COPPIN STATE UNIVERSITY

TESTIMONY TO THE
Maryland General Assembly

PRESENTED BY
Mortimer Neufville, Ph.D.
President, Coppin State University

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2014
**Coppin at a Glance**  
*(Fall 2013)*

- Total Enrollment: 3,383
- Undergraduate: 86%
- Total Female: 75%
- Total Full-time: 70%
- Non African-American: 10%
- Average Age: 28
- Adult Learner: 40%
- Maryland Resident: 87%
- Baltimore City Resident: 67%
- (All Students)
- Out-of-State/International: 10%
- Pell Grant Recipients: 70%
- Average SAT (New Freshmen): 877
- 2ND Year Retention Rate: 65%
- All Students (2011 Cohort)*
- 6-Year Graduation Rate (2006 Cohort)*: 20%
- Bachelor’s Degree Attainment Rate of Transfer Students: 40%
- Licensure Examination Nurses Pass Rate: 87%
- Licensure Examination Education PRAXIS Pass Rate: 76%

*As reported in the State of Maryland 2013-14 Managing for Results (MFR) report.*
Powering Maryland Forward

Good afternoon,

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee:

On behalf of the faculty, staff, students and alumni, I am pleased to report on Coppin State University. I remain grateful for the continued support we have received from the Maryland General Assembly. I thank both the Governor and the General Assembly for their strong commitment to higher education and for recognizing the important role that the University System of Maryland (USM) plays in fueling the State’s economy and workforce as well as enhancing the quality of life for Maryland’s citizens.

Mortimer Neufville, Ph.D
President
Creating Culture Change to Move Coppin Forward

In June 2013, Coppin State University embarked on an aggressive effort to turn the institution around. A campus-wide Implementation Plan team at Coppin, with support from USM, has mobilized around a renewed sense of mission and urgency, which has resulted in actions needed to create momentum and set change in motion at Coppin. The CSU Implementation Plan calls for an intensely choreographed sequence of 50 actions, 25 of which were completed by December 31, 2013, with the remaining actions to be executed by June 30, 2014. Without question, implementing change is always challenging. Changing culture and practices that have held the institution back for so long is difficult, but not impossible.

The CSU Implementation Plan focuses on 3-main goals:
1. Increasing the student graduation and retention rates
2. Strengthening academic programs
3. Improving financial stability and administrative operations

I am pleased to report that real change is occurring at Coppin. True transformation is underway, which is showing encouraging signs and producing tangible results and accomplishments in alignment with the Plan’s primary goals:

Accomplishments Tied to Goal 1:
Increasing Graduation and Retention Rates

- **Implemented intensive academic advising** to provide a dedicated faculty advisor to every enrolled student to enhance matriculation

- **Developed dual-enrollment programs** with Coppin Academy High School and with two community colleges to increase transfer students coming to Coppin

- **Launched a new marketing campaign** to increase positive visibility and awareness of academic programs, restore Coppin’s reputation and to support the admissions and recruitment effort
Coppin’s New Marketing Campaign
Digital Billboards, Transit & Print Media (Fall/Winter 2013)
We are at the halfway mark in bringing the CSU Implementation Plan to fruition. Much has been accomplished with more to be done. With the continued support of the entire CSU campus, the USM and the Board of Regents, we will remain focused in our efforts to bring about the change needed to sustain momentum for Coppin to soar for years to come.

**Accomplishments Tied to Goal 2:**
**Strengthening Academic Programs:**

- **Restructured academic enterprise** from six schools to four colleges with the elimination of two deans and five department chairs to create a more efficient management and delivery of academic programs

- **Successfully secured reaccreditation from Middle States Commission on Higher Education** (November 2013)

- **Expanded STEM at Coppin**, broke ground on a new STEM building, named a STEM Coordinator and established a STEM Center

**Accomplishments Tied to Goal 3:**
**Improved Financial Stability and Administrative Operations**

- **Appointed new vice president for administration and finance**

- **Balanced CSU’s budget for FY13 and FY14** with a fund balance. On track to balance FY 15 budget

- **Reduced personnel costs by 35 net positions** and implemented a hiring freeze

- **Conducted mandatory customer service training** for staff and faculty to improve delivery of service

- **Updated critical operational and governance policies campus-wide**
Helping Maryland Achieve Its 55% Educational Attainment Goal

USM and its member institutions are making impressive gains toward achieving the state’s goal of having 55% of adult Marylanders attain college degrees, which echoes President Obama’s 2020 Goal for America to once again lead the way with the highest proportion of college graduates in the world.

