Testimony to the Maryland General Assembly

Presented by Dr. Calvin W. Lowe
President
Bowie State University

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Prepare For Life

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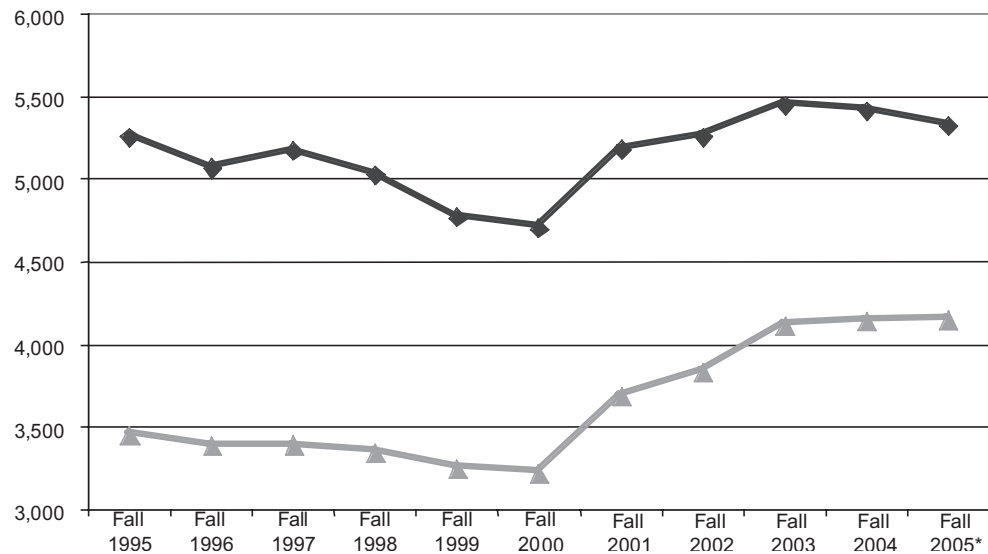STATE UNIVERSITY
Prepare For Life

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Governor's recommended budget for Bowie State University. I would also like to express gratitude for the Governor's and Legislature's commitment to, and support of, higher education. This committee in particular has been a longstanding and ardent supporter of higher education and this position is appreciated.

As this will be my final presentation before this body, I would like to discuss the USM priorities, Quality, Access and Affordability in the context of the performance of Bowie State University under my leadership. Subsequently, I will address the questions posed by the legislative analyst.

Access

The ability to accommodate the burgeoning population of college aged Maryland residents is commonly referred to as the "Baby Boom Echo." Figure 1. gives a graphical synopsis of the enrollment history at Bowie State University over the last ten years.

Figure 1 Headcount - FTE Comparison

The following observations should be noted from this information. From 1995-2000, the University experienced declining enrollment both with respect to headcount (upper curve) as well as full-time equivalent (lower curve) enrollment. This trend was reversed with the first class recruited and enrolled in the fall of 2001. Noel-Levitz observed during their best practices review, conducted at the state's request to assess OCR needs of the HBCUs, that this growth represented the largest single year accomplishment of any of its clients nationwide. This reversal of enrollment decline is characterized by a change in the student profile with an emphasis on more full-time and more residential students. This feature is most prominent in the last two years in which there was a slight headcount decline. However, the enrollment of more full-time students and less part-time students resulted in continued increases in full-time equivalent enrollment. ***Bowie State University has been the only university in the USM that has sustained five consecutive years of full-time equivalent enrollment growth during this five year period. The fall of 2005 represents the highest full-time equivalent enrollment at the University in its 141-year history. Not only is BSU the only***

USM institution to consistently grow during this period, its magnitude of growth exceeds all institutions with the exception of UMUC. See Figure 2.

Figure 2 Five Year Cummulative Enrollment Growth
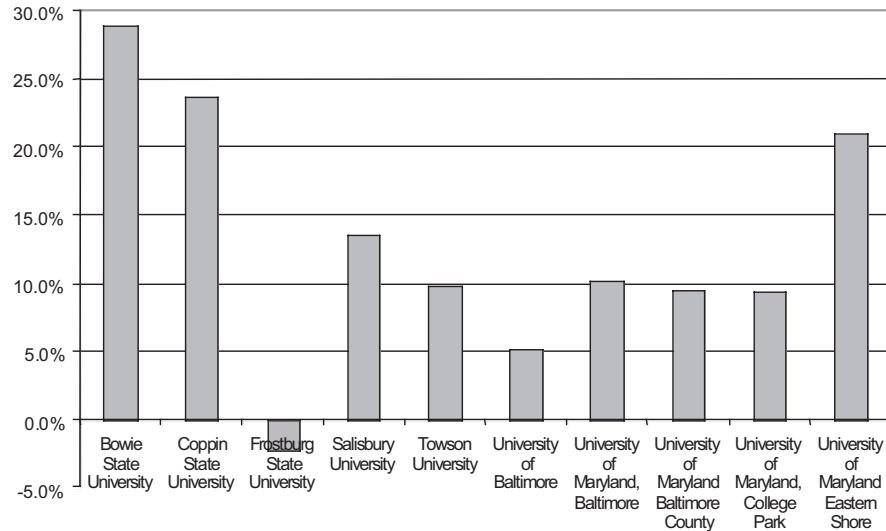
In the past five years, the University has experienced a 29% growth in full-time equivalent enrollment. To place this accomplishment in perspective, it is useful to note that the state of Maryland anticipates the "Baby Boom Echo" to produce a 30% growth in higher education enrollment within the next ten to fifteen-years. Bowie State University has accommodated an equivalent growth in five years during a period marked by budget cuts, layoffs, furloughs and the lowest funding guideline appropriations of all of the comprehensive institutions.

