

Coppin State University receives prestigious EDUCAUSE Award for Innovation in Network Technology

Becomes First School in Maryland to receive the Award and the first HBCU to ever be selected

By Ursula V. Battle

(BALTIMORE, MD 10/25/05) – Coppin State University has been 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 award. Coppin is also the first HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) to be honored with the recognition. The announcement was made public in August by EDUCAUSE. Dr. Stanley F. Battle is the President of Coppin State University.

In receiving the award, Coppin joins the likes of Dartmouth College (2004), Indiana University and Purdue University (2003), College of Mount St. Joseph (2002), Bentley College (2001), Wake Forest University (2000), Seton Hall University (1999), Duke University (1998), Cedarville College and Virginia Tech (1997), University of Oregon and Cal Lutheran University (1996), Cornell University (1995), University of Delaware (1994), and Maricopia Community College (1993).

EDUCAUSE is a nonprofit association dedicated to advancing higher education by promoting the intelligent use of information technology. Coppin was recognized by EDUCAUSE for the technological transformation of the campus. In its selection of Coppin, the award selection committee said, "Transformation at Coppin State has been informed by clear awareness of the institution's mission and the unique needs of its urban clientele. In addition to providing a state-of-the-art 24X7 IT infrastructure, the university has boosted student enrollment, energized faculty, and enabled expansion of important community activities. It has empowered students and their families by making them active participants in the Net Generation."

"Congratulations to President Battle and the Coppin State University community," said William E. Kirwan, chancellor of the University System of Maryland (USM). "The university system shares Coppin's pride in the achievements honored by the prestigious EDUCAUSE award. The transformation of Coppin's technology infrastructure is already having a profound impact on the institution's advancement, extending even more academic and community-building opportunities to its students, faculty, and staff."

Dr. Battle praised the efforts of the Information Technology Division (ITD) and thanked EDUCAUSE for its recognition of Coppin.

"We are pleased and honored to have been selected for this prominent award," said Dr. Battle. "It is encouraging to the Coppin Family – especially the leaders of our information technology efforts – to know that our vision for meshing innovative technology and our unique mission is worthy of national recognition. I would like to thank the EDUCAUSE awards selection committee and congratulate everyone in Coppin's Information Technology Division."

The EDUCAUSE annual awards recognize exemplary achievement in six areas of higher education information technology: leadership, professional writing, administrative information systems, information technology solutions, networking, and teaching and learning. Coppin along with the other winners of the 2005 awards were honored before more than 6,000 of their higher education colleagues at the association's annual conference this month in Orlando.

In 2002, Coppin State developed a strategic vision to address the challenges of a deteriorating infrastructure and the need for a competitive differentiator. Guided by strong executive leadership, the school's Information Technology Governance Committees representing senior leaders, students, faculty, and technical staff laid the foundation for change with the implementation of a Technology Fluency policy and program, and approval of a three-year project to replace the old technology infrastructure with a converged IP infrastructure and enhanced services. The result is an environment in which technology is understood, accepted, embraced, and utilized as an enabler of teaching, learning, collaboration, services, and innovation.

The comprehensive project included new cable plant infrastructure for academic buildings, library, and student union; Voice over IP (VoIP) enabled PBX and 600 VoIP phones; remote buildings connected to the main campus via wireless for voice, data, and e-mail; unified messaging services; smart classrooms and instructional technology software; and a sophisticated threat protection system. Noteworthy features include:

- a sustainable central budget allocation
- a laptop program for students supported through technology grants
- integration of monitoring and management of HVAC and smart classrooms into the converged network
- assessment tools for student technology fluency

Knowing that an "excellent innovative network infrastructure" is the key ingredient to achieve its technology vision, Coppin partnered with Nortel Networks to provide its network infrastructure and IT security equipment, support and guidance.

Dr. Ahmed El-Haggan is the Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer for Coppin State University. Under Dr. El-Haggan's leadership, ITD has gone to a new technology plateau. In addition to being the first school in the University System of Maryland (USM) to go wireless campus-wide, ITD is trailblazing paths on a number of other fronts. They include:

Coppin's pioneering 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 anytime access to the recorded classroom experience.

The addition of the Tegrity digital pen allows students to digitally record handwritten notes taken during class and automatically synchronize it with the recorded lecture. The recorded lecture is automatically loaded to the university's course management system. 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.

Recently, ITD announced the completion of Version 1 of the Coppin State University Mobile Website. The website, <http://www.coppin.edu/mobile> allows users of wireless handheld devices (PDAs and Cell

phone web browsers) who usually encounter varying levels of difficulty when navigating current websites, to access a user-friendly site created specifically for this audience.

In 2003, less than five months after its initial launch by ITD, EDUCAUSE cited Coppin's Website for being "well designed, visually appealing, and easy to use," among other attributes. EDUCAUSE chose Coppin as its "site of the week."

"I am very excited that Coppin is recognized for its leadership in utilizing Information Technology to advance its mission by EDUCAUSE, the most prestigious higher education association that advances the intelligent use of information technology in higher education," said Dr. El-Haggan. "Being in the same league as previous winners such as Dartmouth College, Purdue University, Duke University, Cornell University, and other higher education leaders is a testament to where Coppin is today and where we are heading. We had a great vision, we achieved it, and we are being recognized for it."

Dr. El-Haggan also said that "Partnering with Nortel Networks not only provided us with award winning network products; it also provided Coppin with a clear road map to achieve its vision. Nortel understood our vision and assisted us to get there."

Don Spicer, System CIO and ECAR (EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research) fellow congratulated Coppin on the award.

"A remarkable transformation has taken place at Coppin in the last 4-6 years and technology has played a significant role," said Spicer. "This award recognizes the leadership and its effectiveness at Coppin. The progress is remarkable and Coppin deserves the recognition."

A member of the University System of Maryland, Coppin State University is located in Northwest Baltimore. An HBCU that was founded in Baltimore City in 1900, Coppin is nationally recognized for its innovative programs that empower achievement. Coppin is named after the legendary, pioneering educator Fanny Jackson Coppin. Coppin continues to fulfill its unique mission of primarily focusing on the problems, needs and aspirations of the people of Baltimore's central city and its immediate metropolitan area. For more information visit www.coppin.edu.

EDUCAUSE is a nonprofit association whose mission is to advance higher education by promoting the intelligent use of information technology. The current membership comprises more than 1,900 colleges, universities, and educational organizations, including 200 corporations, with 15,000 active members. EDUCAUSE has offices in Boulder, Colorado, and Washington, D.C. For more information about EDUCAUSE visit <http://www.educause.edu/>

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