COPPIN STATE UNIVERSITY

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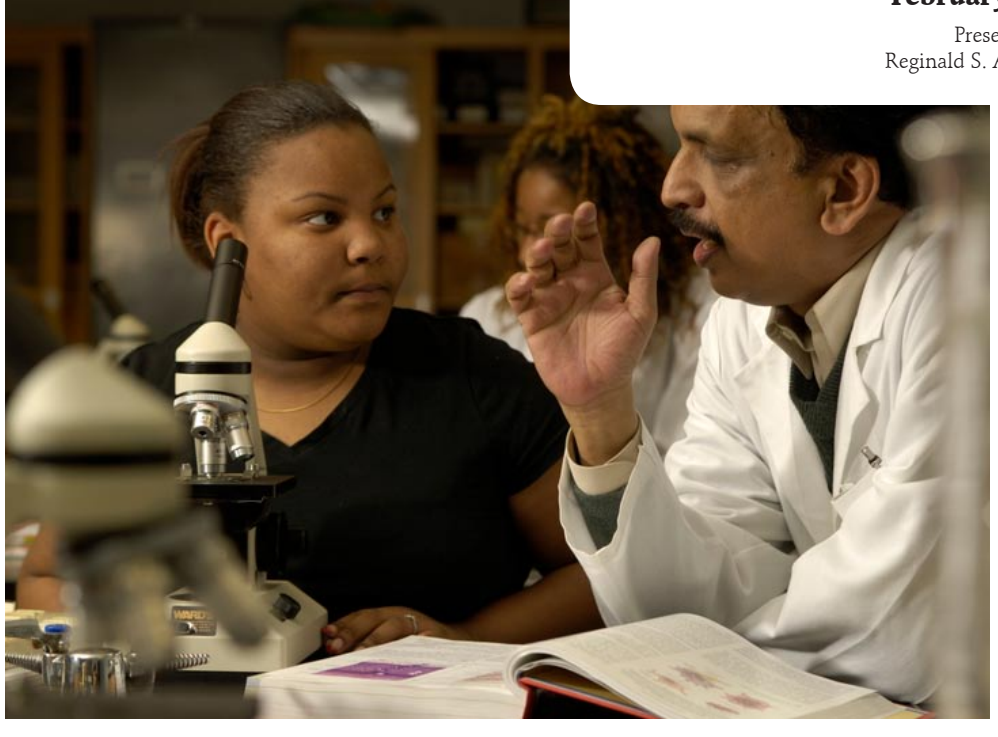
Legislative Testimony to

The Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Health, Education, and Human Resources Subcommittee
February 18, 2008

Presented by
Reginald S. Avery, President



A BRIDGE TO OPPORTUNITY, AN ANCHOR IN THE COMMUNITY

Coppin State University
Legislative Testimony

THE SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND HUMAN RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE

Testimony of Coppin State University President
Reginald S. Avery, Ph.D.

February 18, 2008

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, Vice Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am Reginald S. Avery, President of Coppin State University. I would like to thank you and the Maryland General Assembly for your investment in higher education by allocating a dedicated funding source through the Higher Education Investment Fund (HEIF) to ensure accessibility and affordability to all Marylanders. We thank the Governor for his support of higher education and the University System of Maryland (USM) in general.

At Coppin State University, we know firsthand the importance of accessibility and affordability. Coppin State University plays an integral role within the University System of Maryland by focusing on the problems, needs, and aspirations of the citizens of Baltimore and its immediate metropolitan area. Our mission is to provide high quality undergraduate and graduate education in the arts and sciences, and pre-professional and professional areas to the students we serve.

Our students come through our doors with a special goal in mind: To earn a college degree to help improve their lives and the lives of their families. Your investment in the state's institutions of higher education and in Coppin State University in particular, allows us to continue to make dreams of earning a college degree a reality.

This afternoon, I will address Coppin State University's budget request, discuss the challenges we face, share some of the plans we have to address those challenges, highlight the success and progress we are making, and answer any questions you might have. The specific written responses regarding the Department of Legislative Services analysis of the Governor's FY 2009 Budget are contained in the Appendices to this testimony.