Quality

One of the most meaningful measures of the quality of an educational institution is provided by the independent assessments by external agencies and in particular accrediting agencies. During my tenure, the University completed its 10-year reaffirmation of accreditation with the Middle States Commission for Higher Education. Additionally, specific specialized accreditations have been obtained by the programs in social work, graduate nursing, and education. The education accreditation included specialized endorsements in the specific undergraduate programs of early childhood and special education, elementary

education, English education, math education, science education, social studies, as well as the graduate programs in special education, graduate reading, school administration and supervision, English, math and social studies. The University is a founding institution of the education accrediting organization NCATE and has maintained fifty years of continuous accreditation by this body.

The quality of our academic programs are shown in the founding of two new academic schools, the School of Education and the School of Business. The School of Education was formed in FY 2001 to provide renewed focus to recapturing the institutions' prominence as a premier teacher of teachers. In 2005 a major accomplishment was the conferring of the first doctoral degrees in the University's history to sixteen candidates in the program, Educational Leadership.

The school of Business was formed subsequent to the approval of two new programs, the Master of Business Administration and the Master of Public Administration. The School of Business provides programs that account for twenty-five percent of the degrees awarded at the University. ***Both of these new schools were organized and implemented by redistribution of resources and no new funds were appropriated to facilitate the new academic structures.***

The Center for Learning and Technology opened in the fall of 2000 as the first new academic building at the University in over twenty years.

Center for Learning and Technology

The spring of 2002 heralded the opening of the Computer Science Building. In addition to these capital projects, the University underwent a major site renovation including aesthetic improvements to the grounds as well as upgrade of major infrastructure including sprinklers, lighting and fiber optics.

Computer Science Building

The campus aesthetics provides for a comfortable learning environment for students and faculty alike. The addition of the eternal flame has provided students and alumni with a campus touchstone that brings to life the words of the alma mater that refers to the "flame of faith and the torch of truth that guides the steps of youth." With the help of generous donors, artwork and sculptures have been acquired to add vibrancy and texture to the campus environment.

As the campus evolves into a more traditional academic setting the demand for on-campus housing has skyrocketed. During 2004, the University opened its first public-private living learning residence hall comlex and increased the on-campus capacity by an additional fifty percent. This facility enjoys its second year of 100% occupancy and the University is poised to add additional on-campus housing to its facilities inventory.

The University currently has two capital projects under construction or design. Construction on the Center for Business started in September 2005 and is anticipated to be completed in the spring of 2007. The design of the Fine and Performing Arts building started in January 2006 and is also proceeding very well with the enthusiastic participation of the Faculty who have endured the

conditions in the Martin Luther King Arts Center for too long a time. The design will be completed in the fall of 2007. Most recelntly we have been notified construction has been delayed until summer 2009.

In addition to these projects the CIP includes two other projects, the Natural Sciences Complex and Site Improvements. These are scheduled to start planning in 2009 and 2010 respectively. Planning of these projects has been deferred and the University hopes that if better economic circumstances prevail we can possibly accelerate their implementation in the future. We also announced the RFP for the Student Union and we have held design meetings with students.

While increasing the traditional amenities that comprise a comprehensive university, we have also provided unique and innovative additions to the educational resources available to students. In 2001, **the university was the first in Maryland** to provide laptops for the use of its freshman class at no additional cost to the students. This innovation was so well received that the state of Maryland followed with a digital divide program to address the technological gap which existed at its public institutions. The technological innovations continued with the design and construction of a 224-node supercomputing cluster that is the fastest supercomputer at a university in Maryland and was the 166th fastest in the world when it debuted on the top 500 list in November 2005. ***This supercomputer was designed by a faculty member and was constructed and operated by Bowie State University students.*** This computer is a resource to faculty and students which enhances learning experiences in the classroom, research projects, extramural collaborations and opportunites for entrepreneurial revenue generation.

