



Testimony to the House Appropriations Committee

**Subcommittee on Education and Economic Development
of the Maryland General Assembly**

Presented by Dr. Robert L. Caret

President, Towson University

February 2008



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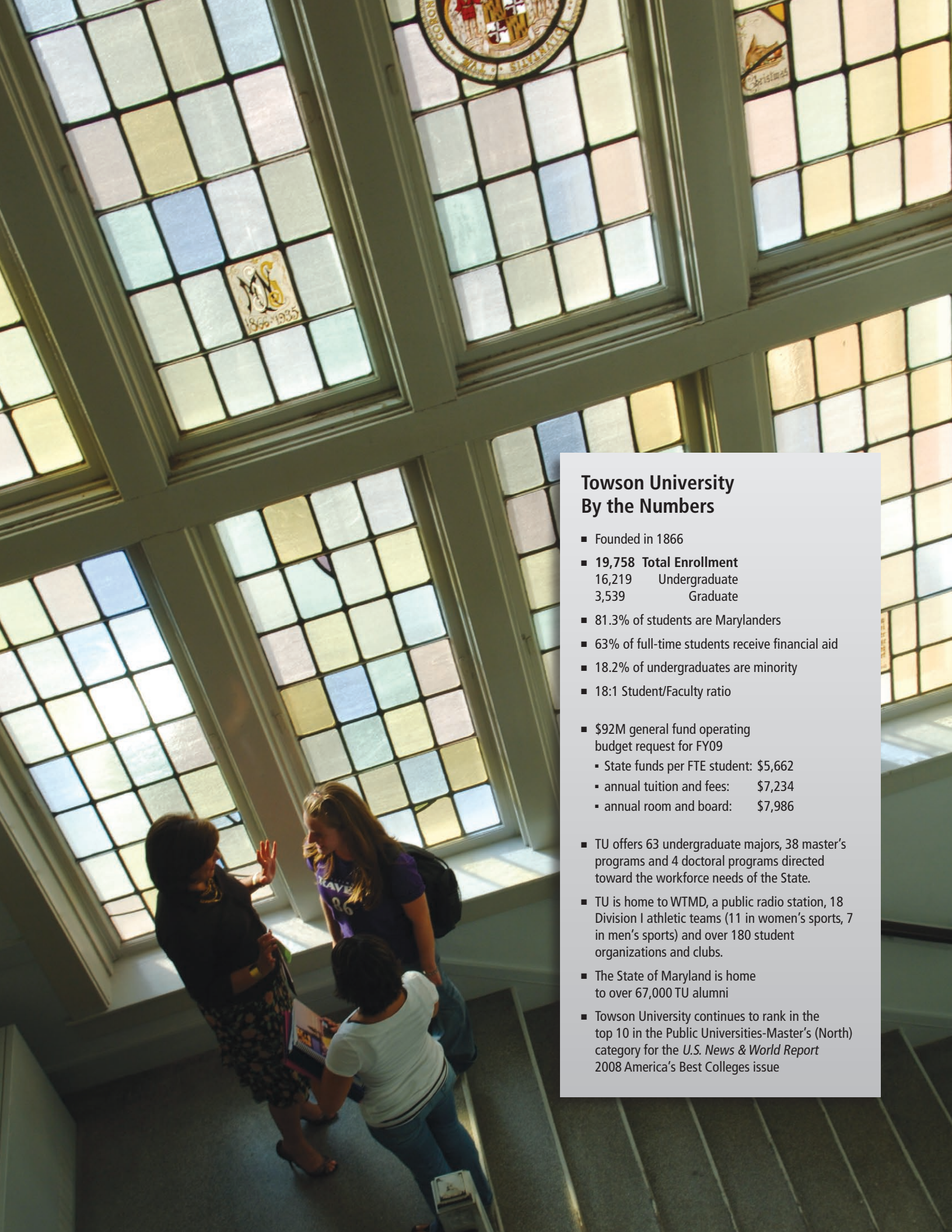
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Towson University By the Numbers

- Founded in 1866
- **19,758 Total Enrollment**
16,219 Undergraduate
3,539 Graduate
- 81.3% of students are Marylanders
- 63% of full-time students receive financial aid
- 18.2% of undergraduates are minority
- 18:1 Student/Faculty ratio

