



PRESIDENT'S REPORT- STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY
University Day Assembly – January 8, 2014
Talon Center

Good morning and welcome back to the start of the spring 2014 semester!

I trust that everyone had a joyous and restful holiday break and that you are returning rejuvenated and ready to reconnect with our students to ensure that they are persisting towards graduation.

During today's University Day Program we will share important updates and celebrate the impressive accomplishments we are making together to advance Coppin. However, before we move through our agenda, we are joined today by a special guest and it is my pleasure to introduce her at this time.

Dr. Danette Howard was appointed Secretary of Higher Education by Governor Martin O'Malley in June, 2012. In this role she serves as the Chief Executive of the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), the State's postsecondary education coordinating agency and provides leadership for the State's \$110 million financial aid program. Secretary Howard also oversees the approval of new academic programs and institutions seeking to operate in Maryland. Prior to joining MHEC, Secretary Howard served as Assistant Director of Higher Education Policy at the Education Trust where she was instrumental in developing the "Access 2 Success Initiative"; a project that seeks to cut the college entry and graduation gaps for low-income and minority students in half by 2015.

Dr. Howard began her career in higher education as a student affairs administrator at UMBC and later worked as a research assistant at University of Maryland College Park. She earned her bachelor's degree from Howard University, her master's degree from the Harvard University School of Education, and her Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, College Park.

On a personal note, I have come to admire Secretary Howard for her tenacity, her tolerance, and her skill in enduring these turbulent times. Secretary Howard is a friend of Coppin and cares deeply about the population we serve. She has defended our cause and stood by us as the critics question our performance, while amplifying the justification for our existence. Please join me in extending a warm Coppin welcome to Secretary Danette Howard.

Thank you Secretary Howard for your informative and inspiring comments, more importantly, for renewing your support for Coppin. We are fortunate to have you as a partner in our mutual mission of providing access to quality higher education for all Marylanders.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

As I transition into my President's Report, I again bring you Happy New Year's greetings. I imagine many of you made New Year's resolutions. In addition to your personal resolutions, I am calling for a joint New Year's resolution at Coppin, that we must collectively maintain our commitment to our students as our top priority and work together to overcome the two indicators that have negatively defined us for too long – low graduation rates and declining enrollment. We have begun to implement actions to move us in the right direction to improve on these indicators and you will hear more about how these actions are taking shape.

But before I talk about the actions and our accomplishments, I want to introduce the leadership team that is working hard to make our progress possible.

Cabinet Members please stand as I call your names:

Provost and VP for Academic Affairs **Dr. Sadie Gregory**, VP for Administration and Finance **John Spinard**, VP for Institutional Advancement **Mr. Doug Dalzell**, VP for Student Affairs **Dr. Franklin Chambers**, VP for Information Technology **Dr. Ahmed El-Haggan**, Athletic Director **Mr. Derrick Ramsey**, Chief of Staff **Ms. Luwanda Jenkins**, Senior Advisor for Legal Affairs **Ms. Francine Stokes-McElveen**.

This is the Executive Leadership team that is working with the entire campus to bring about the positive change and actions that are beginning to move us in the right direction, and as a result, we can take great pride in the following recent accomplishments:

- **We have balanced our budget** and achieved a fund balance which appeared improbable last January;
- **We have been re-accredited by Middle States**, along with our College of Health Profession's School of Nursing's program, which received the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education re-accreditation.
- **Our Academic Structure has been reorganized** into 4 Colleges and is functioning more efficiently. A stronger focus on effective student advising and increased credit hour production through more efficient course scheduling are just a few examples of how we are achieving a more efficient academic enterprise.
- **We have completed updating several critical policies** that will enhance our efforts to operate in a culture of accountability and a spirit of Shared Governance. The Faculty and Student Handbooks and Shared Governance Policy are completed and approved. The Post Tenure Review process will begin this year. The Provost will develop the

rotation schedule. The Appointment, Rank and Tenure Document will soon be completed and implemented.

- **We have launched a new marketing and advertising campaign** to start rebuilding Coppin's image and support student recruitment and our fundraising efforts are yielding results.
- **We have focused on skills training across the campus**—from training for faculty academic advisors to customer service training for all employees to IT training to better utilize our technology in every aspect of the campus.
- **We came together to restore an important tradition of honoring our university's namesake** with a campus-wide observance of Fannie Jackson Coppin Week and Founders Day.
- **We are uplifting our spirits** with the return of our Gospel Choir and engagement of the local Faith Based community.
- **We continue to develop student leaders on campus**; our Student Leaders and Greek Organization students are maintaining cumulative GPAs of 2.7 or higher.
- On the sports front, our **Women's Volleyball Team** earned second place in the MEAC Volleyball Tournament.
- Our **Club Football team defended their title** and was crowned the 2013 National Club Football Association Champions.

We have accomplished much this past year which is cause to celebrate, however, we have much still yet to do. But I know we are up for the task. We are just getting our stride. We have invested the time to develop two plans to guide us and provide a compass for our continued journey.

