



BOWIE
STATE UNIVERSITY

— 1865 —

Operating Budget Testimony

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Aminta H. Breaux, President

FY 2021



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Presented by Aminta H. Breaux, Ph.D., President

**SENATE BUDGET & TAXATION SUBCOMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, BUSINESS & ADMINISTRATION**

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**HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON
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Bowie State University | FY 2021 Operating Budget Testimony

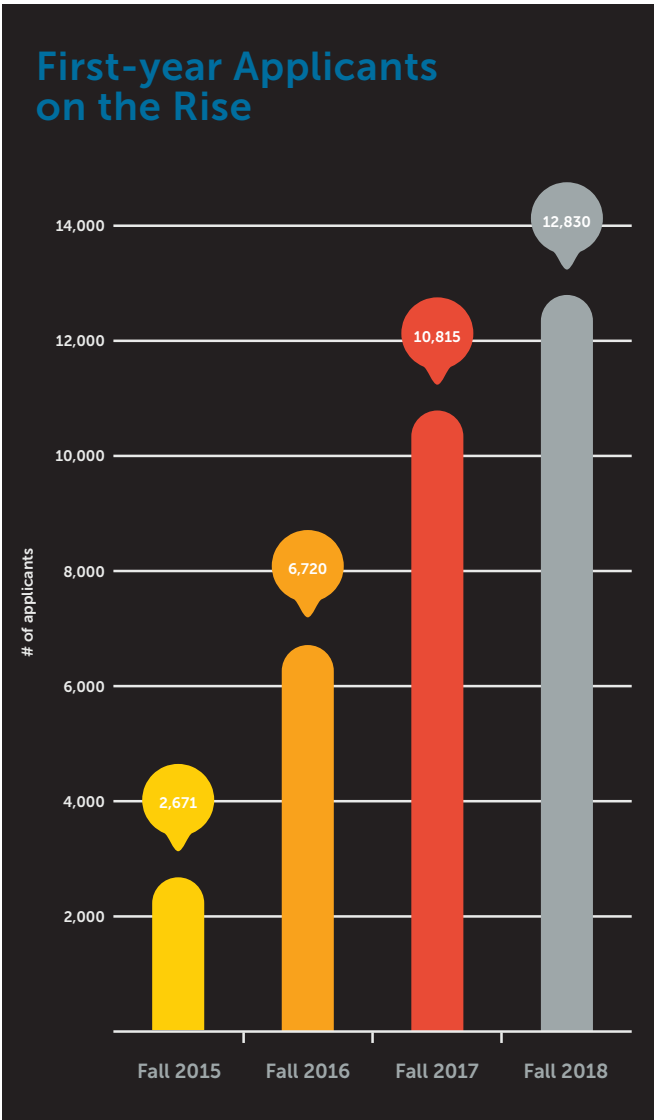
Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, it is my pleasure to appear before you today in support of the Governor’s proposed FY 2021 operating budget for the University System of Maryland, of which Bowie State University is a member institution.

I am Aminta Breaux, the very proud tenth president of Bowie State University. Although I am in the middle of my third year as president, this is my first opportunity to appear before the budget committees, and I am honored to be with you today. I am excited to have this opportunity to talk about some of the work we are doing and look forward to answering any questions you might have.

I want to first thank you and the Governor for all your support. I came to Bowie State after a long career in the Pennsylvania Higher Education System. I appreciate Maryland’s commitment to education, and I am especially grateful for your commitment to public higher education. You clearly understand the important role that higher education plays in driving the state’s economy and improving the trajectory for many Maryland families and communities.

Bowie State has certainly benefitted from your support. Our institution has grown and is thriving. As Maryland’s first historically black institution, Bowie State University traces its roots to the city of Baltimore where, some 155 years ago, it was just a little school for newly emancipated slaves. We now enroll over 6,100 students from diverse backgrounds who are pursuing undergraduate, master’s degrees and doctoral degrees. Our academic programs are highly competitive. We are a leader in producing graduates in STEM disciplines, particularly in nursing, biology and computer/information sciences.

The demand for a Bowie State education is quite high, exceeding the capacity of our residence halls. Our outstanding faculty are engaged in innovative teaching and research, and we are providing more opportunities for our students to succeed both inside and outside the classroom. Bowie State is an institution that is on the move.



