



FY 2025

# **OPERATING BUDGET TESTIMONY**

## **BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY**

Presented by Dr. Aminta H. Breaux, *President*

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
Subcommittee on Education,  
Business & Administration

Nancy King, Chair  
February 23, 2024

House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Education &  
Economic Development

Stephanie M. Smith, Chair  
March 4, 2024

# BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY | FY 2025 OPERATING BUDGET TESTIMONY

It is my pleasure to provide testimony in support of the Governor's FY 2025 operating budget. I want to thank the Governor and members of the legislature for your continued support of higher education and Maryland's oldest HBCU, Bowie State University. Your investment in higher education across the state is demonstrative of your understanding of the role that education plays in fueling Maryland's economy and transforming the lives of Maryland families.

As our enrollment continues to grow, our faculty are creating new corporate partnerships and research opportunities for our students to ensure they have the skills needed to stand apart in the job market. To prepare our students for a changing economic landscape we incorporate into every academic program opportunities for students to build an entrepreneurial mindset. And to make a BSU education more accessible, we continue to expand our hybrid and online programs, and our offerings at regional higher education centers.

BSU continues to Race to Excellence as we close our current strategic plan and engage the university community in the development of our next plan. As we make this transition, we evaluate our progress in three key areas: academic excellence, student success and the long-term viability of the university. We celebrate the success of students and faculty for accomplishments in research, and workforce contributions in fields critical to our region in education, health, and technology. Our faculty continue to develop innovative academic programs driven by workforce needs. Our enrollment continues to grow, and we continue to enjoy tremendous success in our fundraising efforts.

**#16**

in Historically Black Colleges & Universities (*tie*)  
(*U.S. News Best Colleges 2024*)

**TOP 5**

for graduating African-Americans with bachelor's degrees in Nursing, Biology, & Computer/Information Sciences  
(*Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*)

**#46**

in Top Public Schools in the north (*tie*)  
(*U.S. News Best Colleges 2024*)

**#26**

in Best Undergraduate Teaching (*tie*)  
(*U.S. News Best Colleges 2024*)

**#22**

in Most Innovative Schools (*tie*)  
(*U.S. News Best Colleges 2024*)

**#47**

in Top Performers on Social Mobility (*tie*)  
(*U.S. News Best Colleges 2024*)

National Security Agency Model of Excellence  
in Cyber defense education programs

# ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

BSU continues to excel in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics programs, with academic programs in health informatics, educational leadership, data science, information systems, cybersecurity, biotechnology and molecular biology, and counselor education and supervision — BSU's first Ph.D. We continue to assess workforce needs and develop innovative, high-quality programs to address those needs, with 16 new academic programs since 2021 and nine fully online programs. Fall 2023 marked the first semester of enrollment for new STEM programs.

With four of our graduate programs — education, computer science, nursing, and public administration — ranked among the best in the nation, by U.S. News & World Report Best

Graduate Schools, we have become a reliable source for employers seeking a well-qualified, diverse employment pool. We continue to integrate opportunities for students to learn beyond the classroom, providing opportunities for students to participate in study abroad, service learning, professional conferences, and research symposiums. Our proximity to our nation's Capital, military installations and health care organizations makes us an attractive partner to federal agencies, non-profit organizations, and industry leaders.

Access, affordability, and completion are integral to our mission and everything we do at BSU. We are proud to be a part of the Second Chance Pell Program, which provides a transformative experience for incarcerated persons that improves safety within prisons and across communities, strengthens families, and reduces recidivism. These learning experiences help people regain a sense of their humanity, offer a sense of hope for the future, and set them up to return home with fresh perspectives and goals for how they can contribute to their community. Children of incarcerated students who see their parents accessing coursework are more likely to pursue their own postsecondary education. As a Prison to HBCU pipeline institution, we seek to empower Black people and other diverse and marginalized groups by going beyond simply offering educational opportunities. We offer an ecosystem of support and a culture of community, social justice, and change. Currently, our prison education includes courses in sociology and entrepreneurship.

## NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

### 5 UNDERGRADUATE UPPER DIVISION CERTIFICATES

- Data Analytics
- Entrepreneurship
- Cloud Computing
- Cybersecurity
- Internet of Things

### 6 BACHELOR'S DEGREES

- Philosophy, Politics & Economics
- Software Engineering
- Cyber Operations Engineering
- Data Science
- Public Health Informatics & Technology
- Health Services Administration

### 2 POST BACCALAUREATE CERTIFICATES

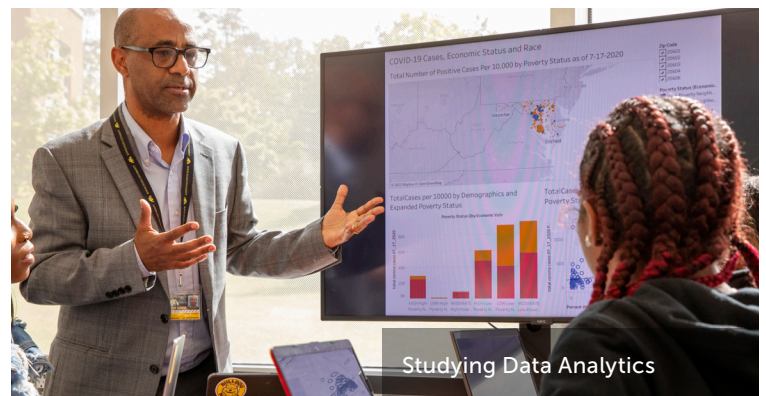
- Public Health Informatics
- Clinical Pastoral Counseling

### 2 MASTER'S DEGREES

- Applied Biotechnology & Molecular Biology
- Internet of Things & Internet Technologies

### FIRST PHD PROGRAM

- Counselor Education & Supervision



## ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

Corporate partners support students through grants to increase diversity in STEM fields, research and experiential learning opportunities, speaker series, and other activities within specific academic disciplines. In fact, BSU is one of three minority-serving institutions selected by the Adobe Foundation to receive \$1 million as a part of an expanded effort to advance initiatives to make learning digital skills more equitable and enable success of diverse students from underinvested communities. The computer science department was awarded the Clare Booth Luce Foundation grant to support students pursuing degrees in computer science as they prepare to fill critical jobs in cyber security across numerous industries. Other partners include National Security Agency, Radiant, Tapestry, Battelle, MARFORCYBER, Cvent, IBM Skills Academy, Amazon

Web Services, Raft LLC, Tata Consultancy Services Limited, Radiant, Environmental Protection Agency, Aerotek, M & T Bank, Johnson Controls, Northrop Grumman, FDIC, MedStar, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Glen Echo Group, and more.



## FACULTY EXCELLENCE RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP

BSU faculty are leading scholars and researchers in their fields. Many faculty have received national recognition and major grants for their work in teaching, research, and contributions to their respective professions. Some of these innovations include over 10 books published, 120 peer reviewed publications, 50 creative works, and over 300 professional presentations. In addition, BSU faculty received 64 new and continuing awards totaling \$19,193,267. To name just a few:

**Dr. Jacqueline Smith** is the first ever Bowie State professor to earn the National Science Foundation's (NSF) CAREER grant, one of NSF's most prestigious awards. The grant is awarded to early-career faculty members who are recognized as academic role models in research and education. Dr. Smith hopes her research into regulating the behavior of VCP can be used to prevent cancer that is resistant to treatments from coming out of remission and spreading throughout a patient's body.

Computer science professor **Dr. Darsana Josyula** was featured on Techincal.ly's RealList Engineers

list, which highlights some of the top minds in technology and innovation in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

**Dr. William Drakeford**, an associate professor in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Professional Development, serves as the director for three grant programs totaling nearly \$3.5 million to support BSU's efforts to produce the next generation of teachers and administrators concentrating on special education. PULSE (Preparing Urban Leaders in Special Education) is designed to support 15 students pursuing a doctoral degree with a focus in leadership



in special education. RESET (Responsive, Effective Special Education Teachers) focuses on 36 master's students who are training to become culturally and linguistically diverse special education teachers. CREED (Culturally Responsive Early Educator Development) is focused on supporting 30 students pursuing a bachelor's degree specializing in early childhood education. Each grant is worth just under \$250,000 a year and renewable for five years.

**Dr. Karen Cook-Bell**, a professor in Bowie State University's history and government department, was awarded an Elkins Professorship by the University System of Maryland. The Elkins Award is provided to support researchers and professors who demonstrate exemplary ability to inspire students and whose professional work and scholarly endeavors positively impact their institutions and others throughout the USM. The award will be used to support the work she began last year when she established the W.E.B. DuBois Center for the Study of the Black Experience.