These plans are the **Coppin Implementation Plan** and the **2020 Strategic Plan** and we are at an important point where these plans are aligned to ensure that we achieve immediate and long-term results that will set Coppin on a successful course for the future. At this time, I would like to ask individuals who serve on both the Implementation Plan Team and Strategic Planning Committee to please stand so we can recognize you.

The Implementation Plan was presented at last fall's University Day. I am pleased to report that we have reached the mid-way point in executing the (50) actions which are in direct response to the Coppin Review Committee Report. Our Mid-term report has been submitted to USM and will be presented to a committee of the Maryland General Assembly later this month. **The 2013-2020 Strategic Plan** was just completed and will be presented soon.

So what is next on the horizon of things we need to address in the months ahead?

Rebuilding our Enrollment Management and Financial Aid Operations:

We are completing the search process for the Director of Financial Aid and the AVP for Enrollment Management. Both of these are vitally important positions and we must find the best possible people to lead these areas.

Meanwhile, we have initiated an Enrollment Management Plan beginning with a more deliberate recruitment strategy. Recruitment is now the responsibility of Student Affairs. Student Affairs will be responsible for bringing students here. Academic Affairs will be responsible for retaining and graduating our students. There can no longer be stove pipes, but teamwork. We must emphasize Team Coppin. Academic Affairs sets the admission standards. Student Affairs will implement them and together they plan orientation activities, transfer articulations, CSU information dissemination, and working with IA to improve our image through more effective marketing to help attract students to Coppin.

As we attract more students, we must have top functioning support operations such as Financial Aid to package and disperse financial aid awards in a timely and accurate manner. We will soon have the leadership in place to effectively re-vamp our Financial Aid operations.

We have also reported on the success we have made with improving our financial controls. Our budget deficit is gone. We have responded to all our audit findings. We have put policies and procedures in place and they will be followed. The question has been raised about how to get more mileage out of our award winning Information Technology infrastructure.

For example, how do we infuse more of our IT capability into the Academic enterprise to better prepare our students for the technology-intensive workforce needs that are driving our economy: areas like cybersecurity, software engineering, and smart technology. In addition, our IT activity must be effectively infused into the Administrative operations of the campus.

We have been faced with an analogy of having a BMW IT Department that is operating on a Volks Wagon campus. Our IT Department must continue to transform itself to be more responsive to our immediate needs – Recruitment Admissions, Financial Aid, Registration, and Retention. So we will redesign the BMW and the VW and have a super hybrid. I am therefore issuing a challenge for this to become a reality.

Speaking of reality, the “Big-Picture Reality” is that we need ALL areas of the university to operate like a well-oiled synchronized engine in order to succeed in retaining the students we have while building our enrollment back up to near campus capacity of 5,000 students.

This month marks my 1-year milestone here at Coppin, and over the past year, I have concluded that the persistent statement that “our students are different is an expired excuse.” Our performance indicators must reflect the expectations of a university funded by taxpayers, governed by a demanding Board, and scrutinized by the media which is prone to sensationalism.

So irrespective of our redesigned indicators, we cannot escape the two areas that can deflate whatever other successes we achieve; **the dismal graduation rate and the declining enrollment.** My challenge to you therefore, is to let us join hands in achieving the Coppin we want to see in 2020. The challenge to all of us is to adopt the following mind-set for our graduation rate:

Out in Four – Five you must – Six you will still count – Seven you won’t.

Deans and Chairs work with our Provost and VPs to attract students who can graduate out in four. Adopt the best practices of the Department of Athletics. Help to build the STEM Program so that we can attract the next generation of African American Scientists. Embrace the Coppin Academy as a ready-made pipeline for new students. We don’t have the resources to buy high achievers, but our relationship and programs should be such that no other university should have first choice for Coppin Academy graduates. Be innovative and ensure that Academy graduates enter CSU having completed some general education requirements.

As you identify best practices such as: The Near Completers Program, The Summer Enrichment Program, Course Redesign, Honors Program, the STEM Program, Community College Articulation, Coppin Academy Acceleration Program; let us identify the resources needed to magnify our successes.

We must exercise caution so that we do not place the numbers game over and above the importance of learning. Our graduates will be our ambassadors; therefore, learning matters and you should keep learning in the forefront. I encourage you that for 2014, we will all commit ourselves to the success of CSU.

We **WILL** adhere to our policies and procedures so that we can achieve clean audit reports and maintain a balanced budget.

We are all here for the same purpose – to educate students and help them achieve successful careers. So refrain from the philosophy that the administration is anti-faculty and vice versa. In building Team Coppin, there is no them and us. Develop a clear understanding of the concepts of shared governance. Be collegial and do not be afraid to reject mediocrity from your students as well as your colleagues.

In closing, I want to end where I began, by asking everyone in this room; faculty, staff, students and administrators to make your New Year's resolution for Coppin one where we join together to make students our top priority. By working together as a team and embracing change we can successfully re-establish Coppin as a vital provider of higher education throughout our immediate community and the state of Maryland.

We **must** provide the wind to graduate our students in **FOUR** and ensure that Coppin will **SOAR** for years to come. **Will you join me in this resolution!**

Thank you and may we have a prosperous and **COPPIN PROUD** 2014.

I invite you to reflect on these images which celebrate our accomplishments this past year.