



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

### ***“Our Year of Success”***

University Day Address - August 18, 2014- Talon Center

#### **STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY**

Good morning and welcome back to the start of Coppin State University’s 2014 academic year!

I trust that everyone had a relaxing summer and that you are rejuvenated and ready to embrace the incoming class of 2018 and welcome our returning students to a stimulating, rewarding and yet challenging academic year.

Together, working with the entire university, we are leading the way towards a new Coppin and are ready and willing to ensure the success of our students and distinguish ourselves as Baltimore’s student centered university.

Although you will hear from them later, I want to take a moment to acknowledge members of the President’s Cabinet. Please stand as I call your name. Our Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Sadie Gregory, our Vice President for Administration and Finance. Mr. John Spinard – Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Mr. Doug Dalzell, – Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Franklin Chambers, – Vice President for Information Technology, Dr. Ahmed El-Haggan, – Athletic Director, Mr. Derrick Ramsey, – Chief of Staff and Associate Vice President for Government Relations, Ms. Luwanda Jenkins and– General Counsel, Ms. Francine Stokes-McElveen.

I’d also like to take a moment to acknowledge those who have joined us today. Mr. Reginald Exum, proud CSU alumni and Chair of our Development Foundation. Welcome.

Are there any other visiting alumni joining us today? Thank you for coming - and thank you for your continued support.

Since its inception 114 years ago, Coppin has established its rightful place as a landmark institution in this community. We provide access to higher education for multiple generations within a single family. Coppin is at the forefront of education, social work, criminal justice, nursing, information technology, nanotechnology fields and very soon other STEM disciplines. And we want to make sure that everyone knows not only who we are, but that we are smart, affordable and relevant. By learning from the traditions of the past and embracing the demands and expectations of the future we have refocused our mission. It is now time for us to reclaim our reputation as a significant institution of Higher Education in Maryland.

#### **OUR YEAR OF SUCCESS**

A few key accomplishments in 2014 exemplifies our commitment to excellence. This time a year ago we embarked on an aggressive, yet necessary plan to stabilize Coppin and prepare the institution for long-term growth and success. Our “turnaround plan” or Implementation Plan was to serve as a catalyst to spark Coppin’s transition for the future. It entails 50 action items

necessary to address Coppin's 3 most critical areas ---Increasing student enrollment, retention and graduation rates, strengthening academic programs and improving administrative operations and financial stability. Many of you in this room have contributed to the successful execution of this plan.

Because so many of us have been working together - committed to the success of Coppin's transformation, I can stand before you today and say that we are in fact making significant progress and we are moving in the right direction.

We began the 2013 Academic year with a number of challenges – operational budget deficits, legislative audits, and declining enrollment and 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.

Thanks to the collective efforts of the campus, 85 % of the plans actions have been completed and the plan has begun to yield results that have provided a sound platform for moving Coppin forward. Fiscal accountability and stability have been restored. Greater efficiencies have been achieved through the reorganization of academic programs. We've achieved greater effectiveness with our personnel down-sizing and right-sizing strategies. Customer Service improvements have been implemented to ensure better support for students and more effective coordination between student support departments.

Policies and operating procedures have been updated, communicated and implemented across the campus. Enrollment growth, image enhancement and marketing initiatives have been launched and are generating results. Overall, the results show that we are making a difference and providing the momentum for Coppin to soar for years to come.

Over the past 12 months we've cleared critical accreditation hurdles and have been re-accredited by Middle States. Our May 2014 graduating class appears to have been one of the largest classes in recent history.

And preliminary data shows that we have amassed a 2% increase in our 6-yr graduation rate. While our 2<sup>nd</sup> year retention rates have shown slow growth from Fall 2012's rate of **64%**, to Fall 2013's rate of **65%**, we are optimistic that this year's rate will continue to steadily increase.

We've made progress in closing the achievement gap between male and female students and we've narrowed the achievement gap between our Freshman Students graduation rates vs. Freshman Transfer Students Graduation rates from 14% to 12%. More importantly, our 2014 Fall semester enrollment is trending upward. While not ideal, these statistics are encouraging and a clear indication that we are moving in the right direction.

We are a people of faith and therefore we have formed partnerships with our local faith based community. As it turns out, the churches, synagogues and other faith based organizations that have benefitted from Coppin's commitment to the community have now committed to us and have pledged to support our programs, our students, and our mission.