Challenges

The Challenges We Face

The University's major challenges are much the same as many other historically black colleges and universities across the nation – lagging retention and graduation rates. This is my fifth week serving as President of Coppin State University. While I am new to my position, I have been in higher education for nearly 35 years. Currently, I am in the process of assessing all areas of the university, including student retention and progression, staffing needs, capital planning and development, and the need for establishing effectiveness, efficiency and accountability measures in all areas. As I continue my assessment, I will collaborate with the campus and external constituencies to advance excellence and effectiveness in every aspect.

Coppin is an outstanding university that is poised for greatness and I am fortunate to be a part of its future development. Improving the University's retention and graduation rate is my highest priority. The University is a leader within the University System of Maryland and the State in providing access to higher education to first-generation college students, as well as making college affordable to students from low-income families. Founded in 1900, Coppin State University (CSU) is a historically black, four-year liberal arts university offering 23 undergraduate majors and 11 graduate-degree programs.

Coppin is comprised of the Honors College, School of Professional Studies, School of Graduate Studies, School of Arts and Sciences, School of Management Science and Economics, School of Education, and the Helene Fuld School of Nursing.

Approximately 70% of the freshmen are first-generation college students while two-thirds are from households where one of the parents had no college or university experience. Coppin has the highest number of students in the state who are Pell Grant eligible. Students who have the greatest need for financial assistance struggle with paying tuition while managing loan debt. The average age of our students is 28.5. Many of our adult students must balance their studies with the rigorous demands of both family and employment.

Overcoming

Overcoming These Challenges

I strongly believe that if we admit students, we must do everything we can to ensure their academic success. In sum, this means appropriate attention to Preparation, Retention, and Graduation.

I thank Chancellor Kirwan for his vision to implement the important initiative to close the participation and graduation rate gaps that exist between majority students and low-income and under-represented minority students. Our Fiscal Year 2009 budget has been developed in concert with the Governor's and USM's stated goals. The University is receiving an additional $3.0 million in general funds to offset the increase in our mandatory costs of $3.8 million. The HEIF is funding $100,000 to begin addressing "closing the achievement gap", a priority of USM; and $367,022 for tuition replacement due to the tuition freeze.

Such support will continue to pay dividends. I am pleased to share that Coppin State University awarded a total of 484 degrees in 2006-07 compared to 423 in 2005-06. That amounts to a 14.4% increase in the number of undergraduate and graduate degrees awarded.

Again, I must stress Preparation, Retention, and Graduation. While these initiatives have helped us to address retention and graduation rates, I realize that we must continue to do more to ensure that Preparation, Retention, and ultimately Graduation are achieved by the students who come through our doors with the dream of earning a college degree. Since arriving at Coppin State University, I have spent considerable time and effort analyzing existing data, determining the validity of that data, and having extensive conversations and dialogues with senior administrators, faculty, students, staff, and external constituencies. I continue to assess all aspects of the University, including policies and procedures, budget planning and development processes, and other matters that will allow me to make informed judgments and decisions with the ultimate goals of instituting effectiveness, efficiency and accountability measure in all areas.

Accountability is a critical part of ensuring that this is achieved. To this end, the University signed on as a participant in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) that is being touted by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC). In order to solidify CSU's infrastructures and implement effectiveness measures in all units of the University, with a major emphasis on finance, we will undertake a revamped strategic planning process to ensure appropriate alignment between and among all units of the University. We will assess staffing and our organizational structure; plan, develop, assess and prioritize resources; enhance our fundraising thrust through our Foundation Board and other entities; and strengthen and develop a strategic enrollment management plan to reinvigorate our enrollment. We will also continue to ensure the University maintains Middle States and other specialized accreditations.

In order to help ensure the retention of our students, we will implement support strategies that include tracking them from the point of entrance as freshman through graduation and beyond. Such strategies may include the establishment of a "Center for Student Success", a "Center for Undergraduate Research," the initiation of ongoing planning and development, and a continued review of our intercollegiate athletics department. It is also critical that we hire full-time tenured track faculty. This is necessary for us to enhance and introduce new academic programs, and to advance research and scholarly activity.