Racing to Excellence

Our new Racing to Excellence strategic plan has energized the campus community and our many community partners and stakeholders. It frames the work we do each day to empower our students to reach their full potential and ensure the future growth and vitality of our campus. The strategic plan is grounded in three priorities: academic excellence, student success and the long-term viability of the institution. We are making significant strides in each of these areas. I will highlight a few.

Academic Excellence

Bowie State faculty are building on a long history of excellence in teaching, research and scholarship in support of our mission. Just last year, five of our outstanding academic programs received reaffirmation of accreditation: social work, business administration, nursing, mental health counseling and school counseling. These programs and others continue to attract a diverse population of students who ultimately contribute to the workforce in Maryland.

I am extremely proud of our legacy as a teacher's college. Today our **College of Education** is leading the way to tackle the state's teacher shortage and improve student achievement. With support from a five-year, \$7.23 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, BSU is developing an innovative Master Teacher Leadership degree program to produce highly skilled, problem-solving teachers to serve Prince George's and Dorchester Counties, along with the District of Columbia, where teacher shortages and poverty rates are high.

We are also working to address the shortage of African American male teachers. Led by Dr. Julius Davis, a mathematics education researcher and recent winner of USM's prestigious Elkins Professorship, BSU is creating a center for research and mentoring of black male students and teachers. The goal is to support a pipeline of black males joining the ranks of Maryland's educators, especially those teaching in high-demand STEM fields.

Along with the Prince George's County School System and the University of Maryland, BSU is providing specialized training for students enrolled in our master's degree program in school counseling. Students are placed in high-needs schools where there are shortages of counselors. These aspiring school counselors will be able to support students' total well-being and academic success.

Bowie State is leading the way in responding to the opioid crisis that has affected so many Marylanders. Dr. Cubie Bragg is leading a team of faculty in our College of Education's Counseling Department in a **Peer Recovery Workforce Training Project**, supported by a \$1.02 million federal grant. This project is on track to train 265 peer recovery specialists to be dispatched to help communities in the region where the need is greatest. Bowie State is the only USM institution with school counseling and mental health counseling programs that are accredited by CACREP, the national organization that sets the standard for professional counselor education.

A multi-disciplinary team of faculty is working to prepare students to become **data scientists**, a workforce area of great need. I am also pleased that we have collaborated with three of our sister institutions (University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Towson University and University of Baltimore) to create a Data Science Corps, an interdisciplinary group of students who will receive specialized instruction and exposure to real-world projects as they become more proficient in data science. This important effort will establish a talent pipeline of data scientists ready to take on the challenges in today's data revolution.

As we work to provide more learning opportunities for our students, partnerships are extremely important to the university. We have worked to cultivate more strategic partners to join us on our Race to Excellence. One of our major priorities is creating more experiential learning opportunities for students. We believe it is important that all students develop the entrepreneurial

mindset to help prepare them for today's workforce. I am pleased that we have garnered support from a new partner in this effort. This fall we joined with coffee and social impact company, **Saxbys**, to bring its Experiential Learning Program to our campus to open an exclusively student-run café. The Student CEO undergoes extensive training at Saxbys and is responsible for every aspect of running this business on campus. He or she earns full academic credit for a semester. Bowie State University is the first HBCU and first institution in Maryland to partner with Saxbys in this unique educational endeavor.

To bolster our efforts to infuse entrepreneurship into the curriculum, we are developing a certificate program, so that student can earn an additional credential in this area. With support from the National Science Foundation, we are working with George Washington University to host an I-Corps workshop to provide real-world, hands-on learning experience to successfully transfer knowledge into products and processes that benefit society. This unique opportunity will help aspiring entrepreneurs learn about commercializing innovations and creating ventures.