Coppin State University, with its student population comprised of 71% working adults with young families, plays an important role in providing access and opportunity for a growing segment of Marylanders. The ability of working adult learners to achieve degree completion is essential to the Powering Maryland Forward -55% state-wide college completion goal strategy, and Coppin remains committed to ensuring that no Marylander is left behind.

Progress to Degree Initiatives at Coppin:

The major challenge faced by the University is increasing the graduation and retention rates of students. In addition to the administrative interventions and actions mentioned in the Implementation Plan accomplishments, there are a number of successful programs that are having a positive impact on Coppin’s ability to increase, retain and graduate students while also succeeding at closing the achievement gap between African-American first-time, full-time degree seeking freshmen at CSU compared to non-African-American students at other USM institutions.

Summer Academic Success Academy (SASA)

The Summer Academic Success Academy (SASA) is a comprehensive, summer residential program designed for first-time, full-time students enrolled directly from high school. SASA is developed to help incoming freshmen successfully make the transition from high school to college. The program aims to provide academic development, personal growth, social/cultural enrichment, study strategies, academic planning and advising. Major program elements include supplemental instruction, specialized workshops, learning communities, tutorial services, cultural events and mandatory on-campus housing.

“SASA was an eye-opener, a program where you discover independence and learn how to manage academic responsibilities.”
Khristiaynna Wright

“Having an extra month to get introduced to the staff and campus was helpful. I felt confident knowing what to expect from my professors.”
Blake Evans
Freshman Male Initiative (FMI)—Encouraging the Retention of Male Students

While improving the persistence and graduation rates for all students is extremely important, we expanded our efforts to encourage the retention of men at the University. We launched the Freshman Male Initiative (FMI) to address the specific challenges that plague not only CSU but colleges and universities throughout the nation—the retention of African-American men. The program, now in its fifth year, pairs first-time male students with junior and senior male students. These upperclassmen serve as mentors and meet with their mentees 12-15 hours a week through study sessions and social networking. Groups often meet for team and relationship-building workshops and participate in various community outreach activities.

The College of Health Professions’ Living-Learning Community

The Living-Learning Community was created in 2011 as an educational experience based around a specific academic theme, which integrates instructional learning and residential community living. This program is designed for entering first-year and transfer pre-nursing students who desire to live on campus. The program provides nursing students a unique opportunity to live and study with fellow dedicated nursing and pre-nursing students who attend block schedule classes for English, biology and nursing as well as first-year classes in the residence hall. A service-learning component enhances the living-learning experience for the students while promoting the development of civic responsibility and awareness. In addition, students develop leadership skills through academic and social activities while building relationships with faculty and staff.

SASA, FMI and the Living-Learning Community continue to generate positive student retention results and suggest that CSU’s best-practice based programs are very effective. For example, while the retention rate for the overall first-time student population in 2013 was 60 percent, SASA participants were retained at a rate of 66 percent, FMI participants at a rate of 80 percent and living-learning community students at a rate of 83 percent (figure #1)
Notable Success on Closing the Achievement Gap

The University has closed the gap between graduation rates among African-American males and African-American females. As part of its achievement gap initiatives with the USM, Coppin continues to monitor success among selected comparison groups. Last year, a gap of 5% remained between males and females. Now the gap has closed to 0% (actual is -5%). (Figure #2) Success is attributed to programs and strategies such as the Freshman Male Initiative and First-Year and Second-Year advisement strategies employed throughout the academic community.

The gap also narrowed between freshmen and freshmen transfer students from 14% to 12% although the cohort size from fall 2007 (555) was larger than the previous fall 2006 (494) cohort. The University will continue to implement best practices toward transfers in an effort to continue to close the gap among this group of students by improving successful matriculation and by expanding collaborative partnerships with the community colleges.

Coppin will continue best practices such as the Summer Academic Success Academy (SASA), the University College (First-Year Experience Program), the Freshman Male Initiative (FMI), enhanced General Education and program-level assessment, the College of Health Professions’ Living Learning Community, technology leveraging, and will continue contributing to the State’s STEM Initiatives.
**NCAA Program**

In Fall 2012, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) chose CSU among one of only six universities nationwide to participate in the Limited Resources Institutions Grant Pilot Program, a three-year grant valued at $900,000. This program will enhance the academic support services provided to student-athletes by increasing the number of advisors and tutors available as well as enhancing our ability to monitor the academic progress of student-athletes. The grant also provides opportunities for student-athletes to take courses during the summer and winter semesters and supports faculty enrichment and peer mentoring programs. One unique feature of the pilot program will be the creation of mobile “hot spots” or satellite computer labs so that student-athletes will have continued access to technology while traveling.