Our Success

A Glimpse at Our Success

Although the University has faced and continues to face challenges on several fronts, we also have made many accomplishments for which we are very proud. These include:

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

- In the June 1, 2007 issue of *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, Coppin ranked #16 in the category of African-American Baccalaureate Degree Producers in Mathematics and Statistics for the 2005-2006 academic year. In the same issue, Coppin ranked #46 in the category of African-American Baccalaureate Degree Producers in Psychology. Coppin ranked #100 overall in the total amount of Baccalaureate Degrees conferred in all disciplines combined.

- The Honors College, a thriving, student-centered, international unit, is comprised of two distinct programs, the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement and Honors. The McNair Program prepares junior undergraduates for doctoral study. To date, nearly 100 McNair Scholars have earned masters degrees and seven have been awarded doctorates.

- The Coppin State University Helene Fuld School of Nursing prepares students for professional nursing practice, which includes functioning as members of multidisciplinary health teams in providing care to individuals, families, and groups in a variety of health care settings. The School of Nursing in helping to meet the state's nursing workforce shortage and:

    - has seen an 85% increase in enrollment
    - educates 80% of the baccalaureate prepared minority nurses in the State of Maryland
    - 95% of graduates work in the underserved areas.
    - 85% to 100% of each graduating class is licensed in the state of Maryland.
    - is the only four-year institution in the state of Maryland to offer a four-year baccalaureate degree in Health Information Management (HIM). (HIM professionals have expertise in health informatics, which requires knowledge of clinical medicine, the computer-based patient record, coding and classifications systems, quality and human resource management, as well as ethical, legal, regulatory and accrediting agency requirements.) Graduates are eligible to take the national certification examination and earn the credentials Registered Health Information Administrator (RHIA).

A Glimpse at Our Success (continued)

- provides a Community Health Clinic. The Clinic serves as a health care facility and as a harbor for moral support for the community. The Nursing Center provides readily accessible, low-cost, high-quality care to underserved and uninsured residents of the neighborhood surrounding the University. Services of the Center emphasize health promotion and prevention of disease. The goal of the Center is to improve the health of persons who reside in areas adjacent to the University. The facility also serves the Coppin Family (students, faculty, staff and administration) and partners with local churches, hospitals and other community institutions to conduct Health Fairs and health care events.
- manages the Saint Frances Academy Health Suite. In conjunction with Kaiser Permanente, the Center also provides episodic nursing care to high school students at St. Francis Academy in Baltimore City; identifying, helping to prevent and treat a wide range of physical, psychological, behavioral and social problems in more than 300 high school students.

- A faculty member in Coppin's Helene Fuld School of Nursing, was selected as the Thurgood Marshall College Fund's (TMCF) 2007 Professor of the Year for her unique efforts to keep the campus' nursing program on the cutting edge of technology.
- In August 2007, Coppin established a Health Information Management (HIM) program. Graduates will earn a Bachelor of Science in Allied Health with a concentration in HIM. The program will help to fill the growing demand for health information professionals. Required HIM courses include, Legal Aspects of Health Information, Pharmacology and Health Information Management in Non-Traditional Settings. The HIM Program is the only one of its kind in the state.
- The Coppin State University School of Education offers a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs designed primarily to prepare students for careers in teaching. An integral component of the Teacher Education Program is the development of the students' understanding of the realities of our multicultural, interdependent world and their ability to work effectively with all children. The School of Education continues the University's proud and historic Teacher Education tradition. Coppin was founded in 1900 at what was then called Colored High School (later named Douglass High School) on Pennsylvania Avenue by the Baltimore City School Board who initiated a one-year training course for the preparation of African-American elementary school teachers.