- \$92M general fund operating budget request for FY09
 - State funds per FTE student: \$5,662
 - annual tuition and fees: \$7,234
 - annual room and board: \$7,986

- TU offers 63 undergraduate majors, 38 master's programs and 4 doctoral programs directed toward the workforce needs of the State.
- TU is home to WTMD, a public radio station, 18 Division I athletic teams (11 in women's sports, 7 in men's sports) and over 180 student organizations and clubs.
- The State of Maryland is home to over 67,000 TU alumni
- Towson University continues to rank in the top 10 in the Public Universities-Master's (North) category for the *U.S. News & World Report* 2008 America's Best Colleges issue



Chairman Bohanan, and members of the subcommittee on Education and Economic Development, thank you for providing me the opportunity today to update you on Towson University's progress over the past year and to discuss our goals and challenges for FY 2009. Over the past five years as Towson University's President, I have come to the legislative session each year eager to share the wonderful strides we have made toward accomplishing the goals and objectives laid out in our Towson University 2010 strategic plan. As 2010 emerges on the horizon, now is a better time than ever to talk about the 2010 vision and how it fits into the State's needs.

Maryland's Metropolitan University

First, thanks must go out to those who have worked tirelessly to support higher education in Maryland. By creating the Higher Education Investment Fund during the special session to supplement the general fund appropriation, the Governor and General Assembly have made it clear that they understand the State's future success is reliant on a well-educated workforce. As Maryland's Metropolitan University, Towson continues to help a broad cross-section of society map their future and give them the tools to be confident and successful citizens.

Towson University maintains an active role in the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU) of which we were a founding member. In 2006 the organization's headquarters were relocated to our campus, and I was elected President. In October 2007 Towson University was proud to host the annual conference in Baltimore with a community engagement theme. Several major tenets of metropolitan universities were highlighted, including:

- Giving students practical, real-life experiences as part of their education
- Lending expertise to help solve community problems while practicing and teaching good citizenship
- Actively building partnerships to achieve goals

As you can see, the CUMU philosophy is very much in sync with our responsibilities beyond the campus. We will continue to embrace our mission of offering an affordable, accessible, and quality education to Maryland's citizens.

Towson University 2010: Mapping the Future

Towson University 2010 is a powerful document. When the university first laid out the 23 goals and 86 action items in 2003 we did not fully realize how quickly 2010 would approach. It is now 2008 and we are only two years away from reaching our objectives. When I look back over the past five years I am pleased with all that has been accomplished.

The plan provides a framework to address five major themes that are essential to the growth and success of Towson University's academic, student experience and community partnership programs:

- Enrollment Management, Growth, and Mix
- Partnerships Philosophy
- Student Experience and Success
- Resources for Success
- Telling and Selling the Story

The plan guides our decisions regarding academic programs, staff and financial resources, capital projects, and other major campus initiatives. For the past two years I have issued a report card to measure our success and grade our efforts toward accomplishing each of the themes. This year's report card will be released shortly, and though there is still much to be accomplished I am proud to say we are making excellent strides. The following provides a status report on some of our major accomplishments.

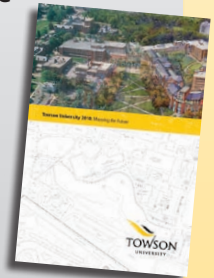
Enrollment Management, Growth and Mix

As the State's designated growth campus, we continue to grow to serve Maryland's citizens. In FY 2007 the State funded enrollment growth at Towson for 300 additional students, however due to continuing demand and our commitment to serve more students, Towson grew by 748 FTE students in fall 2007. The growth made the fall 2007 class the largest yet, swelling our total enrollment to almost 20,000 students. We are committed to educating these students who will become our State's nurses, teachers, artists, scientists and business professionals. Our acknowledgement as one of the "Best" in *U.S. News & World Report* and the *Princeton Review* reinforces that our commitment to our students is meaningful, with 68 percent of freshmen designating Towson as their first-choice institution.

