

May 5, 2020

Dear Coppin Campus Community:

Thanks to the students, faculty, and staff who have remained steadfast in the pursuit of education and in their efforts to promote the university, despite the challenges we face during the COVID19 pandemic. I and the university's leadership team greatly appreciate your dedication. As we move toward the end of the Spring 2020 semester, I want to provide an update on the status of the university.

The university remains open for course instruction and university services. As of March 16, 2020, all staff is teleworking, with the exception of those who are essential and must report to the campus in order to fulfill vital campus operations. The campus will continue in this telework capacity until further guidance is received from Governor Hogan and Chancellor Perman.

The Spring 2020 Commencement ceremony will not be held this month. However, I have accepted the recommendation of the campus Commencement Committee to plan for a May 2021 commencement ceremony to celebrate the spring 2020 graduates. The committee has also recommended a virtual celebration, and plans are moving forward to accomplish this in June, 2020.

Courses for the summer sessions will be offered, exclusively, online and will begin as scheduled, on May 26. This is also the last day of registration for session 1 of summer 2020.

All external and internal campus activities, events, and summer programs have been cancelled until further notice. This includes the Summer Academic Success Academy.

The university continues to work with the Governor's office and the USM Chancellor's Office to determine the safest way to proceed with academic program delivery and university staff operations for fall 2020. At this point, it is uncertain whether conditions will allow us to safely return to our on-campus operations. We are planning and preparing for online instruction for the fall while hoping that the threat of the COVID-19 virus diminishes enough for us to have some on-campus presence. Further plans are being implemented in order to assist students who may need computer equipment and internet access in order to fulfill course instruction requirements. We will continue to provide updates, as we receive them.

Many of you have heard about the passage of the federal CARES Act. The university has already received student funding of approximately \$1.4 million through this legislation. In preparation, I have established a workgroup to provide recommendations regarding the disbursement of funds to students, focusing on the strategic goals of the university. As such, I have approved the following:

- All eligible returning full-time students who register for Fall 2020 courses will receive \$350 each;
- All eligible returning part-time students who register for Fall 2020 courses will receive \$150 each;
- All eligible graduating students will receive \$350 or \$150 each, depending on enrollment status;
- Laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots will be purchased and provided to students, based on financial need.

Since the Maryland Comptroller writes checks for the university, students can expect to begin receiving funds from that office beginning June 1, 2020.

One of the main goals for this year has been to build our enrollment. We have worked to ensure that the decisions made are focused on improving enrollment and retaining students. As a result, I am pleased to report that enrollment staff are managing well, in spite of the challenges imposed by the pandemic, and all recruitment, admission, and registration activities have been moved online. Currently, 2,254 students have been admitted for the fall 2020 semester. I applaud the efforts of the faculty and the staff of the University Academic Advising Center whose collective efforts have resulted in registering more than 1,000 students for fall 2020 semester. This is significantly more than the number of students who registered by the same time, last year. New student registrations are also above last year's numbers. What, ultimately, happens with our enrollment will depend on how the coronavirus pandemic progresses, but we are optimistic at this point.

You may have noticed an increase in Coppin State media presence on television and online through our Coppin marketing piece and highlighted news stories about Coppin State students. We were also very pleased to see that the university has been ranked number 17 in the country for *Best Value* by College Consensus. Even from a distance, working together has demonstrated the collective strength of the Coppin Campus community.

My tenure as interim president of Coppin State University is scheduled to end on May 26, when the newly appointed president, Dr. Anthony Jenkins, will assume his role as leader of this outstanding institution. I have enjoyed my time here, getting to know the students, faculty, and staff and helping to move the university forward. I am confident in Coppin's bright future, and I wish you all tremendous success, in the years to come!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. L. Burnim". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mickey L. Burnim, Ph.D.  
Interim President