As a result of this grant, Coppin State’s graduation success rate for athletics increased from 68% to 75% from 2012 to 2013. The second year retention rate for freshmen athletes between 2012 and 2013 is 87%. The overall retention rate for all student athletes at Coppin is 95% with an average GPA of over 3.0 which has been maintained for eleven consecutive semesters. In addition, grant funding has enabled a record number of student-athletes to attend summer and winter sessions. Other achievements include developing a faculty mentor program in which faculty are now engaged in the daily routines of student-athletes lives through tutoring, and assistance with skills training to help student-athletes prepare for life after athletics. The creation of a 5th year program for student-athletes who have exhausted their eligibility was also implemented.

Coppin's Athletic Department is seizing every opportunity to maximize student success by raising the bar and making academics and graduation within four years a top priority. The NCAA Pilot program has been a tremendous resource and investment which is yielding impressive and immediate results. We look forward to improving on these achievements in the second year of the pilot program.
Expanding STEM at Coppin

Supporting Maryland’s STEM Initiatives

Construction is underway and on schedule for Coppin’s new Science and Technology building scheduled for completion in 2015. The new facility will expand the University’s footprint on the south side of West North Avenue and greatly enhance the landscape of the neighboring community.

The new Science and Technology Center (STC) will have several positive effects on the University, including enhanced educational experiences for our students that will be comparable to those provided at many other colleges and universities in Maryland. This new facility will assist the University in producing graduates to advance the State’s Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) agenda. The STC will be designed to house science related disciplines, including natural sciences, biology, physics, chemistry and general sciences. STC will also include new academic space to support mathematics and computer science programs. The STC will introduce Coppin’s future students to a world-class, state-of-the-art educational facility, sending a message that effective teaching and learning are twin foundations on which this University rests.

New STEM Center at Coppin

In the fall of 2013, the University officially opened a STEM Center and identified a coordinator, and has completed the redesign of STEM courses. The purpose of the Center is to increase the number of STEM graduates and professionals in the State. A collaborative process is in place between the university’s colleges to establish additional STEM professionals. To assist students in the STEM disciplines, $200,000 in financial aid was designated to assist students with GPAs at or above 3.0 and SAT scores ranging from 1,590-1,820. Awards were made to qualifying students in the fall 2013 and spring 2014 semesters.
Coppin’s New Marketing Campaign
Print Ads Showing Alumni Success, Targeting Transfer Students (Spring 2014)
Metrics for Measuring Success at Coppin

The current indicators for measuring retention and graduation rates do not adequately represent the profile of Coppin’s student population. We have, therefore, expanded the indicators to better represent the profile of the student population matriculating at CSU. In addition to the standard first-time, full-time freshman 6-year cohort and the first-year retention metric, we have identified several indicators for measuring student success and outcomes for Coppin including:

- Graduation rate of transfer students
- Three-year rolling average of students graduating
- Number of first generation college students graduating
- Percentage of full Pell-eligible students at Coppin compared to other institutions
- Employment statistics for students enrolled at Coppin relative to the graduation rate of full-time students who also work full-time
- Economic impact of Coppin on the local community of West Baltimore and the impact of our students who stay and work in Maryland

This year (2014) will serve as the baseline year for benchmarking these expanded metrics using reliable data sources for accurately capturing, tracking and reporting on the outcomes of these metrics, which collectively will provide a more accurate picture of student success and persistence toward graduation.

Forward Momentum . . . Looking Ahead

Recent efforts to stabilize and move Coppin forward are starting to take shape. The University is now operating with an unprecedented level of fiscal soundness and accountability, the academic enterprise is recalibrating to be more efficient and responsive to in-demand programs and workforce opportunities and the campus is more unified and working towards common goals to ensure the success of our students.

As we look ahead, there is positive momentum underway to meet the challenges that lie ahead, with the greatest attention focused on increasing Coppin’s enrollment, retention and graduation rates. Achieving our combined CSU Implementation Plan and 2020 Strategic Plan goals will require persistence, relentless focus, strong accountability and additional resources. Coppin is also committed to contributing to the State’s overall goals with respect to STEM, health education, increasing student success through academic transformation, and helping to advance the State’s economy by supporting workforce development. Therefore, we support the Governor’s recommended increase in state funding for USM to move these important initiatives forward for the benefit of Maryland.

Despite the challenges, we remain optimistic and encouraged about Coppin’s future. With the continued support of the Governor, the Maryland General Assembly, USM and the Board of Regents, we will remain focused on our mission to ensure that attaining a college degree is not a privilege for some, but an opportunity accessible to all.