

May 22, 2020

Dear Coppin State University Faculty, Staff, and Students:

As my tenure at the university comes to an end, I want to thank you for the incredible experience of working with you over the course of this year. I have met enthusiastic and hopeful students, extraordinarily dedicated faculty, and capable, hard-working staff, and it has been uplifting! The faculty and students did an outstanding job of pivoting very quickly from on-campus instruction to teaching and learning at a distance. It was a very big adjustment for faculty and students, and I am extremely proud of how well you did it! Simultaneously, the staff moved to a teleworking environment and, for the most part, our business operations continued to a very reasonable degree. Thanks to you, Coppin State remained open in pursuit of its mission!

The year was marked by tremendous foundational work of the faculty led by Faculty Senate Chair, Dr. Charlotte Wood. The revision of the Post-Tenure Review Policy and its full implementation, a faculty evaluation process was developed and implemented, and a faculty salary equity plan was developed and approved for July 1st implementation! Congratulations! You are most deserving!

On the student side, several people commented that this year's coronation for Mr. and Miss Coppin State University was the best one in several years. The students looked good, performed well, and showed a lot of eagle pride. Kudos to Ms. Mujahid and the Royal Court! COVID-19 forced us to alter our commencement plans, but we look forward to a virtual celebration in a few days and a more substantive one, next year.

Staff, generally, don't get a lot of recognition, but they really are the backbone of a well-functioning organization. Staff across all our divisions—Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Information Technology, Institutional Advancement, and Administration and Finance all made great contributions. We exceeded our fundraising target for the year and enhanced our business and IT operations. The Coppin staff did a remarkable job this year in leading our recruitment and enrollment effort so that our fall enrollment numbers were among the best in the USM! We had the third highest increase among USM universities in the number of first-time, full-time undergraduate students, and we were one of only two USM institutions to show an increase in undergraduate enrollment overall! Thank you, staff!

You made great strides this year and you should be proud of that. We all know, however, that a formidable challenge lies ahead. The university still has work to do in growing its enrollment and increasing its retention and graduation rates! The good news is that your success last fall shows that it can be done. The competition remains keen, COVID-19 will hamper things for a while, and a deep national recession will probably add to the challenge. Coppin State, however, can look to the future and be encouraged by last fall's enrollment, the resilience that you showed this year, and the arrival of a bright, committed new leader, President Anthony Jenkins. I expect great things of you in the future, and am confident that you can achieve them!

I was blessed to be part of the Coppin State University community, this year, and I bid you Godspeed!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. L. Burnim", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mickey L. Burnim, Ph.D.
Interim President