## **University Appointments**

Critical leadership appointments have also been made this year. Financial Aid Director, Ms. Thelma Ross, - Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, Mr. Troy Miller, - and new Head Basketball Coach, Mr. Michael Grant .

Ms. Ross came to us with more than 20 years of experience in financial aid and in her short time here has been able to not only package and disperse financial aid awards in a timely and accurate manner, but also improve our students' experiences with the financial aid process. Mr. Miller joined us last month. He has extensive experience in financial aid, admissions, recruitment, marketing, and domestic and international recruiting. We welcome him and look forward to working with him on increasing our enrollment numbers. As for Coach Grant, whom you will hear more about, we are awaiting our highly anticipated WINNING basketball season. And heading our grants and sponsored programs area is Ms. Sherawanda Watkins-Esuke, J.D. At the moment, she's helping facilitate our grants application process.

## **SIGNIFICANT DIVISION ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

There are significant accomplishments throughout the campus. Some have been discussed previously and others will be discussed shortly by the respective Vice Presidents.

### **Students Affairs**

Our Division of Student Affairs is making real progress in preparing our students for leadership and life-long success. Student Affairs Career Services staff delivered 39 career related workshops and presentations with more than 800 participants receiving critical career advising. Also this past year, Student Affairs successfully registered approximately 139 (F1) students in SEVIS, our Student and Exchange Visitor Program.

### **Information Technology**

In our IT division, several programs and events were conducted to expose, orient and train students, faculty and staff on key information technology tools and infuse IT campus wide. Programs such as TEchMania, Tech@nite, TechKnow Squad, Adjunct Faculty Saturday, Academic Advising Training, Staff Summer institute and Staff Tech Symposia were held and more than 1,000 students, 32 adjunct faculty, 39 academic advisors, and 176 staff members benefitted from IT Development Programs and events.

### **Athletics**

This Spring our student athletes achieved an overall GPA of 3.02, marking the 12<sup>th</sup> straight semester that they have maintained GPA's above 3.0.

71 student athletes were named to the 2014 MEAC All-Academic selections and four were selected to all-MEAC teams.

Women's Basketball and Volleyball advanced to the MEAC championships and Men's basketball advanced to the semifinals. And seven student-athletes competed in the NCAA Division 1 Outdoor Preliminary East Regional Championships in Jacksonville.

### **Academic Affairs**

With a stronger focus on effective student advising, increased credit hour production, and more efficient course scheduling, we are achieving a more efficient academic enterprise. We've focused on offering high performing, high demand programs and majors.

### ***We Are Smart.....***

- Our College of Arts, Sciences and Education gained approval and recognition in 4 program areas of Specialized Professional Associations.
- College of Business has made huge progress toward the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs Accreditation and has established its College of Business Advisory Board comprised of prominent business and community leaders.
- Students from the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences Criminal Justice Program assisted lawmakers by lobbying for the Passing of Senate Bill 860 "Photo and Lineup Eyewitness Identification."
- Our College of Health Profession's School of Nursing's program recently received the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education re-accreditation.
- The Humanities & Visual Performing Arts Departments hosted the Conversations in Print art exhibit. With more than \$100,000 of artwork on display, the exhibit was designed to show appreciation for the works of seventeen (17) African American printmakers.
- The Department of Natural Sciences and the Center for Nano Technology hosted their 2nd Annual International Symposium titled "Sustainable Science, Technology, Human Health and the Environment for a Global Society."

### **Administration and Finance**

The Administration and Finance Division has worked tirelessly to Balance our FY14 Budget and in addition was able to achieve a 1% Fund Balance.

The division also submitted a balanced budget for FY 2015, corrected 9 of 12 audit findings by June 30, 2014, transitioned to our new dining services vendor (Aramark), implemented a new energy management project which will result in significant utility savings for the campus, and implemented a campus-wide customer service program.

### **Institutional Advancement**

Our Institutional Advancement Division has also made significant strides in fundraising, improving Coppin's visibility and showcasing our relevance in the community. In the past year, our IA department has raised \$1.85 million, our 2nd largest fundraising year in recent history. IA has increased our alumni participation rate from 7 to 10% and was instrumental in making over 250 scholarship awards, including 40 SOS (Senior Opportunity Scholarships). IA was the driving force behind our new marketing campaign designed to increase Coppin's visibility.

