all the positive things that are part of Coppin's past, present and future. So now is the time to embrace a new attitude and spirit. A rise in ATTITUDE raises the ALTITUDE so that we can soar like the Eagles we are. Each of us must become advocates and ambassadors for Coppin!

There's an expression that says "If you speak it and put action to words you can achieve it." So I am inviting the entire campus to come together under the banner of "COPPIN PROUD" to lift up our current traditions and start new ones. To celebrate our success and traditions several significant events will help us launch our Coppin 2020 Vision.

First is our Convocation on September 11<sup>th</sup> and I look forward to joining all faculty members and as many members of the staff and student body as possible for this annual Coppin event to open and bless the new academic year.

It is important for us to embrace our traditions but not allow our traditions to hinder our expectations for achieving excellence. It is my understanding that there has been no official celebration of Founders Day in recent years, therefore, we are planning to re-introduce the occasion of our founding through an annual celebration. So, in addition to Convocation we will honor our Founder-Fannie Jackson Coppin on October 15 and 16.

We are a people of faith and therefore we must engage our local faith based community. We will start by hosting a Prayer Breakfast as one of the events during Founders Day celebration which will begin an annual observance.

We continue to be challenged by a lack of participation and spirit at CSU sporting events. Let's turn this around by showing our support and pride by increasing attendance at Coppin home basketball games. We will designate a special home game for each of our 4-Colleges and have faculty and students come out and cheer our teams on. We will also get our Administrative Departments in on this as well.

Our Human Resources Department and Student Affairs Division will lead Spirit Week and various Student events to create excitement throughout the campus. Institutional Advancement has an aggressive plan to increase Alumni involvement and giving. We must get behind this effort and collectively reach out to our alumni to make sure we have them on our radar. And as faculty and staff, many of you know of alumni who are doing well and can give back to Coppin in many ways. We need your help to identify and reconnect with alumni who are local as well as those who are out of state. We need their support and involvement.

I am more than optimistic about our future. The issues are not insurmountable. Our Success lies in our ability to attract, retain and graduate students. We must be mindful that improving student services is the essence of what we do to ensure student success. I am calling for a new commitment from all of us to actively recruit, retain and graduate students who can be productive citizens. Recruitment and Retention is everyone's job. Each one of us plays a role in this area which is so crucial to the viability of every university.

I am reminded of a quote by Frederick Douglass that speaks to our situation today at Coppin. *"We are one, our cause is one, and we must help each other if we are to succeed."*

The things of value that uniquely define Coppin far outweigh the challenges that are holding us back. By working together we will succeed in leading Coppin to new horizons and secure its future as a vibrant university in the state of Maryland.

I am proud of Coppin..... I am proud of our students..... I am proud of our faculty and staff..... I am proud of our legacy..... I am proud of our mission.....I am proud to serve as your President..... I AM COPPIN PROUD!

Thank you