Towson University 2010: Mapping the Future

Towson University will pursue selected directions in support of our mission and vision for the future. Each year, we will grade our efforts and success related to five themes:

- Enrollment Management, Growth and Mix
- Student Experience and Success
- Partnerships Philosophy
- Resources for Success
- Telling and Selling the Story



Creative Approaches to Growth

To address enrollment growth Towson University is presenting for approval to the Board of Regents a pilot trimester program that will enable Towson to maximize existing resources and increase enrollments over an entire calendar year. As proposed under the USM Efficiency and Effectiveness initiative, it will enable us to absorb student growth and reduce time-to-degree by drawing on two already available resources during the summer months—unused time and unused facilities. The pilot trimester will focus on increasing instructional capacity in areas of high workforce needs, including health professions, STEM disciplines, education, and homeland security.

Trimester

To address enrollment growth TU is presenting for approval to the Board of Regents a pilot trimester program for the summer months. The trimester program will:

- Respond to the BOR Efficiency and Effectiveness Initiative
- Address critical workforce needs
- Expand enrollment
- Reduce time to degree
- Expand course options for students
- Improve utilization of classrooms and labs
- Decrease demands on facilities, including residence halls and parking

The following high-demand program areas have been identified for inclusion in the pilot trimester:

- Health Professions
- STEM
- Information Technology
- Education
- Homeland Security

In addition, we have expanded our physical locations and online offerings. Towson University has a growing role in Harford County with the expansion of many of our program offerings to Harford Community College (HCC) and the HEAT Center. The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Act has catalyzed this need, and we are responding. We continue to be the largest producer of teachers and the second largest producer of nurses in Maryland, and our expansion into Harford County will bolster shortages in these areas. With more than 20 program articulation agreements now finalized allowing students to earn Towson bachelor's and master's degrees on the HCC campus, the Interstate 95 commute will no longer be a barrier to students who want to earn a TU degree.

Facilitating a Diverse and Inclusive Community of Learners

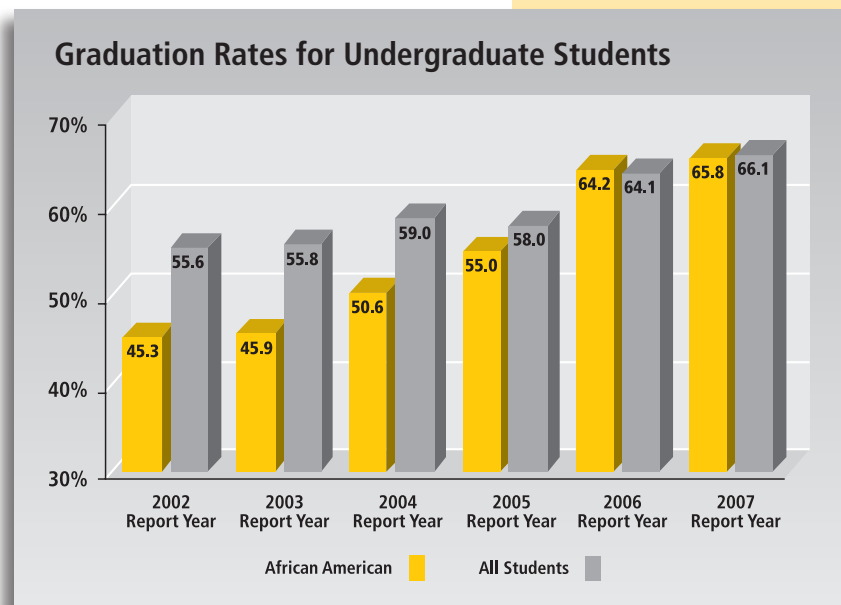
While our goal is to enroll 25,000 students by 2013, a major priority of this plan is to ensure a diverse mix of individuals. Our outreach programs with regional public schools continue to grow stronger and contribute positively to this goal. Towson University's Top Ten Percent Program attracts Baltimore City and Baltimore County high school seniors who rank in the top ten percent of their public schools. The program is now in its third year and has over 368 students enrolled—most of whom are minorities from urban high schools. To ensure student success we have created a partnership with Baltimore City Community College and the Community College of Baltimore County to offer necessary preparatory courses for many of these students and provide a seamless transition to a four-year degree.