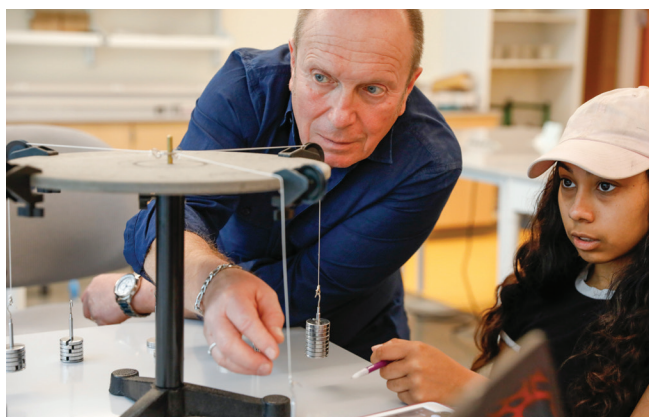
At the same time, we are addressing our demand for more residence halls to keep pace with our growing enrollment. In just a few weeks we will begin construction on a \$42 million **Entrepreneurship Living-Learning Community**. This facility will be anchored near the main entrance to our campus, creating a more visible presence for our thriving institution and strengthening our connection to the region's economic engine. It will house more than 500 students and provide technology-infused classrooms, along with room for student businesses and public retail space. It will also be the new home of the university's Entrepreneurship Academy and the Bowie Business Innovation Center (Bowie BIC), the first business accelerator located at an HBCU in Maryland. We are truly excited about this project and look forward to its opening in fall 2021.

Our award-winning physics professor, Dr. Mikhail Goloubev, working with 2015 BSU graduate Joshua



Saxbys Experiential Learning Program

Brown, received the university's first patent in more than 10 years, for a silent wind turbine, contributing to the global effort to address climate change. Other Bowie State faculty are engaged in innovative, exciting work and are committed to helping our students succeed as they prepare to enter the workforce or pursue graduate or professional degrees. In the Natural Sciences Department, in particular, each undergraduate student now engages in a research project every semester as part of a course-based research initiative. Much of this learning occurs in our state-of-the-art Center for Natural Sciences, Mathematics & Nursing, which opened in June 2017. This facility has transformed the learning environment and has become a hub of student activity. The importance of providing attractive, high-quality facilities cannot be overstated as we race to excellence in teaching and learning.



Mikhail Goloubev

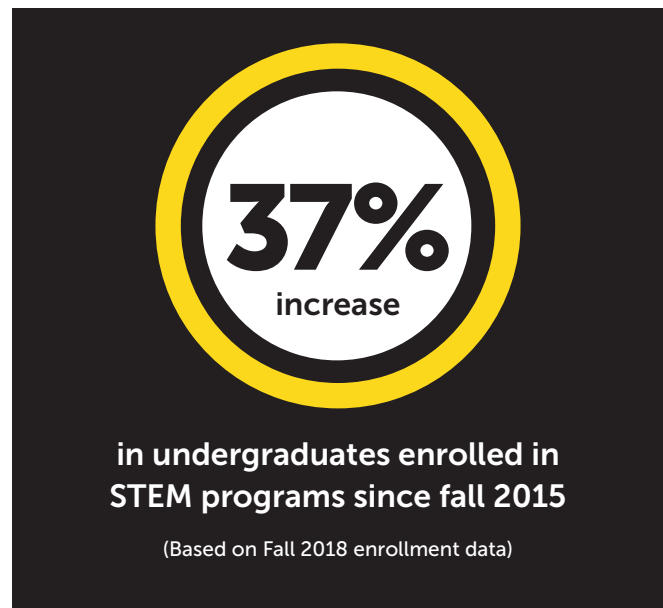
Student Success

When I arrived at BSU in July 2017, I saw a campus that was growing quickly. With so much to offer, it does not surprise me that Bowie State has become a highly attractive choice for more and more students. In order to build on that success and better plan for future growth, it became clear to me that we needed to focus more strategically our enrollment. We created a new Division of Enrollment Management to streamline admissions, registration and financial aid operations and provide leadership for our retention and student success efforts. This effort has resulted in greater collaboration across the various units and underscores the point that we all have a role to play in recruiting, retaining and graduating students.

We have revamped our orientation program and overall experience for new students, so that students are connected with key staff members to help ensure a smooth transition into the university. We've also expanded partnerships with community colleges, including Prince George's Community College, Baltimore City Community College, Howard Community College and Montgomery College. We recognize the importance of providing clear pathways for community college students to earn a four-year degree.

Bowie State is among six regional comprehensive and research institutions participating in the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)s' 15-month pilot program to develop innovative strategies to improve student success, especially among first-generation students and those from groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education. The Center for Student Success will establish a peer learning community among AASCU member institutions and develop a framework for academic transformation. We are excited to participate in this effort and look forward to even greater outcomes for our students.

