



## OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

February 16, 2023

Good afternoon, and welcome to the 2023 State of the University Address. Keylin Perez, and Tre'Quan Hayes you did an incredible job getting us started. Let's give our Mister and Miss Coppin State University a round of applause.

Happy Homecoming, Coppin! It is an exciting time to be at Coppin State University, and I appreciate everyone coming out today, as well as those watching via live stream.

Today, we pause to reflect on what we have accomplished collectively this past year, and look ahead, with great optimism, to a future that is ours to create. Our accomplishments are many and we have achieved them by working together across campus and beyond. And I appreciate those who support our efforts: state and federal leaders, USM Chancellor and his team, the USM Board of Regents, our alumni, and friends.

Let me also acknowledge a cohort of new faces, and some familiar ones that have joined the Coppin State University leadership team, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs - Pamela Wilks, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs - Stephan Moore, Associate Vice President for Student Development and Achievement - James Stewart, Chief Government and Legislative Affairs Officer - Stephanie Hall, Director of Title III - Angela William, Director of Title IX - Katsura Kurita, Director of Communications - Robyne McCullough, Interim Vice President for Information Technology - Dionne Curbeam, Interim Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs - Errol Bolden, Interim Dean of Graduate Studies - Ericka Covington, Interim Dean for the College of Health Professions - Joan Tilghman, Faculty Senate President - Nicholas Eugene, and Staff Senate Chair, Yvonne Oliver. Let me also acknowledge our First Lady - Toinette.

One of the best parts of our university are our people. As a member of our faculty and staff, you play a profound role in educating, mentoring, and inspiring Coppin students every day. It is your work, collaboration and commitment that has allowed us to advance our beloved Coppin. Over the years, Coppin has evolved, from college to university, and changes in location, and size. However, one thing has never changed - that is our purpose, and I thank our faculty and staff for your unwavering loyalty to nurturing potential and transforming the lives of our diverse, multicultural, multi-generational student population.

Our role as a public university has never been more important. As a public university we must continue to educate our students to lead, find solutions, and have an entrepreneurial and innovative spirit, as they leave these hallowed grounds set on transforming the future. Universities like Coppin are critical to developing a strong functioning society. To do our part, we must challenge ourselves in new ways - through new curriculum development, new approaches to teaching, intentional holistic development, expanding experiential learning, and better measurement of student learning outcomes. These factors are the core promise of a quality public education. With this context as

our backdrop, over the next several minutes I will talk about how Coppin is following through on its promise and its mission.

As a university, we have much to be proud of. We do an incredible job providing our students with a quality education. The benefits to our students extend far beyond their time at Coppin, and there is no question that we are a leader in upward and economic mobility. We also know students who earn their degree from Coppin receive a significant return on their investment, and in turn, make greater investments in our communities, city, and state.

According to GradReports, a national organization that looks at college graduates one-year after graduation in relations to salaries, and career placement, Coppin is ranked seventh, among Maryland's four-year colleges and universities. As Maryland's most affordable four-year university, we work to ensure students are never priced out, or otherwise excluded from receiving a life changing education.

Academic quality will always serve as the standard for an outstanding public university. At Coppin, we are extending the boundaries of learning. Through our Divisions of Academic Affairs and Information Technology, we are engaging our students in 21<sup>st</sup> Century innovative learning. Instead of just reading textbooks or watching videos about a subject, students use virtual reality technology to become fully immersed in what they are learning. Our nursing students navigate human hearts and lungs to explore and learn the difference between healthy and diseased organs. In Criminal Justice, students walk through virtual crime scenes, in the arts - theatre students engage in method acting techniques, and Rehabilitation Counseling is using virtual reality to work with persons experiencing various conditions including autism and schizophrenia. Using technology in these ways allow us to elevate our teaching and advance student learning in ways never before imaged.

We are also using technology to champion accessible education for all students. The National Center for Education Statistics estimates that approximately 11% of U.S. undergraduates report living with a disability. The Division of Information Technology is helping to cultivate a campus community in which digital tools and technologies are accessible for all persons and are used to enhance our learning environment.

As a result of these cutting-edge efforts, Coppin State faculty and IT staff were named winners of the 2022 Catalyst Award for Optimizing Student Experience, by Anthology. The award acknowledges institutions leveraging technology to develop educational and administrative innovations that positively influence the learning experience and improves operational efficiency.