Towson’s overall minority population is currently 18.2 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment. Closing the minority achievement gap at Towson became a reality last year. From 2002 to 2007 Towson reduced the graduation gap for minority students from 10.8 percent to 1 percent. The six-year graduation rate for all minorities is 63.4 percent, above our peer performance average of 43 percent.

Our African American graduates are an important part of our future. The region is becoming more diverse, and Baltimore City’s residential population is majority African American. Our percentage of African American undergraduates is 10.9 percent, which is above our peer average of 8.3 percent. The six-year graduation rate for African American students is now equal to all races. The second year retention rate is equally impressive with 85.2 percent of the African American students compared to 82 percent of all races remaining for their second year.

The percentage of African American students enrolled in our graduate programs is 13.5 percent, which is more than double our peer average of 6.0 percent. In Towson University’s 2007 graduating class, 8.5 percent of the master’s degrees were awarded to African American students.

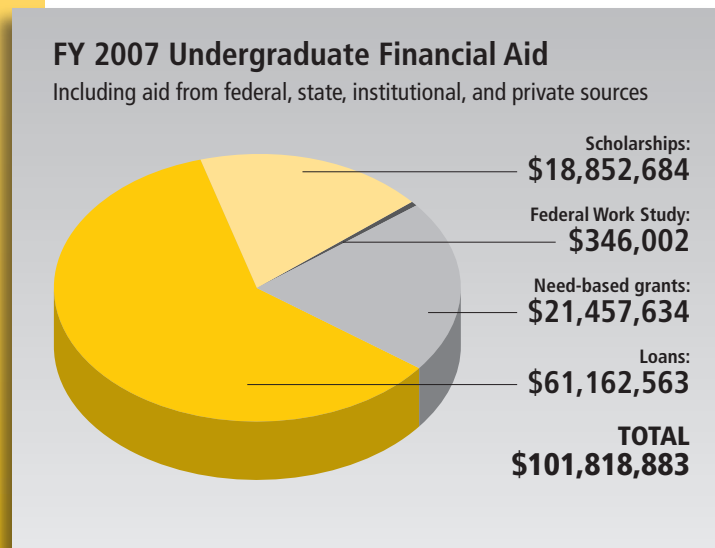
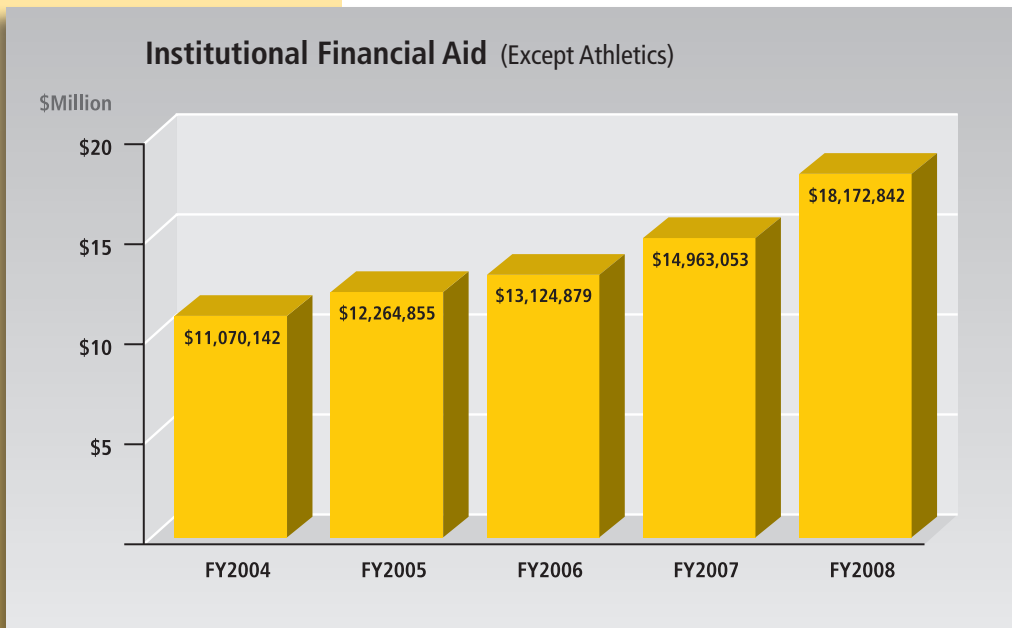
More important than the number of students are the outcomes. Towson University is providing a campus environment and support structure that enables all of our students to be successful not only during their time at the university but also after they graduate. Since 2006 we have been employing our campus-wide Reflective Process for Diversity. The process engages every level of employee in every division on campus and members of student leadership groups in self-reflection on diversity with the ultimate goal of facilitating a diverse and inclusive community of learners. At this time the Reflective Process has reached just under 600 employees. We anticipate that we will have reached our remaining faculty and staff by spring 2010. Through this initiative, we are continuing to shift our culture by increasing awareness and commitment to diversity campus-wide.