We are taking a holistic approach to student success in keeping with our mission to provide access. Efforts are underway to leverage and strategically align resources to provide more



financial support to students, especially those at risk for not completing their education. We are grateful to the legislature for establishing the 2nd Lt. Richard Collins III Service with Honor Scholarship for ROTC students attending Maryland HBCUs. Thirty-eight BSU students have been awarded scholarships in honor of our fallen Bulldog. We anticipate fifteen ROTC students graduating in May, all of whom will commission into the Army – eleven for active duty and four in the Reserves.

We are not just focused on enhancing physical spaces – as critical as that is – but also enhancing the culture of the campus. We established an Office of Multicultural Programs and Services to help promote diversity and inclusion among our student and to provide extra support to our efforts to retain and graduate our international students. With the help of a loaned executive from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), we worked with HomeFree-USA's Center for Financial Advancement to begin empowering our students to become money savvy, manage their debt and ultimately become homeowners. Through this partnership, cohorts of undergraduate fellows also participate in yearlong experiential learning opportunities to prepare for careers in the mortgage and real estate finance industry.

Since fall 2015, we have seen a 37-percent increase in enrollment in our undergraduate STEM

programs. Our biology, nursing and computer technology programs are among the top producers of African American undergraduate degrees in Maryland. Our students continue to excel in these disciplines, participating in national and international conferences, hackathons and other competitive endeavors.

Our student-athletes excel in their sport and in the classroom. During the 2018-19 academic year, 136 student-athletes combined earned a GPA of 3.2 or better. The graduation rate of our student-athletes is 61 percent.



Football team honored in Annapolis

Institutional Viability

Bowie State University has a proud legacy of providing access to high-quality educational programs. We are building on that legacy to ensure a sustainable future for the institution. This work takes many forms including preparing workforce-ready leaders.

Efforts to leverage our excellent academic programs to support workforce development include building capacity in computer technology for veterans to earn bachelor's degrees in an accelerated 36-month program. We're bridging the gap between our academic programs and industry needs with a certification program in cybersecurity designed to provide students with real-world skills to tackle the growing challenge of cyber crime.

According to the National Council for Behavioral Health, there is a severe shortage of substance abuse counselors. We are working to prepare students

at the Universities at Shady Grove for master's degrees in counseling psychology with a certification in addictions counseling, building on our post-baccalaureate addiction counseling certificate. We thank the Governor and the legislature for supporting this and other strategic workforce development initiatives.

We're creating a culture of philanthropy on the campus that begins with the freshman class, and being good stewards of the public and private resources we garner. As a former vice president for advancement, I know how critically important it is to build our endowment. Unfortunately, this is a bit more daunting for institutions like BSU. We are grateful to the legislature for passing Delegate Mosby's bill last year to provide tax incentives for donations to HBCU endowment funds. Early indications are that the program is spurring investment in our institution, with several donors taking advantage of the tax credit. In fact, we established 12 new endowments in the last fiscal year. I continue to emphasize to potential donors the importance of building our endowment to ensure that future generations of students have access to the high-quality education BSU offers.

Our work to build a sustainable future also includes recruiting and retaining student-centered employees, engaging our alumni and cultivating



more partnerships with government, business and community groups to bring our intellectual resources to bear for the public good. And it means gaining recognition for the distinctive experiences and programs that define us as a public university.

And it means celebrating and preserving our history as an HBCU, while opening our doors to students from diverse backgrounds who can benefit from our outstanding academic programs and the nurturing learning environment we offer. Our long-term viability also requires a commitment to sustainability and eco-friendly practices. We have engaged our student, faculty and staff in this cause. We take great pride in having achieved LEED Platinum status for our Center for Natural Sciences, Mathematics & Nursing. Bowie State also generates about 10 percent of its energy from solar panels located around the campus.

The Race Ahead

In fall 2018 we reached an all-time high in applications and enrollment. We are enrolling more students than ever and helping them progress to graduation, consistently graduating more than

1,000 students each year since 2013. Most of these graduates remain right here in Maryland. We are looking forward to opening new facilities to support our growth, and we are working hard to develop innovative programs to support excellence in teaching and learning. Bowie State is on the move and the future is bright!