The brand of our university continues to rise, in large part, because our faculty, staff and students continue to gain state and national recognition for their outstanding work on and beyond campus. We congratulate F. Michelle Richardson who was elected President of the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASS); and all our faculty and staff who are professionally engaged at the local, state, and national levels. Let's also congratulate students Isa Williams and Brittany Saunders who received nominations for their performance in the theater play BROKE-ology.

Last summer, five Coppin State University criminal justice students joined the Baltimore Police Department as interns, as part of a paid internship pilot program, sponsored by the Police Executive

Research Forum. Our students spent the summer learning about police operations, and presented research they conducted on how policing in diverse communities such as Baltimore can be improved. The Baltimore Police Department accepted several of their recommendations. The goal is for the program to be replicated in major cities nationally, and our students will play a role designing the student experience.

Our commitment to raising the research profile of the university has never been stronger. In fact, our faculty and staff have propelled our research enterprise to historic heights, earning a record number of sponsored awards. This past year, we secured over \$6.4 million in grant funding from state and federal agencies. This is a 211% increase since 2019, that is remarkable.

Coppin State is where scholars and champions are made. The collaboration between coaches, faculty and staff have resulted in tremendous personal and athletic achievements for our students. Our amazing Eagles, in 2022, brought home numerous individual athletic and academic accolades, in track and field, volleyball, tennis, bowling, and basketball. And let's give our baseball team a big Eagle Nation applauds for winning the 2022 MEAC Baseball Championship.

And while our student-athletes' accomplishments in the arena of competition are something to cheer about, our proudest achievement is leading the MEAC with the highest student-athlete graduation rate at 89 percent.

Let me also take this moment to congratulate Nichole Person for securing a \$95,000 grant to support student-athletes' academic success, Head Volleyball Coach, Tim Walsh – for winning MEAC Coach of the Year, and Head Baseball Coach, Sherman Reed and his coaching staff for their championship season. And they will receive their championship ring during halftime of our men's basketball game, so please join us.

During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, we had our best fundraising year in history. Because of the incredible generosity of alumni, faculty, staff, friends, and corporate supporters, total gifts surpassed \$4.7 million dollars to help advance the university's priorities. This is the third year in a row that we have exceeded our external fundraising goal. Our record-breaking fundraising also reflects the hard work and leadership of our Institutional Advancement team in collaboration with so many across campus.

For the second consecutive year, Eagle Nation and our friends came out in force to support our annual golf classic. And if you missed it, you missed the best golf classic in Maryland. This year's golf classic raised a record \$70,000 to support our Division of Athletics. I want to thank the Coppin State University Foundation Board, the Divisions of Institutional Advancement and Athletics, our friends, and the entire planning committee for their collaboration and leadership.

Great strides have also been made in the growth of our university endowment. And in a time when endowments are critical to a university's stability, together, we have increased our endowment by 34%, since 2019, exceeding \$16 million. This is a record for the university. Our success in fundraising and engagement is yet another clear sign, that Eagle Nation, and our friends are behind us, and they value the direction in which our university is headed.

This summer, we partnered with The Sax Agency on our brand awareness campaign. And I appreciate the faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends who participated in the focus groups.

The exercise allowed us to better understand how Coppin is viewed by internal and external stakeholders. This campaign is helping us articulate our value and display our brand across Maryland and neighboring states. Results have generated positive feedback from those traveling around the state, on I-83, moving through BWI airport, or engaging with us on social media. Led by our Division of Institutional Advancement team and divisions across campus, this visibility of Coppin will help us attract talented students, faculty, and staff; and deepen university pride throughout Eagle Nation.

These efforts are part of our 6 Point Enrollment Strategic Plan and designed to increase our enrollment and retention. And I am pleased to report that for Fall 2022, Coppin was one of three institutions acknowledged by the USM for enrollment growth in its incoming cohort. This past fall, our endeavors to expand our recruitment market share resulted in our attracting students from thirty-five different states, including the District of Columbia and thirty international countries. We also saw significant growth among our Presidential and Fanny Jackson Coppin Scholars. In Fall 2021, we enrolled a total of twenty Presidential and Fanny Jackson Coppin scholars. In Fall 2022, the total increased to eighty Presidential and Fanny Jackson Coppin Scholars. Also, in Fall 2022, we witnessed over a quarter of Coppin Academy's graduating senior class, enroll at Coppin State – this is a record high. In the face of unstable headwinds that caused enrollment declines across our nation, the actions we took allowed us to keep our enrollment flat. These accomplishments were made possible, because of the collaborative teamwork between the Divisions of Enrollment Management & Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Institutional Advancement. And while, these achievements are encouraging, we continue to work on improving our recruitment model so we can build off these growth trends for years to come.