## Shared Governance

All of our shared governance groups have done an excellent job of representing the university and upholding our mission.

The Faculty Senate successfully updated our Faculty Handbook along with other key policies and procedures and governance documents. They also conducted a thorough review of undersubscribed courses and completed a Faculty Workload Productivity report.

Our Faculty Senate Chair, Dr. Virletta Bryant was elected to serve as Chair of the Council of University System Faculty.

The Staff Senate increased its Staff Senators membership and member participation in campus activities this year and for the first time held Open Forum meetings via LYNC.

To date, no other University of Maryland System Institution has held their Staff Senate meeting via the communication software program.

## RECOGNITION OF KEY FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENTS

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the success and accomplishments of our distinguished faculty, staff and students.

### Faculty

- **Dean Beverly O'Bryant, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences**, was named as one of the Daily Record's Top 100 Women of Maryland for her outstanding accomplishments in community leadership and mentoring.
- **Dr. Errol Bolden, Chair and Associate Professor in the Department of Social Work** was awarded the Social Work Educator of the Year Award by Maryland's Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.
- **Dr. Jamal Uddin, Associate Professor in Natural Sciences** was awarded the Board of Regents Faculty Award for Scholarship, Research and Creative Activity for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Year in a row.
- **Dr. Joan Tilghman, Chair of the Family Nurse Practitioner Program**, was awarded an \$80,000 grant from Carefirst Blue Cross Blue Shield. A few weeks ago, Carefirst presented the University with the funds which will allow a Coppin State nursing student to continue her studies and focus entirely on becoming a nursing educator.

### Staff

- **Mr. Dick Radar, Director of Telecommunications**, received the Board of Regents Staff Award. He is the first Coppin staff member to receive this award.
- **Ms. Kelli Jackson, our Digital Audio/visual Systems Manager** was awarded the Technology Rising Star award from Career Communications Group's Women of Color magazine.

- **Ms. Dionne Curbeam, Director of Instructional Technology and IT Training** was named to the Prestigious Blackboard Most Valued Professionals Program. She also received the NCOURAGED Educators Award.
- First-year Coppin State head **men’s basketball coach Michael Grant** has been named as a member of the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) Division I Congress representing the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC), and
- Our own **Diwani Lewis, Head Men & Women/s Tennis Coach** was named MEAC coach of the Year.

## **Students**

Our students as a group have upheld Coppin’s mission of serving the community by engaging in a variety of community outreach and public service related activities. They have fed the homeless, participated in tutoring and financial literacy outreach programs, served on the Student Advisory Boards, and helped the community through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program. Coppin students not only excel in the community, but they also excel in the classroom and on the field.

- Our Student government association, Led by Mr. Roderick Johnson has engaged in a variety of student activities that have benefitted the surrounding neighborhoods and the campus community.
- Honors College graduate Ms. Omazonna Amadi was admitted to Stony Brook School of Medicine in New York and also received a full scholarship to pursue a PhD in neuroscience at the University of New Mexico.
- Christina Epps was named the 2014 Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) woman of the Year, a first for Coppin. She was also CSU’s Female President’s Eagle Award Winner , Female Athlete of the “Year and MVP in Track and Field
- This past year, (157) CSU students completed the Charles B. Wright Leadership program and are officially certified student leaders.
- Student athletes have used their talents to assist with this summer’s STEM robotics camps for local inner city kids. They served as coaches, counselors and mentors and were responsible for adding a sports component to the program.

## **WE ARE AFFORDABLE AND RELEVANT**

Coppin is re-branding its image and we are continuously working to highlight the best of Coppin by “Re-claiming our turf,” “Increasing our Competitiveness,” and “Increasing Student Enrollment.”

***We are Affordable...*** Did you know that last year Coppin was ranked as the Most Affordable College in Maryland with the highest financial return on investment for its graduates for providing high quality education at an affordable price.

On average, our students enter the workforce earn an estimated \$36,300 per year after graduation, ranking us among the most financially effective of all Maryland post-secondary schools. This proves that not only are we smart and affordable, but we are relevant.

Coppin has a rich and proud history. We have a track record of producing successful graduates. We have a great story to tell and now is the time to tell it. Earlier this year we launched a marketing campaign with billboards and ads promoting high achieving alumni, and our academic programs under the “Coppin Proud” banner.