Financial Aid

Towson University's excellence as a public university means little unless we are accessible. Because of our commitment to accessibility and affordability, Towson University has established strong scholarship and financial aid programs. We continue to grow the institutional financial aid pool, which includes merit, need-based and mission-related aid. In FY 2008 Towson University budgeted 18.2 percent of the university's undergraduate tuition and fee revenue, or \$18,172,842, in support of institutional aid. This is an increase of \$3,209,789

over the previous fiscal year's spending. From FY 2004 to FY 2008 Towson University increased spending for need-based aid by more than \$5 million, or 161 percent. In FY 2009 we plan to continue to increase the financial aid pool in order to keep up with projected enrollment growth.



Partnerships Philosophy

Partnerships play an extremely important role in achieving our goals. They continue to help us serve as Maryland's Metropolitan University by making direct ties to entities at the local, regional and global levels. Using the partnerships philosophy, we will continue to evolve as a workforce engine for the State and expand our outreach efforts to promote economic development and address social issues within the State. A university of our size and location has civic and social responsibilities that reach beyond the limits of our campus. We are stewards of our community, and several initiatives demonstrate our commitment to this philosophy.

Cherry Hill Learning Zone Initiative

The Cherry Hill Learning Zone Initiative is a partnership among the Baltimore City Public School System, Baltimore City government, Towson University, and Cherry Hill's grassroots organizations. The partnership builds upon the strengths of the Cherry Hill community to meet its needs and nurture its potential in areas related to community, economic, and educational development. We are working with parents, civic leaders, small businesses, clergy and many others to help make Cherry Hill a community where children want to go to school and want to excel and succeed.



Towson University is also involved in managing several schools in the city under the University Partnership Schools initiative. This initiative was formalized by the State Board of Education in May, allowing the four elementary/middle schools in Cherry Hill and the neighboring Morrell Park Elementary/Middle School to be managed in partnership with Towson University. In addition, the university held a reading clinic in Cherry Hill over the summer and is currently developing a program that will teach high school students resume writing and interviewing skills. We continue to bring students and their parents on campus to further enhance their reading skills, exposing them to the academic environment at an early age.

Towson University's College of Education has been nationally recognized for creating more than 120 Professional Development Schools. Currently, Patapsco Elementary School is being prepared as a Professional Development School for Early Childhood educators beginning in spring 2008. Ultimately, all University Partnership Schools will be merged into a Professional Development School

network, whereby teachers across grade levels will be prepared for careers as urban educators. Our goal is to prepare every preschooler for kindergarten, every elementary-aged student for middle and high school, and every high school student for college or the workforce.

STEM Programs

Many of the jobs related to the influx of people expected from BRAC are related to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). The need for better preparation in this area beginning at the K-12 level is well-documented. Building on our Professional Development School network, Towson is partnering with those same



schools to build a STEM pipeline. This year a former NASA astronaut joined the Towson University team. Using his engineering knowledge and teaching experience, he is spearheading the university's Willard Hackerman Academy of Mathematics and Science, which brings more emphasis to early STEM initiatives. The academy recently launched a new Saturday morning series that features presentations, performances and demonstrations designed for students to learn about modern discoveries in mathematics and science. The Academy has also partnered with the Maryland Science Center to provide outreach activities in space science.