Our 6 Point Plan will focus on several key elements: an evaluation and overhaul of our admission processes; the development of seamless partnerships with K-12, local agencies, and community colleges; strengthen the recruitment of traditional and non-traditional students in Baltimore (online and face-to-face efforts), and expand our market share to include an intentional focus on the recruitment of Latino and international students; we will increase our competitive scholarships; continue developing our comprehensive marketing and branding campaign; and implement a comprehensive data-driven retention plan.

A year ago, we began a series of campus conversations about ways to improve the retention of our students and the stabilization of our overall campus population. From these conversations, it became apparent there was no consistent approach or plan to our retention work. Together, we set out to develop a comprehensive retention model, one that is more proactive, systematic, and equipped with policies, procedures, and best practices designed to better meet the needs of our students. To help provide direction for our retention efforts, we created the Student Development and Achievement (SDA) unit, led by James Stewart. To establish greater synergy among the new team and provide our students with quality wrap around support services, with the leadership and support from the Office of Facilities Management, the Divisions of Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Information Technology, we created our first ever centralized student success hub, the Eagle Achievement Center. Immediately following the State of the University Address, please join us on the fourth floor of the Parlett L. Moore Library for the ribbon cutting ceremony to officially open our new Eagle Achievement Center. The impact of our new SDA team is already being felt, together we yield a six percent increase in our first-to-second year retention this past year.

While this is good news, we still have far too many students adversely impacted by academic, financial, and advising issues. This makes our strategic enrollment and retention work an essential priority, for our university.

In spring 2022, to help students reduce the time it takes to complete their degree, we announced our Summer SOAR program, this summer our Summer SOAR program goes live. Students who earned a total of thirty semester credit hours this past academic year, can enroll in up to six credits hours during the summer, for free. And I am thrilled that students are already inquiring about the program.

Our Student Affairs, and Administration and Finance teams are continuing their good work of improving the student experience on campus. I am pleased to report the implementation of our new university hour has been a huge success. It has been instrumental in bringing life back to campus, especially in the dining hall and within the residential quad. Also, as we pack the PEC to cheer on our basketball teams you will hear the sounds of the Coppin State Pep Band, consisting of students, faculty, staff and alumni. Greek Life received a boost as we welcomed back to campus the gentlemen of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Incorporated - moving us closer to once again having all Divine Nine fraternities and sororities active on campus, for the first time in over five years. Student Affairs and Administration and Finance will also lead the charge to establish a senior celebration week, the week of events will honor and celebrate our graduating seniors. And with the help of the commencement committee, we revamped commencement to include a graduate stroll. Also, I want to acknowledge and thank Kevin Carr, Consuella Simms, Christopher Thomas, and Monae Hicks for spearheading our efforts to stand up our Coppin Corner. This work goes to the heart of our commitment to address food insecurity issues on campus. These are but a few of the steps we have taken to foster a more responsive and engaged student experience at Coppin.

And let's congratulate Ihsan Mujahid, Assistant Dean of Campus Life, for winning Mister and Miss HBCU Advisor of the Year.

Coppin State University continues to generate a significant return on public investment. Our economic impact on Baltimore and the State of Maryland nears \$250 million dollars annually. For every one dollar the state invests in Coppin, it receives nearly \$4 in return. This is why we have and will continue to take action that strengthens our legislative presence and partnerships, at the federal and state levels. Over the past several months we have created opportunities to showcase the importance of Coppin State University and provided over seventy new and current lawmakers with a factual data-driven narrative that reinforces Coppin State is an essential university, irreplaceable and invaluable to our state and region.