**U.S Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona** visited BSU to highlight the work of **Dr. Nikki Ham** and **Dr. Julius Davis**. Dr. Ham established the Ujima Center, funded by a \$5 million grant from the Department of Education, which supports future school counselors enrolled in the Master of Education in School Counseling program. Dr. Julius Davis received a \$1.5 million grant from the Department to support the Black Male Teachers Project to increase the number of black male teachers in classrooms.



Secretary Cardona speaks with students during his campus visit

## ACADEMIC SUPPORT

**The One Step Away Program (OSA)** is a Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) grant designed to increase college completion rates by providing bachelor's degree granting Maryland institutions with seed monies to identify, contact, re-enroll, and graduate near-completer students. Near-completers are those students who have earned at least 90 credits toward a bachelor's degree, but have stopped out or dropped out for more than twelve (12) consecutive months without obtaining a degree. Over seventy-five students have graduated with assistance from the One Step Away Program, which has been awarded over \$500,000 in grant funds for the last ten (10) consecutive years. OSA continues to advocate for Bowie State students by providing tuition assistance, textbook vouchers, tutoring, and wrap-around support services. Each year, OSA graduates account for approximately 1% of the number of Bowie State University graduates.



Tutoring session at the Student Success Center

**The Student Success Center** is committed to the academic growth and success of Bowie State University students. Students may register for tutoring sessions, schedule a session for homework help with Brainfuse, or visit the Writing Center to learn to become more effective and confident writers. The Math Lab provides students with strategies

to learn, study, and solve academic problems in specific courses more effectively. Students may also participate in Supplemental Instruction, regularly scheduled, voluntary, informal group sessions in which students review notes, discuss readings, develop organizational tools, and prepare for exams. The sessions are facilitated by trained peer leaders who utilize collaborative activities to ensure peer-to-peer interaction in small groups.

**Engaged Learning and Student Support** centers on the power of community. Students, faculty, and staff partner to cultivate deep learning and student success

by providing opportunities for students to discover their strengths and explore new perspectives, walking with first-generation students to demystify the college experience, building authentic communities that support growth and bold action, and empowering faculty to connect with students through meaningful, interdisciplinary learning experiences. Bulldog Scholars Academy (a summer residential experience for incoming freshmen), Scholars Studio Learning Communities for first and second-year students, Operation Navigation (peer support) provide avenues for faculty-student and peer-peer engagement and transformational learning.

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Diversity Matters. As Maryland's oldest HBCU, we celebrate and welcome all social identities and are intentional about providing holistic student development opportunities reflective of the University's mission to offer our students a transformational experience as they prepare for careers, civic responsibilities, and lifelong learning. We foster civility and global citizenship through coordinated culturally responsive programming that cultivates an environment of acceptance, civility, and community. The Diversity Task Force, comprised of members of the BSU community, meets regularly to develop recommendations for diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives across the university.

We hosted our inaugural Native American Pow Wow – the first authentic ceremonial Pow Wow ever held on a Maryland HBCU campus. A community celebration to kick off National American Heritage Month, the day was full of Native American cultural experiences focused on alarming social justice issues impacting the Native American community. The event included authentic food, games for children, musical and dance performances, and featured authentic Native American vendors. Attendees received free Ancestry DNA kits to trace their Native American heritage.



Native American Pow Wow

# STUDENT SUCCESS

## ENROLLMENT & DEGREE PRODUCTION

Bowie State University remains in high demand, demonstrated by continued upward trends in recent years. We received over 13,000 applications in Fall 2023. Full-time, first time degree-seeking freshmen enrollment has grown over 20% since Fall 2019. As we continue to develop stackable credentials in high-demand fields, graduate certificates, master's and doctoral programs, our graduate enrollment also continues to grow, with an increase of over 18% since Fall 2019.



Spring 2023 Graduates

## PROFILES OF SUCCESS

**Raymond Ingram**, a junior theatre major with a concentration in acting and directing, debuted his play, *Buy Black*, about how Black Americans cope under the threats of gentrification, and promotes supporting small neighborhood businesses such as Black mini-marts to redirect money back into the community. The play also encourages people to stay in their communities and build them up again.

A group of 14 students each received a \$2,500 scholarship as part of the Capital CoLAB Emerging Tech Talent program, which facilitates their work towards a Generalist Digital Tech Credential. The program was launched by Bowie State University

and the Greater Washington Partnership, a collective of area businesses, in 2021 to attract more minorities and women into tech-focused career fields.