The technological innovations continued with a Maryland sponsored trade mission to the continent of Africa. As an outgrowth of this mission, the rights to a software product that allowed for the design and construction of the Bowie State University Virtual Incubator Network. BSU is the only institution in the United States with the capability to link business clients, educators and policy makers virtually any where in the world with powerful collaboration tools.

The Bowie State University Virtual Incubator Network (BSUVIN) is a powerful tool for building networks, developing innovative ideas, and working collaboratively. Through the BSUVIN, users have access to:

• A virtual private work space for each registered user;

• Virtual project or activity specific work spaces with powerful collaborative capabilities that can be controlled by the users;

• A Smart Ideas feature gives users the opportunity to share business or non-business related ideas with chosen groups for feedback and exploration of collaboration opportunities;

• The Network Engine provides the ability to create a virtual network of contacts, which can be used to distribute information quickly to individuals or groups with similar interests and develop collaborative work groups based on interests that have been expressed via the Smart Ideas capability;

• Access to the University's high speed computing cluster, one of the fastest clusters in the world, provides more than ample computing power for any application.

BSU is the only institution in the United States with the capability to link business clients, educators and policy makers virtually, any where in the world, with a powerful collaboration tool like the BSUVIN.

The faculty are the most direct contributors to the quality of the educational services provided to students. In acknowledgement of the faculty's perception of salary compression and the USM Board's objective to maintain faculty salaries at the 85 percentile of their Carnegie Classification peers, I constructed a plan to increase faculty morale and meet this board objective. In FY2002 the average faculty salaries in each rank was increased to the average of their corresponding Carnegie classification peers. This accomplishment has been short-lived as the university's averages have eroded due to retirements, turnover with junior faculty, inflation and cost of living increases that have not kept pace with the nation.

Figure 3 Faculty All Ranks: Salary Percentile FY04
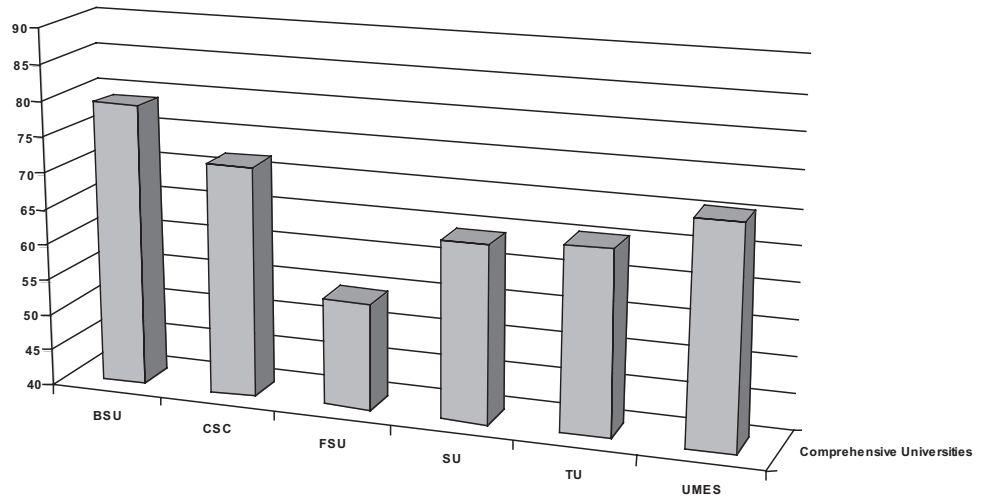
Another activity to enhance the faculty and thereby the quality of educational services provided to students is the plan to increase full-time core faculty and decrease part-time adjunct faculty.   The figure below acknowledges success in this regard began in 2003 subsequent to the layoffs, furloughs and reorganizations. The core faculty has increased in size but the dependence on adjunct faculty also continues to grow.

Figure 4 Bowie State Faculty
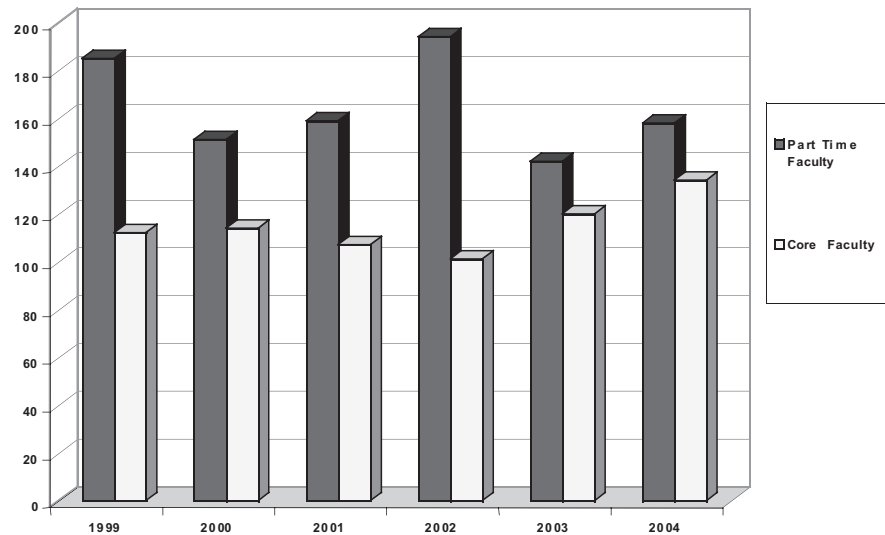
Affordability