A Glimpse at Our Success (continued)

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- Coppin has earned local, national and international recognition for its Information Technology (IT) efforts. Coppin's numerous IT awards include the 2006 Computerworld Mobile and Wireless World "Best Practices in Mobile and Wireless" Award for Innovation and Promise. That same year, Coppin also received *U.S. News and World Report* recognition as #19 on the magazine's list of top 50 colleges and universities nationwide with absolute wireless capability. In 2005, Coppin was selected by EDUCAUSE to receive the non-profit organization's prestigious Award for Excellence in Networking: Innovation in Network Technology, Services, and Management. Coppin's selection marks the first time a school in Maryland has received the EDUCAUSE award. Coppin is also the first HBCU to be honored with the recognition.

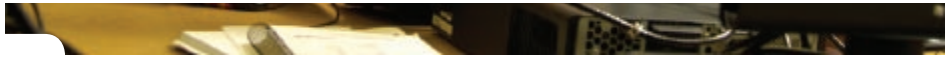
- Coppin pioneered the use of educational technologies with the use of Tegrity Campus, which combines digital audio and video recording of the class lecture with electronic note-taking and computer usage. The software provides 24-hour access to the recorded classroom experience. As a literal learning tool, the Tegrity pen uses camera technology on its tip. Tegrity digital pen allows students to digitally record handwritten notes taken during class and automatically synchronize it with the recorded lecture. Later, the students can replay the entire lecture online while viewing their notes exactly as written in their notebooks, or they can select any notation to replay that part of the lecture.

- Coppin is the first school in the University System of Maryland to go completely wireless. Coppin was also the first USM institution to implement the e2Campus text alert system.

- In December 2007, Microsoft published a Case Study about Coppin's Business Intelligence Solution. The case study highlighted Coppin's IT efforts, and brought additional local, international and national attention to the University.

FUNDRAISING

- Coppin State University has been selected as the School of the Month for July 2008. The selection marks the second time that Coppin has been identified as a Tom Joyner Foundation School of the Month. Coppin was last chosen in April 2004, and raised over $400,000.



A Glimpse at Our Success (continued)

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Since 1997, Coppin State University has embraced the idea that academic excellence is built from the ground up through the West Baltimore Pre-K to 16 Urban Educational Corridor. Coppin, which is only the second school in the country to implement a K to 16 model, took over nearby Rosemont Elementary/Middle School in 1998, and is the first and only higher education institution in Maryland to manage a public school. Corridor components also include Coppin Academy, a university-assisted high school located on the University's campus. The Coppin Academy officially opened on August 29, 2005.

- The American Humanics program at Coppin State University prepares students for non-profit careers and collaborates with local branches of National Non-profit Partners in providing internship and career placement opportunities by providing students with professional development and visibility in the community. American Humanics is a national partnership of colleges, universities, and non-profit organizations with a mission to educate, prepare, and certify professionals in an effort to strengthen and someday lead non-profit organizations. Upon graduation, the students receive non-profit certification through American Humanics. The students regularly do volunteer work in the community such as helping to rehab houses through Habitat for Humanity and other programs.

- The Coppin Heights Community Development Corporation (CHCDC) is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization established in 1995 by Coppin to advance the broader community improvement/neighborhood revitalization agenda for the Greater Coppin Heights/Rosemont Community. The CHCDC is dedicated to promoting the health and stability of the Greater Coppin Heights/Rosemont community. The mission of the CHCDC is to serve as a catalyst for suitable and affordable housing for low to moderate income residents and to stimulate economic development within neighborhoods immediately adjacent to Coppin through the establishment of social, economic, educational and affordable housing development initiatives that collectively increase the stability and sustainability of the Coppin Heights community. The CHCDC also conducts housing fairs, workshops, and other events.

- Established in 1999, The Kinship Care Resource Center of Maryland is funded by the Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) and the Social Services Administration (SSA), and administered in partnership with Coppin State University's Helene Fuld School of Nursing and Department of Social Work to empower and preserve families. The Resource Center provides resources to caregivers who are raising another relative's child/children.

A Glimpse at Our Success (continued)

ECONOMIC IMPACT

- An estimated 95% of Coppin's graduates remain in the state after earning their degrees. The impact Coppin graduates have had in these critical human services areas and the countless lives they have touched is immeasurable.