**Jaivien Kendricks** presented his clothing line to the world during NY Fashion Week and was recognized for his clothing brand, *More Life*, which aims to connect with his customers through clothing that bears messages such as, "Don't Let Your Dreams Be Dreams" and "Defy the Odds." The junior business administration major with a concentration in marketing was recently named an AT&T Rising Future Makers, which recognizes 25 HBCU students who are making an impact in their communities while still in school.

Tony Award winner and BSU alumnus **Myles Frost** is making his first appearance in a major motion picture portraying Trayvon Martin in "Origin," a new film written and directed by Ava DuVernay. The film is based on the book "Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents" by Isabel Wilkerson, opened with a limited theater release in Los Angeles and New York on December 8.



Jaivien Kendricks showing off his clothing line

# LONG-TERM VIABILITY

The BSU experience extends beyond the classroom. Through strategic alliances with renowned professionals in the arts and athletics, we are able to enhance the services and resources that enrich the student experience and vitality of the university.

With generous financial support from Kevin Durant and the Durant Family Foundation, we updated the A.C. Jordan Arena in the Leonidas S. James Physical Education Complex at BSU. Renovations included installation of a new basketball court, expansion of seating capacity and upgrades to the press box area to provide students and guests with a top-tier athletic experience. The gift also provided financial support for men's and women's basketball and university athletics programs, and established a scholarship for Durant Center College Track students who attend BSU.

BSU is home to the Dionne Warwick Theater at Bowie State University's Fine and Performing Arts Center, the first performance venue named in the music icon's honor. The naming symbolized Ms. Warwick's lifelong advocacy and contributions to music education and the arts. Ms. Warwick was joined by two other music icons, Doug E. Fresh and BeBe Winans, corporate leaders, politicians, and other officials from across the nation for the celebratory ribbon cutting of the Dionne Warwick Theater. The name lending is a testament to the rich history of artists and performers such as Myles Frost who have originated from this university.

BSU Bold – The Campaign for Excellence has yielded historic success, reaching its goal of over \$50 million in FY 2023 – 2.5 years ahead of schedule! With a campaign end date of December 2025, we now strive to meet our expanded goal of \$75 million. Funds raised from the campaign expand scholarships, academic and technology support, and experiential learning opportunities as we prepare the next generation of leaders. Our endowment currently exceeds \$40 million, an increase from \$7 million in FY 2018, while individual endowments increased from 15 in 2017 to 144 in 2023.

We have implemented a growth model to direct our efforts across the university:

- Grow enrollment by 22.7% over 10 years
- Enhance marketing and recruitment strategies
- Provide value-based educational experience for our students
- Attain R2 Carnegie designation
- Maintain our mission with a focus on increased demand for a BSU education, changing demographics, and innovative academic programs
- Improve four-year graduation rate
- Provide state-of-the-art facilities for students and faculty to learn, conduct research, and create community



The new A.C. Jordan Arena basketball court



Dionne Warwick at the theater name unveiling



# RESPONSES TO DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

## **The President should detail the progress being made to fill the vacant positions.**

Bowie State University has implemented a comprehensive strategy to reduce the number of vacancies. We have retooled our Human Resources office to include a Talent Acquisition Manager and team. This unit develops recruitment strategies to support the university's immediate and long term talent needs, and collaborates with other units within HR to retain the existing talent pool. With innovations in candidate assessment, professional development, succession planning and employee recognition, we aim to attract the right people to BSU and keep them. The talent acquisition strategy also allows us to promote talent when feasible.

This strategy has already made an impact on vacancies. As of February 1, 2024, the vacancy rate decreased approximately five percentage points, or by 35 positions. Furthermore, 72 FTEs are currently being advertised. BSU has taken a proactive approach to monitoring vacancies with limited activity and performing routine check-ins with departments for hiring updates. Funds have been reallocated to enhance recruitment advertising, to source additional recruiting tools (LinkedIn Recruiter, Indeed), and to expand the list of approved recruitment agencies with expertise in higher education. We expect our vacancy rate to fall to around 9% by June 30.

## **The President should provide a reason for the increase in contractual FTEs for fiscal 2025 after the decrease in fiscal 2024.**

The decrease in contractual FTEs for FY24 is associated with the increase in regular positions funded from the HBCU settlement funds.

The increase in contractual FTEs for FY25 is based on the additional contractual staff and faculty needed to grow and support BSU's new academic programs, such as instructional course redesign, advising and on-line course enhancement, all funded with the HBCU settlement funds.