CareFirst Nursing Grants

Towson University continues to address the shortage of nurses in the region by expanding our programs to satellite locations and engaging in grant programs like CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield's Project RN, which was launched last fall. The program aims to increase faculty at nursing schools by preparing and supporting nurses completing their master's degrees with a commitment to teach in the Maryland, Virginia or D.C. area. CareFirst is committing \$1 million to provide annual grants of \$40,000 each for 12 master's nursing students over two years. Priority is given to schools that have demonstrated their commitment to increasing full- or part-time nursing educators.

MBA Program

Towson University’s College of Business and Economics has grown to be the largest undergraduate business school in the State and the largest of our six colleges. Since its inception, the UB/Towson MBA program has shown outstanding program results. In fall 2007, 391 students were enrolled, a 123 percent increase over 2006. The program is serving the needs of new graduates, career changers and seasoned professionals while addressing State efficiency and effectiveness mandates. Two new unique tracks for the MBA—sports management and business security—are offered only through the UB/Towson MBA program.

In February 2008 one of the UB/Towson MBA students was named a “Young Leader Under 30 on the Rise” by *Ebony* magazine. The feature honors professionals age 30 and under who are making a difference in the corporate world, government or through entrepreneurship, while also helping others in the community. The student credits his experience in the UB/Towson MBA program as helping him earn the honor. “I probably would not have been given this award if it had not been for the UB/Towson MBA program,” he said. “Being a part of the MBA is where my passion has been cultivated. Both campuses have also helped me develop my business.”

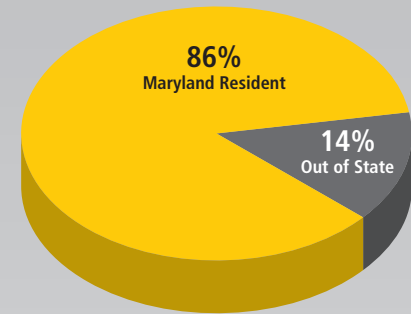
Research and Innovation

We are proud of several recent partnership developments that will enhance the lives of individuals with disabilities. In January, National Public Radio, Harris Corporation and Towson University faculty in conjunction with WTMD radio station announced a new initiative to make radio more accessible to the hundreds of millions of hearing and visually impaired people around the world. The initiative will leverage cutting-edge HD Radio technology to enable hearing-impaired people to “see” live radio content on specially equipped receivers by applying television closed-captioning processes to radio broadcasts. The technology will also provide audio cues and voice prompts for those visually impaired and blind.

2007 UB/Towson MBA Statistics

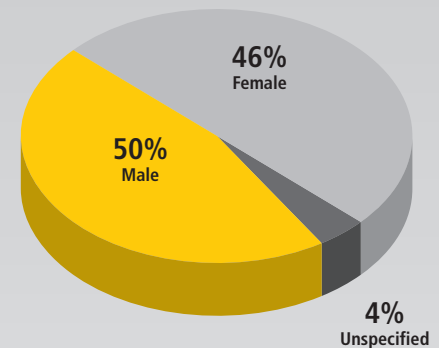
Residency

The program serves the need of Maryland residents.



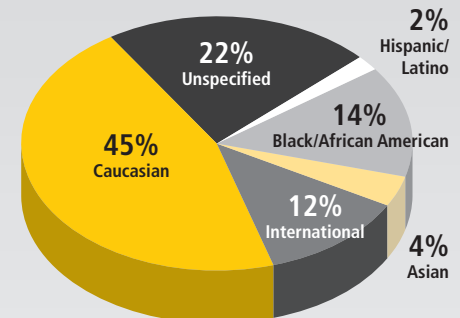
Gender

The percentage of female students in the MBA program is well above the national average (between 25% and 35%).



Ethnicity

The program serves a diverse student population.





The College of Health Professions will establish the Center for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), which will offer and evaluate model programs for addressing the needs of adults (primarily young adults) with ASD and their families. In addition to these services the center will support ongoing education for a variety of professionals who serve this population and provide outreach to a variety of entities.