- Coppin has a major economic impact on the State of Maryland. The University turns out more than 400 skilled graduates annually. Due to the higher salaries earned by college graduates, each Coppin State University graduating class contributes over $10 million to the Maryland economy. Since our inception, more than 15,000 have graduated from Coppin Normal School, Coppin State Teachers College, Coppin State College, and now Coppin State University.

Chancellor Kirwan has established a "green" initiative for system-wide sustainability, putting USM in the forefront of educational and institutional responses to global climate change. At Coppin State University, we have implemented an IP network centralized energy management and control system for all buildings for energy conservation; run classes at the University's satellite locations in Prince George's County and Baltimore City; offer on-line courses and are currently exploring a fully on-line degree; and have implemented Virtual Server Technology for "greener" Data Centers. These initiatives have better enabled us to reduce pollution.

Also, Chancellor Kirwan has implemented a competitive initiative that focuses on competitiveness and using the resources of USM to put Maryland and its students on a footing for success in the new global knowledge economy and includes a focus on increasing the number of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) teachers in Maryland schools. Coppin has received grant support from the National Science Foundation for STEM to attract, recruit, maintain, and increase the number of minorities entering in the fields of science and technology. The grant is being used to help enhance, strengthen, and provide support to the existing science and technology degree programs here at the University.

Moving Forward

Moving Forward

Again, we thank the Governor for his support of higher education, and the Maryland General Assembly for taking such a bold step during a difficult budgetary time for the State of Maryland during the Special Session of 2007. You understand that higher education is the key to an economically viable Maryland, and we appreciate your investment in Coppin.

While we have received a steady infusion of funds in the operating budget over the past few years, those funds were still not enough to offset the increases due to mandatory costs. Additional operating funds are sorely needed to hire new tenure track faculty along with maintenance staff for facilities, including the new Health and Human Services Building and the new Physical Education Complex.

The new facilities under construction will help us to advance existing and new academic programs and teaching and learning initiatives, and undoubtedly play an important role in helping the University to attract and retain new students, faculty and staff, and help us to become more competitive inline with many of our peer and aspirant institutions. Your continued support is vital to us in several ways. For example, it will help us to make important investments in the youngsters that we serve through our Urban Education Corridor initiative; it touches the kindergartners to eighth graders at Rosemont Elementary/Middle, the ninth to twelfth graders students enrolled at Coppin Academy, and each and every one of the students enrolled at Coppin. That support must continue to ensure that we carry on our tradition of "Nurturing Potential and Transforming Lives."

There are many great things happening at Coppin State University and I am happy to be a part of it. I salute my predecessors Dr. Miles Connor, Dr. Parlette Moore, Dr. Calvin W. Burnett, and Dr. Stanley F. Battle for their outstanding service to Coppin State University. While this institution has struggled due to years of underfunding, we have begun to turn the corner with the infusion of new funds. As I noted earlier, the increase in the number of our graduates who earned undergraduate and graduate degrees last year illustrates that your support is paying off.

That support must continue to insure that Coppin State University continues its rich tradition of serving as a bridge to opportunity by helping to bring the dreams of our students to fruition through our educational programs, as an anchor in the West Baltimore community by reaching beyond our campus to help our residents, and serving as a vital and necessary resource to the City of Baltimore, the State of Maryland, and beyond.

Thank you.

Reginald S. Avery
President, Coppin State University

Coppin State University

Response to the Legislative Issues and Recommended Action

FY 2009 Budget

The President should comment on what measures the university is taking to reduce the number of qualified students not admitted to the nursing program.

Coppin State University recognizes that this is a critical shortage issue for the State of Maryland and a high priority of both the Governor and the Board of Regents. Because of strict guidelines (faculty-student ratio, nursing lab support, clinical placements etc.) of the Nursing board, we are limited by the number of students that we can accept into our nursing program. During the last three years, the university has doubled the size of the nursing faculty from 15 to 30 full-time faculty members, hired a full-time academic advisor and increased the number of nursing lab coordinators to a full-time and part-time person. Additionally, in January 2007, the university moved the graduate and upper division nursing programs from the main campus to two floors of a leased building on Charles Street. This off-campus facility houses smart classrooms, clinical labs, faculty offices, computer labs, and a nursing resource center. Furthermore, over the past two years, we have increased by fifty the number of slots for qualified students accepted into the program each year. In addition, CSU continues to seek federal and private funds to underwrite these resource needs. Despite these efforts, resource constraints continue to limit our ability to admit more students into this program.