And we have double down on our commitment to West Baltimore. Driven by our designation as an anchor university, this past summer, we secured over \$2 million dollars to support businesses and community development near campus. Adjacent to campus, at the Mill on North we helped bring eight Black own eateries to West Baltimore, by securing an \$800,000 grant to complete the new food hall project. The food hall will provide the campus and surrounding community with additional eating options, and our campus community will be able to utilize their university meal cards to dine at the food hall.

Also, last summer, I joined several state and local community leaders to celebrate the groundbreaking for the KEYS Community Healing Village – a center that will provide mental and

behavioral health support, meals, and additional resources to members of the community in West Baltimore. We secured over \$1.2 million dollars to help with the development of this project. This partnership will afford Coppin students, faculty, and staff the opportunity to strengthen our community and our outreach through mentoring, teaching and recruitment.

Team Coppin, we should be proud of our progress. Our 2022 accomplishments represent historic success across every facet of our mission; thus, the picture is clear, because of you - the state of our university is strong. And it is from these achievements we will continue formulating behaviors, and ideals that equip us to better tomorrow than we are today.

And we will continue our progress, guided by our five strategic priorities. I appreciate the collaborative work being done by our strategic planning steering committee and subcommittees.

While there is urgency in our work, it must be done with intentionality. The goal of achieving our priorities may mean we sometimes find ourselves in uncomfortable spaces together, but this may be necessary as we continue to learn and grow collectively.

With an impressive year to build upon, we will focus on an audacious future shaped by our commitment to create signature programs and support services that prepare students for their dream career, while simultaneously meeting the workforce needs of our state and region. To support our work, we will continue expanding our academic portfolio as we add a B.S. in Cybersecurity Engineering program, our first engineering program, and a MSW to DSW program, our second doctoral program, and I want to thank our faculty for their vision and leadership.

Over the next few years, Dean Sadie Gregory and the faculty of the College of Business will be working to elevate our business school's accreditation from ACBSP to AACSB. AACSB is the highest accreditation standard an academic school of business can attain; thus, we will become one of nine-hundred institutions across sixty countries, and one of eighteen HBCUs with this designation - placing our College of Business alongside the Top 6% of business schools in the world. And to foster their work we will dedicate the new College of Business and Graduate Studies building later this spring.

Dean Leontye Lewis and the faculty of C.A.S.E, will launch, for Fall 2023, our Master of Education in Teacher Leadership. This academic program positions us to recapture the dominance we have been known for in preparing future educators and administrators, at the K-12 level.

The Division of Institutional Advancement will develop national alumni chapters, beginning with the Northeastern region. Such chapters will position us to connect and reconnect with our growing alumni base. Moreover, these chapters will play an important role in our recruitment, retention, networking, and mentoring efforts.

In Fall 2022, I charged the Coppin State University Foundation Board, and the Division of Institutional Advancement to develop a gala that would allow us to raise funding to support our students, as well as showcase our impact as an anchor university. On May 5, 2023, join us in a stylish celebration along the Baltimore Harbor as we “Illuminate the Impact and Ascent of Eagle Nation.” The inaugural Coppin State University Gala will be a spectacular event.

The success of our students relies heavily on our faculty and staff, and the development of our team is crucial to the quality of education and services we provide. Therefore, I am allocating \$1,000, annually, to each regular full-time faculty and staff member to be used to enhance and invest in our team's development as professionals and educators. Divisions are working with the Office of the President to rollout this initiative for Fall 2023.

This spring, we will begin the work of establishing our dual enrollment office, which will be housed in the Division of Academic Affairs. The office will be responsible for building partnerships with high schools and community colleges throughout Maryland. Its purpose is two-fold; increase our presence in local high schools and community colleges; and provide a pathway for students to jumpstart their college career and transition seamlessly into Coppin State University.

Since my arrival, I have been inspired by so many of our faculty and staff who provide outstanding teaching and personal support to our students, at every level.

Eagle Nation, now is our moment. Today we accept the challenge of reaching our fullest potential as a leader in urban higher education, and we will do so by working together, focusing on our priorities, and relying on our resiliency and character. Everything we have accomplished has been done by the power of one...one team, and one university. Let us recommit ourselves to our noble mission. Let us be inspired by, that which is in our reach, and the great ambition of our university - "nurture potential...transform lives". Because at Coppin, we know...the Sky is not the limit.

Thank you, let's have a great Homecoming, and Go Eagles!