



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

June 27, 2023

Dr. Sanjay Rai
Acting Secretary
Maryland Higher Education Commission
6 North Liberty Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Dr. Rai:

This letter is written in response to Morgan State University's (MSU) objection to Coppin State University's (CSU) proposal to offer the MSW/DSW in Social Work degree, which was filed on June 7, 2023. Below are the central claims from MSU followed by responses from CSU.

Morgan State University claims the following as it relates to Coppin's proposal:

Claim #1: Inconsistency with the Institution's June 27, 2023 Mission Response: CSU's full mission statement, which was approved by the University System of Maryland Board of Regents in 2019 has a local, regional, and more importantly, a global focus. CSU's mission states the following:

"Coppin prepares its students to be competitive in regional and global markets through its commitment to quality programs in teacher education, criminal justice, business, social and behavioral sciences, information technology, nursing, allied health, health information management, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), fine and performing arts, and liberal arts. The University's state-of-the-art Science and Technology Center (STC) houses STEM programs, and provides facilities for research through a technology-based learning environment anchored in West Baltimore."

Claim #2: CSU's Proposal Does Not Meet a Regional or Statewide Need Consistent with the State Plan for Postsecondary Education

Response: CSU's proposal provides an explanation consistent with the Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education and explicitly addresses two of the central themes: Access and Innovation. Text from the proposal indicates:

CSU's academic program development priorities continue to be directed toward supporting the workforce demands as identified by the USM1 and in the *2022 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education*. In recent years, numerous articles in notable journals have made a strong case for recognizing the severe shortage of social workers with skills that are in demand following the most recent pandemic of COVID-19 and the trauma that ensued afterwards throughout the United States and world-wide. In addition, a recent program viability study conducted at the institution, CSU recognized that the Social Work program would grow

exponentially by meeting the demands of the students who want to attend CSU for the MSW/DSW. There is a high-demand for the skills that the proposed program will bring to the State meeting compelling workforce needs.

Coppin State University's proposed program will provide **Access**, which is the **first goal and priority the Maryland State Plan**. The university has the lowest tuition costs within the University System of Maryland, which affords prospective students with the opportunity to begin or continue their education at Coppin, which is the desire of current BSW graduates. The lower tuition costs will strengthen the pipeline of available graduates to fill critical roles as defined by the State. A recent poll of CSU students indicated that 85% of our current BSW graduates apply and are accepted into graduate MSW programs in- and out-of-state, most of whom enter as advanced standing students. While these students currently receive graduate education in social work from other schools, at least 75% of those BSW graduates want to pursue their advanced degree at CSU, and routinely inquire about whether an MSW/DSW degree will be offered at the institution due to the low tuition costs and student experience. Additionally, several of our graduates and community practitioners have expressed interests in securing the DSW degree in Social Work. In addition to serving our own BSW graduates who wish to continue studying in the proposed CSU MSW/DSW program, we would also serve the population of students who are unable to attend other programs within the USM and geographic area.

Additionally, the university will help meet the **third goal and priority of the Maryland State Plan**, which is **Innovation**. The proposed MSW/DSW in Social Work is a prime example of a USM institution adapting to the ever-changing workforce needs. While traditional social work skills will continue to be in demand, advanced doctoral-level and applied skills will be needed to address areas of the discipline as current workers evolve into advanced job roles and as some workers leave to work in related fields to meet needs of the community. According to the National Bureau of Labor Statistics, Overall employment of social workers is projected to grow 9 percent from 2021 to 2031, faster than the average for all occupations. About 74,700 openings for social workers are projected each year, on average, over the decade. Many of those openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations or exit the labor force, such as to retire, moving onto other job roles due to innovation within the service components of the field. The Social Work discipline has evolved since the pandemic and will continue to evolve as community needs continue to grow.

Claim #3: Unreasonable Program Duplication Which Could Harm Another Institution

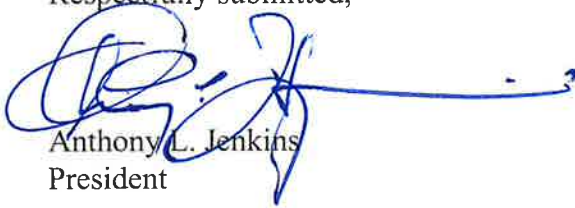
Response: CSU's proposed program will not cause unreasonable program duplication, nor harm to MSU's approved program offering. While MSU's MSW program has been in existence for several years as an on-campus program, its most recently approved Doctor of Social Work (DSW) is approved to be offered in an online modality. CSU's proposed MSW/DSW degree program will be delivered face-to-face.

As it relates to potentially duplicative curriculum, the side-by-side comparison submitted by MSU is invalid. On a national level and due to accreditation requirements by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), all social work curricular requirements are the same since they are required to meet the standards for accreditation. Course duplication in many respects is required by the

discipline and to meet national and global workforce needs. There is no purposeful intent to duplicate programs other than to meet standards.

I request that the Commission consider the following response to MSU's objection within the context of its program review process. Should additional information be required, feel free to contact my office.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anthony L. Jenkins', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anthony L. Jenkins
President