We are promoting the Coppin Brand to support student recruitment, institutional fund raising, alumni involvement, and to restore and re-establish Coppin’s reputation and mark our relevance in the higher education marketplace.

We’re just getting started and later this morning you will hear more about our new Coppin Brand.

## **LOOKING AHEAD TOWARDS 2020 “STEPPING UP OUR GAME”**

So, what lies ahead for us in the coming years? How will we step up our game and make Coppin more relevant? By focusing on enrollment, increasing our competitiveness and improving our visibility.

### ***We are Affordable...Focusing on Enrollment***

The most challenging issue for us is increasing our 6-year graduation rate, while at the same time maintaining an optimum student enrollment. The competition for obtaining qualified and motivated students is stiff and as a result we have to seriously consider more aggressive strategies for growing our enrollment. One way of doing this is by promoting the deferred admission concept through arrangements with community colleges. We must also continue to focus our efforts on increasing the number of transfer students through collaborative partnerships with the local community colleges.

### ***We are Relevant... Increasing Coppin’s Competitiveness***

By creating more partnerships with community colleges, providing more scholarships such as our Presidential Scholars Award for students who excel in academics, leadership and service and launching this year’s Our House Mentoring Program, we are increasing Coppin’s competitiveness and proving that we are relevant.

### ***We are Smart... Expanding Our Capacity for Greatness***

This year we submitted grant proposals to major funding agencies to seek external grants and contracts for projects that further the University’s mission. We are also partnering with local business to provide internship and employment opportunities for our students and graduates.

## **THE YEAR OF ANALYTICS**

With all that we have accomplished, I am issuing a new challenge to the campus community. I am declaring this academic year “The year of ANALYTICS” here at Coppin. For those of you

who do not know, analytics is the ability to collect and use data to generate insights that help inform our decisionmaking.

Our world is driven by data and the data we collect provides insight on how we can transform the University and make a real impact on the programs and services we provide each and every day. Analytics can help us answer the right questions with reliable, predictable fact-based decisionmaking. All this can be done without additional financial outlay.

In **Academic Affairs** we will use analytics to continue to provide high quality courses that prepare our students for a variety of high demand jobs and graduate school experiences. We can use analytics to derive more efficiencies in course scheduling and credit hour productivity.

In **IT**, we will continue to be more responsive to our immediate needs in Recruitment, Admissions, Financial Aid, Registration, and Retention.

**Administration and Finance** will work to use organizational data to continue to align our organizational needs with our fiscal responsibilities as well as improve performance and customer service.

**Student Affairs** can use analytics to enhance the student experience and

**Institutional Advancement** can enhance its outreach to the donor community and our alumni. So I challenge you to make analytics your tool for making 2015 a productive year.

## **UPDATE ON SEARCH FOR NEW PRESIDENT**

While I know that we will have another University day in the Spring Semester, I wanted to take this time to announce that this will be my final academic year here with you at Coppin. The Chancellor has assured me that in the Fall, he and the Board of Regents will begin the search for a new President. This will be a confidential search process with the decision made by the Board in time for a July 1<sup>st</sup> transition. This is the customary process for all presidential searches in the USM.

My time here has been rewarding and I have gained so much from this experience and can only hope that I have made Coppin a better place. I thank my administrative team for the critical role you have played in stabilizing the budget, reducing expenditures, restructuring our academic programs, providing award winning IT services, and enhancing the student experience here at Coppin.

I also want to thank the faculty and staff for your hard work and dedication to the students and to the mission of the university. Finally, I want to thank the students, for they are the reasons we come here every day. Shaping the lives and the futures of our students is what will continue to drive us for years to come.

Today, I am very optimistic about our future. Our success lies in our ability to attract, retain and graduate students. We must be mindful that improving student services ensures student success.

*Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.* once said:

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. [for] Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.”

So I thank you all for your continued support in working to provide a “true educational” experience for our students. I know that over the next few months we will continue to work hard to keep Coppin smart, affordable, and relevant in the city, the state and the nation.

If there’s anything I have learned in my many years in higher education, I know that our opportunities help define key moments in our lives and our experiences help shape not only who we are, but also who we will become. Coppin is definitely on the right track.

I am proud to serve as your President ..... I AM COPPIN PROUD!