Thank you for the opportunity to share some of the exciting work we are doing at Bowie State University. We very much appreciate the state's investment in our institution. The Governor's FY 2021 allowance provides a 3.7-percent increase for USM. Bowie State's budget would increase by 2 percent, or \$986,000. These funds are critical to sustain our progress. We are grateful for this support especially as it will allow us to maintain affordability, which is so critical to us and the student we serve. As generous as the proposed budget is, the university will still face increased costs associated with health benefits. I urge your full support of the Governor's budget.

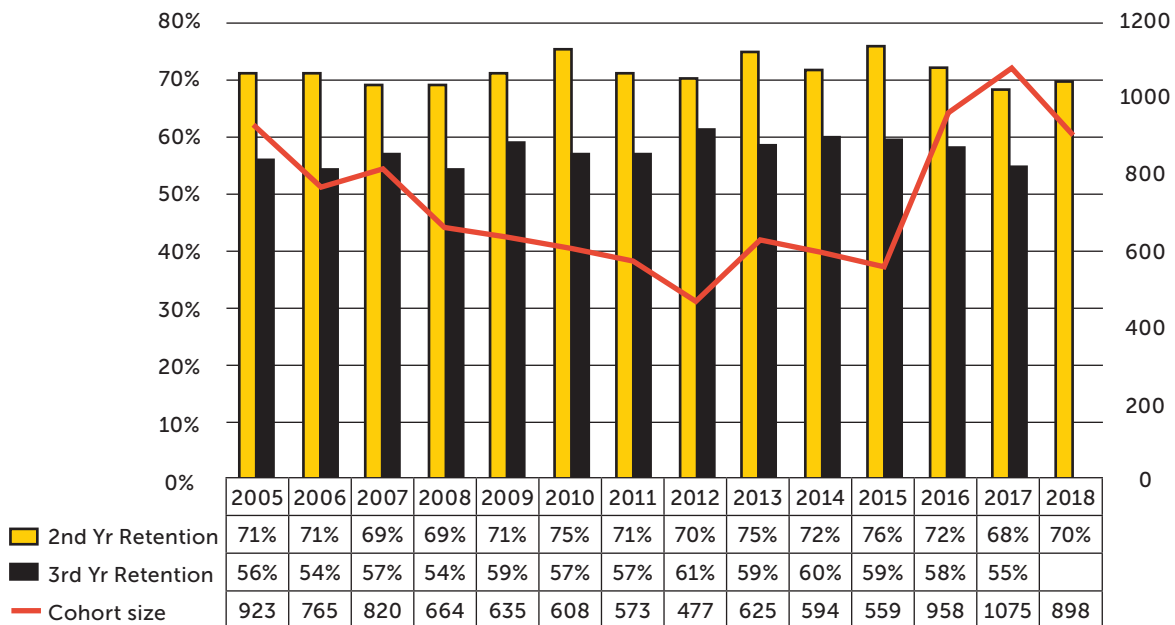
I will turn now to the questions raised by our analyst with the Department of Legislative Services.

Bowie State University | FY 2021

Responses to DLS Recommendations and Requests for Comment

Page 6: The President should comment on the 20-year low, second-year retention rate, and what steps are being taken to retain first-year students. The President should comment on whether the institution grew too quickly with the decision to more than double the first-time, full-time (FT/FT) undergraduate enrollment from fall 2015 to 2017 and if that is a major factor on [sic] the decreased second-year retention rate.

**Second- and Third-year Retention Rates and Cohort Size
First-time, Full-time 2005–2018 Cohorts**



There are several factors that affected the 2017 cohort second-year retention rate, including recruitment, academic planning, academic support services and housing. Bowie State University entered into an agreement with Royall/EAB to assist with the recruiting of students beginning with the fall 2016 class. The initial focus of this partnership was attracting a larger number of students to apply and enroll at the university. The Royall/EAB partnership resulted in a 300-percent increase in the number of first-time undergraduate applicants between 2015 and 2017 (fall 2015: 2,671/fall 2017: 10,830). The first freshman class from the Royall/EAB partnership (fall 2016) was 958. While the fall 2016 class was significantly larger than the freshman classes for the previous 10 years, the campus was able to support these students with existing personnel and fiscal resources.