Resources for Success

As you can see, Towson University is doing many exciting things in the community, but we never forget the real reason we are here—to educate and graduate students. We also know that institutional and student growth is only possible with parallel growth in resources. Enrollment increases impact fiscal, personnel and student support decisions. As we move forward toward 2010, Towson University will continue to focus on developing recruitment and retention efforts for faculty and staff, implementing the campus Master Plan, and enhancing the campus infrastructure in support of our students.

Outside Support

This past year we reached approximately \$20 million in grants and contracts, a 10 percent increase over the previous year. As of January we have raised more than half of our Capital Campaign goal of \$50 million. Our alumni donations increased by 16 percent over last year, raising nearly \$1.7 million for the university.

Tenure-Track Faculty

In the past four years we have added 129 additional net tenure-track faculty positions to handle the enrollment growth, and we currently have 630 core faculty positions. In addition to more tenured and tenure-track faculty, we now have 118 full-time lecturers. We are committed to remaining competitive related to salary standards for faculty. We are currently in the 75th percentile, an improvement over 2003 when we were in the 68th percentile. Our goal is to be in the 80th percentile, and we are making steady progress.

Physical Growth on Campus

In terms of campus space, enrollment growth has certainly been challenging—but we are facing these challenges head-on. A 670-bed residence hall designed for freshmen and sophomore students will open in August 2008, and plans are underway for another 600-bed facility to open in August 2010. A dining and student services facility to support these new residence halls is also planned for 2010.

Phase I construction of the university's new College of Liberal Arts Building is underway. When complete, the building will consolidate the liberal arts departments into one location on campus. Through the university's Foundation, Towson is also now leasing offices at 7400 York Road, which will allow core campus space to be made available for faculty offices and other units central to the university's academic mission.

Expanding the Campus Infrastructure to Meet Today's Needs

To accommodate the university's growing nursing program major renovations occurred in Burdick Hall this year, including a new Nursing Skills Lab, a Digital Media Classroom for outreach to the USM Hagerstown location, and new faculty offices. Stephens Hall was also renovated for the expansion of our Honors College, including technology-enhanced seminar rooms, student study space, and faculty offices.

In response to the tragic events at Virginia Tech last year, the university is bolstering its safety resources. In May 2007 the university implemented a text message notification system for emergencies. More than 6,000 campus users have signed up for the service to date. We are also in the process of acquiring an exterior siren and expanding our internal system to allow for public address capabilities during emergencies.



West Village Housing

Student Experience and Success

The overall student experience is critical to student success, and Towson University has made large strides in student involvement. Over the past year we increased student attendance in the following areas:

- Fine arts events – 17%
- Greek life recruitment – 30%
- Family Weekend – 40%
- Athletics events – 27%

Our Division of Student Affairs is placing more emphasis on civic engagement. All students are encouraged to participate in the university community with programs like our New York Times lunch discussion series. Students must also participate in at least one service-learning opportunity off-campus. We are continuing to increase internships, and encouraging students to extend civic engagement beyond their time at Towson University. This year we launched the National Graduation

Pledge in which seniors commit to be environmentally and socially responsible after graduating.

Sustainability Facts

- From 2006 to 2007, Towson University increased its recyclables by 63%.
- In 2007, Towson University recycled more than 3,900 tons of material—395 pounds per student.
- Towson University’s campus is home to nearly 400 recycling bins.
- Since 2001 more than 15 acres of high-priority forest areas on campus have been placed into perpetual conservation easements for preservation.
- “Green” building features, such as passive solar heating, day lighting, and high-performance HVAC systems, have been implemented into campus buildings.



Sustainability and Environmental Awareness

Students, faculty and staff members have taken an active role in attracting and hosting a number of green programs on campus, ranging from recycling competitions to campus and community clean-ups. These programs have helped foster an awareness of green initiatives on campus and enabled the university to increase its recycling and energy conservation rates. Last year’s RecycleMania program enabled us to recycle 13,445 pounds of paper from January 2007 to April 2007 alone. As a signatory of the President’s Climate Commitment, we are also working toward classifying all newly constructed buildings under LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification.