The University has undergone tuition and fee increases in the recent years that reflect the increased dependence on student generated revenue as the state support has decreased. The challenge to maintain affordability for students is addressed through the combination of institutionally awarded financial aid and efficient and effective utilization of existing resources. As reported in the state's Financial Aid Task Force Report, the institutionally awarded financial aid at Bowie State University increased 60% in the period from FY2001 to FY2004. This was an increase from $2,032,982 to $3,261,714 during this period. While this increase far exceeded the rate of increase of tuition and fees over this period, there remains a high level of financial need among the matriculating students. The Financial Aid Task Force Report indicates that Bowie State University had the highest per capita enrollment of Pell eligible students in the fall of 2004. The number of Pell eligible students was 1278, more than twice the number of that at any of the comprehensive institutions. Increasing the general fund allocation to this endeavor is a continuing need.

Cost savings through efficient and effective use of resources has been a component of management objectives of the USM institutions. The annual Joint Chairman's Report from the USM on the combined savings of the constituent institutions demonstrates that Bowie State University continues to exceed the expectations to find efficiencies within its operating budget. The FY2004 report demonstrates $3,484,000 in savings, the FY2005 report demonstrates $2,242,000 in savings and the FY2006 expectation is $2,062,000 in savings. The success in the University's ability to accommodate enrollment growth and enhance the quality of educational services has been in large measure due to the extraordinary management effectiveness. The combined $7.6 million of cost savings in the last three years is extraordinary. The large efficiencies have been exploited and it is anticipated that future results will be considerably more modest.

Administrative Efficiencies in Technology Services and Infrastructure

In addition to the widely acclaimed achievements in academic efficiencies, Bowie State University continues to pursue excellence in administrative efficiencies in support of the goals and objectives of the University System of Maryland and the State of Maryland.

Bowie State University has converted from an old legacy application and successfully implemented PeopleSoft application modules that have helped us meet our goals for administrative efficiencies. These modules include PeopleSoft financials, student administration, human resources, and contributor relations. These successful implementations have produced quality services and processes for our institution.

Incoming student applicants can check their financial aid awards online thereby providing quality service, information, and assistance in making their decision to come to Bowie State University. Students register, pay, check their grades, and perform various administrative functions online without having to come on campus to wait in long lines for services that they need.

Services for our faculty members include online roster information, class scheduling, academic advisement, grade entry. This has streamlined the coordination between faculty, students, and administrative services.

In addition we have implemented and are in the process of implementing the following:
• Introduced the Budget Narrative and Spreadsheet Online System (BNS)
• Hosted the first Regional Workshop on Terrorism with West Virginia University
• Negotiating a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with local jurisdictions for the purpose of cooperating as "first responders" in all hazards events
• Instituted the first bike patrol on Bowie State University's campus
• Instituted a "guard controlled" main gate for evening hours
• Established a Parking Office Command Center
• Created a position for a manager of safety and disaster planning and management
• Launched the Digital Imaging Project
• Initiated the Sallie Mae Interactive Voicemail and the "pay for parking through payroll deductions
• Funded two Vanguard campus shuttle vans for moving people around campus and to outer periphery parking lots.
• Relocated the Department of Public Safety closer to the residential complex
• Installed 14 video cameras on campus
• Negotiating with Greyhound to bring bus service to the campus
• Renovated the James Gym swimming pool

We continue to strive to achieve our administrative efficiencies. The speed with which technology advances does not allow for staying as-is. It requires rigorous improvement to adhere to federal and state laws, system and legislative guidelines, student and institutional needs to effect and robust and highly secure system. Current technology initiatives include the upgrade of our network infrastructure, systems and storage requirements, security, logging, audit solutions, eLearning, and digital imaging just to name a few. Future challenges include upgrades and infrastructure requirements as we move our current application to "Fusion", the result of Oracle's purchase of PeopleSoft, converting to Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP), disaster recovery and business continuity, and using technology to devise efficiencies in the delivery of education to our students.

In order to achieve these goals, we rely on the University System of Maryland and the State of Maryland legislature to support our baseline operational requirement needed for success.