The President should comment on the continued use of fund balance as a revenue source.

With an anticipated shortfall of revenue with the Health and Human Services Building coming on-line in fiscal 2009, the university foresees the use of a portion of its fund balance. Coppin State University must utilize funds to support the operation of this new facility and provide staff for housekeeping, maintenance, and public safety. The opening of this new facility, along with escalation of other mandatory costs, will make it more difficult to maintain current operations and therefore, the university must rely on its fund balance.

The President should comment on measures being taken to increase the amount of need-based aid offered at the university.

Coppin State University makes every effort to provide educational access and diverse educational opportunities for students whose potential is often hindered by the lack of adequate financial resources. To this end, the university serves more financially disadvantaged students than any other Maryland four-year institution. Since fiscal 2006, the amount of institutional funds dedicated to need-based financial aid has more than doubled; from $295,800 in fiscal 2006 to $964,112 in fiscal 2008. Within the confines of available funding, CSU will continue to make every effort to increase need-based financial aid to assist students in making their education financially possible.

The President should comment on future plans to increase operation and maintenance staff. The President should comment on efforts the university is taking to increase housekeeping staff and develop a plan consistent with the industry standard for housekeepers.

Coppin State University is keenly aware that the physical characteristics of landscape, ambiance, and appearance as well as the availability, quality and adequacy of facilities are necessary to support the mission and programs of the university. Therefore, we agree with the analyst's recommendation that attention be given to improve the operation and maintenance of existing facilities. As CSU moves forth with staffing for newly constructed facilities,

we will continue to strategically identify needed improvements in staffing and to our organizational structure, develop a plan that is consistent with industry standards, and ensure that these are aligned appropriately with the university's overall strategic plan.

The President should comment on the steps the university will take in the near future to increase performance of students with the Access and Success Program. The President should also comment on the accountability indicators developed by the HBI Presidents.
Student retention and persistence through graduation is the highest priority of the university. As the new President, one of my priorities will be to build the university's assessment infrastructure and utilize this information to enhance current academic support and other student services as well as enhance our articulation efforts, the Summer Bridge, and summer transition programs. Furthermore, as I assess and analyze information to determine all of the factors hindering student persistence and graduation at CSU, I will work with the university community to develop new strategies to improve student excellence. I look forward to working with the Maryland Higher Education Commission and other Historically Black Institutions in developing accountability indicators to assess our efforts to improve retention and graduation rates.

The President should comment on what is driving the decline in enrollment and the measures the university is taking to stabilize and increase enrollment.
The university's ability to stabilize and increase enrollment is a high priority. The fluctuations in enrollment at CSU are largely attributed to retention-related issues. Although students discontinue enrollment for various reasons, the primary reason at CSU is financial. Many of CSU students are financially challenged. CSU has the highest Pell-eligible rate in the state. At a time when need-based aid was not keeping pace with the increasing financial demands of the students, the university was placing increased emphasis on the enforcement of the state policy regarding the discontinuation of re-enrollment of students with outstanding balances.

In order to stabilize and increase enrollment, the university will develop and implement a Comprehensive Strategic Enrollment Plan. Key components of this plan will be the assessment of the current enrollment and the development of an integrated approach for addressing marketing, recruitment, retention, academic program development, campus facilities and budgeting. Emphasis will also be place on increasing scholarships and need-based aid for the students.

Recommended Actions
DLS recommends adding language restricting the expenditure of $1,500,000 until Coppin State University submits a report on how the funds will be spent to improve retention and graduation rates.

Coppin State University concurs with the recommended action and looks forward to working with the Maryland Higher Education Commission and other Historically Black Institutions in developing accountability indicators to assess our efforts to improve retention and graduation rates.