Telling and Selling the Story

As you can see, Towson University has much to be proud of, and we are making it a top priority to share our successes. We have been a positive force in the community for 142 years, but we are only recently drawing the appropriate attention to our positive impact in the community and the high quality of our academic programs and faculty research. Our “Thinking Outside” radio and television campaign has helped us to reach a wider audience and more effectively communicate our commitment to research-based learning with practical applications that extend beyond our campus borders.

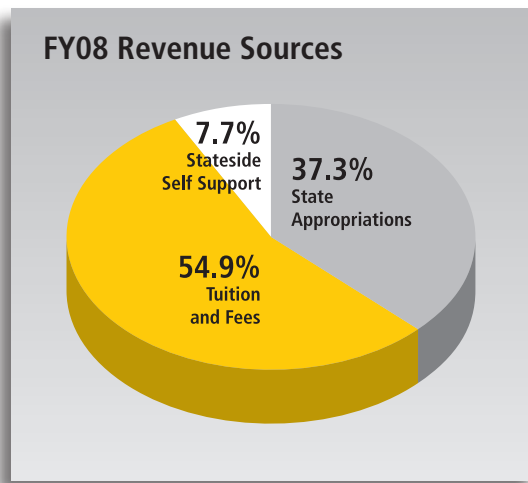
Our telling and selling is paying off. People are listening and congratulating us for our accomplishments. We have come a long way since we started out with 11 students, three faculty members, and a small rented building. We now have close to 20,000 students, more than 3,000 faculty and staff members, and 44 academic and administrative buildings spread over 328 acres in a metropolitan region abundant with opportunity. We look forward to continuing to share with you how Towson University is a leader in the community, State and region.

Enacting the 2010 Vision and Beyond

We are making wonderful progress, but realize there is still much to be done in bringing Towson University 2010 to reality. In just a few years 2010 will have come and gone, and Towson will be analyzing our vision and making appropriate changes for the next phase. With your help we can continue to achieve our vision and plan for the future of Towson University.

Rebalance the Funding Mix

Access to a quality, affordable education for Maryland's citizens is the goal of the Governor, the legislature, the University System of Maryland and Towson University. At this point, the enrollment funding initiative put in place by the Governor and University System of Maryland and supported by the General Assembly allows Towson University to successfully fulfill the needs of the State as the lead growth campus of traditional age students. While our commitment to growth is strong, we must continue our advocacy for a more balanced funding mix for our students. Currently Towson University receives the lowest student support in the State. At \$5,662 per FTE in State general funds for FY 2009, Towson University students bare the greater cost of their education with tuition and fees at \$7,234. Our desire is to deliver quality, affordable and accessible education, and rebalancing the funding mix would allow us to rely less on tuition and fees to operate.



Additional Operational Support

As aforementioned, Towson exceeded our target enrollment in FY 2008, and we are planning and budgeted to grow by another 500 FTE in FY 2009. We are rapidly approaching our goal of 25,000 students by 2013. This major growth spurt requires immediate attention. Our growth has created a domino effect: More students require more faculty and staff and expanded services to support them; more faculty and staff increases mandatory costs for items like health insurance and cost of living adjustments; more people on campus require additional physical space to accommodate more classrooms and offices; with additional space comes a need for more operational support to keep up with additional utilities, housekeeping and maintenance.

To maintain the quality of our academic programs and Towson's reputation for small and interactive classrooms, 25 more tenure-track faculty members are needed this year. We are also anticipating the need to hire new support staff in the health center, the counseling center, disability support, human resources, the bursar's office, judicial affairs, and campus life. The success of our students is of the utmost importance, and each student who sets foot on our campus deserves a quality education, including professional support for important areas like health and career issues.

Towson University's students, faculty and staff are fully engaged in making Towson University 2010 a reality. Our partnerships have enabled us to have a positive impact on many constituencies, helping us to advance our mission as Maryland's Metropolitan University. There is so much to see, hear, and experience on campus, and I am pleased to report how much we have been "Thinking Outside" in our collaborations with business, education and government entities to achieve our goals. Thank you for your time today and your involvement in advancing Towson University. Your engagement with our vision will surely help Towson University to better serve Maryland's students and the State's workforce needs. We realize there is still much to be done to enact the 2010 vision and we appreciate your support.

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