During this time, the Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management reported to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Even though enrollment management units were in the same division as academic units, there was limited advanced academic planning related to number of course sections, academic support services and classroom availability for a freshman class of more than 1,000 students. Academic support services had higher student/staff ratios, which affected the quality of the service. Classes were being held in rooms typically not used for instruction. Simply put, the analyst's observation was correct – Bowie State University did not have the capacity to effectively serve the needs of 1,075 new freshmen.

To address this issue and provide a more strategic approach to planning enrollment growth, I created an Enrollment Management Division and hired its first Vice President, who reports to me. The initial charge for the division was to create a holistic onboarding approach to bringing on new students consisting of admission standards that recognize our core access mission and admission's best practices, coupled with strategic financial aid awarding. The first step in the process was to assess instructional, academic support and housing capacities with varying freshman class sizes. After cross-divisional discussions, we determined that the university had the capacity to handle a new freshman class of 900-950 students with its current resources. Beginning in fall 2018, the new freshman onboarding approach coordinated within enrollment management offices and with academic departments, student support services and housing for a better student experience. The impact of these efforts are student success measures returning to previous levels. The fall 2018 cohort second-year retention rate is 70 percent. Average credits earned in the first year was 21.4. Average number of credits earned to credits attempted ratio was 70.1 percent. First-year cumulative GPA was 2.51.

Another factor in retaining students is financial aid. Bowie State offers an affordable, high-quality education, and yet many students struggle to pay their tuition. Only 49 percent of our students qualify for Pell Grants. That is down from 58 percent two years ago. In other words, we have middle class students who simply cannot afford to enroll or stay in school. Just this past fall we had 249 students who met academic standards, but had to be dropped from their classes due to non-payment of tuition and fees. We have to do more to provide financial assistance to help our population of students. In that regard, we are working to increase our endowment, so that we can fill in the gap with scholarships to help retain more of our students. This is a top priority for our fundraising efforts.

The availability of on-campus housing continues to be a challenge. The demand for housing by new and returning students exceeds current capacity. The Entrepreneurship Living-Learning Community, set to open in fall 2021, will add 500+ beds to address current demand and to allow for future renovation and/or replacement of current residence halls.

Through the use of data and a strategic enrollment plan, the university is continuously monitoring and adjusting new student onboarding and retention strategies across units to properly balance the need to attract new students with the capacity to retain students.

Page 8: The President should comment on what actions are being taken to increase the ratio of degrees per 100 FTES.

MHEC reports annually undergraduate degree productivity using the following calculation: number of FY bachelor’s degrees awarded divided by the institution’s IPEDS reported undergraduate FTE/100 (IPEDS 12-Month Enrollment Survey). Bowie State’s productivity levels in MHEC’s 2019 report are below:

Table 1: Bachelor’s Degrees Per 100 Students in Maryland Public Four-Year Institutions, 2008–2017										
Institution Name	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17
Bowie State University	16.3	16.4	16.0	17.9	18.1	19.8	19.6	20.5	22.1	15.3

More recent data show that the ratios are trending up towards previous levels:

Year	Rate
2017-18	16.52
2018-19	17.42

In addition, Bowie State University’s contribution to the State’s 55% Completion Goal has far exceeded MHEC projections during each year since 2011:

Trends in BSU Degrees Awarded Compared to MHEC Degree Projections									
Fiscal Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
BSU Actual Bachelor’s Degrees	683	688	739	741	801	833	713	783	826
MHEC Degree Projections	618	630	643	656	669	682	696	710	724
Actual minus Projection	+65	+58	+96	+85	+132	+151	+17	+73	+102

Our enrollment has fluctuated in the past and this accounts for some of the lower ratios. As noted above, we are taking a much more deliberate, data-driven approach to growing our enrollment, and the ratios are trending upward. We expect this trend to continue as we implement our strategic enrollment management plan.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Bowie State University Nursing Program Update

The university accepts this recommendation. A plan has been developed and presented to the Maryland Board of Nursing to help us stay on course with improvements to the program. Among the key action items was to recruit a new chair for our nursing department, which we have done after a national search. We look forward to providing an update on our nursing program and efforts to improve the NCLEX pass rate as required by the Maryland Board of Nursing.



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