



President M. Roy Wilson  
Wayne State University  
**House Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Higher Education**

February 28, 2019

Chairman VanSingel and members of the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee, it's an honor to address you today.

Michigan is fortunate to have 15 high-quality public universities that together constitute a vital asset that would be the envy of any state. Each of these universities serves a distinct mission on behalf of its students, its community and our state.

Some universities serve many rural students, and some mostly urban students. Some offer certificate programs and associate degrees. Some almost exclusively serve those pursuing traditional bachelor's degrees. Some have large research portfolios that are critical to the economic well-being and improved quality of life for Michigan and far beyond. We need all of our 15 institutions to play their unique role in the state's educational and economic landscape.

Wayne State University has its unique mission. We are a premier, public, urban research university, and Michigan's only public, urban research university.

We are "research intensive," among an elite set of universities in the Carnegie Foundation's highest classification for research — in the top 3 to 4 percent.

Wayne State also ranks in the top Carnegie classification for community engagement. We are proud to be one of only a few institutions in the country to hold the top Carnegie classifications for both research and community engagement.

Last year, we celebrated our 150th year in the heart of Detroit. What began as a small medical college founded by five Civil War doctors is now a thriving institution with 13 schools and colleges, students from down the street and all corners of the world, and renowned academic programs from medicine and science to law and the arts.

We are in the third year of a five-year strategic plan, and we have been making great strides in our areas of strategic focus, the most important of which is student success. This is my sixth visit to this chamber, and this year I am happy to announce that our phenomenal improvement in our six-year graduation rate earned Wayne State the Association of Public and Land-grant

University's 2018 Degree Completion Award, which recognizes innovative and successful approaches to improve degree completion and ensure educational quality.

We then learned that our graduation improvement rate was the best in the country — another high honor. Wayne State's graduation rates have nearly doubled between 2011 and 2017, increasing from 26 to 47 percent. Gains have been particularly pronounced among first-generation, low-income and minority students.

In the fall of 2018, Wayne State enrolled the largest full-time incoming freshman class in the school's 150-year history: 2,957 students. That's an increase of 15 percent over 2017. The average GPA for the incoming class was 3.4. Forty-four percent of our new students identify as minorities, and we've experienced a 28 percent increase in new Hispanic students and a 13 percent increase in new African American students. Community college transfers also are up six percent.

Regarding international enrollment, international students currently make up around 6 percent of our student body. As you may know, there is a national trend of declining new international student applications and enrollments in the United States. Wayne State has not been immune to this trend. Our international student enrollment experienced a sharp decline of more than 20 percent in the 2016-17 academic year, but a much smaller drop of 1.5 percent this academic year due to recruiting efforts, particularly in India, Canada and the Middle East, where we receive the largest numbers of international students.

We will continue to welcome international students to our campus. They add richness to the learning experience, diversity to our campus and help all of our students better prepare for the world they will enter upon graduation.

Throughout our history, Wayne State has prided itself as a place of both excellence and access. These two pillars are not mutually exclusive, and the combination of the two is yet another way we are unique.

At the turn of the century, Detroit was one of the most diverse cities in the nation. The city had a high proportion of immigrants and first-generation families. Throughout its long history, Wayne State has been welcoming to all,

and has been the university of choice for Detroit's often marginalized populations. Wayne State also has been, for a very long time, a place that was friendly to people who are working full or part time, because of Detroit's strong work ethic and culture. This spirit of accessibility is, to this day, woven deep into the fabric of our institution.

Our commitment to access pays off for our students and our state in a very tangible way. According to a New York Times report on economic mobility, Wayne State accepts more students from the bottom income quintile than any other public university in Michigan by a considerable margin. We were also the best public university in Michigan in the overall mobility index, which reflects both access and outcomes, and indicates the likelihood that a student moved up two or more income quintiles.

And we do our best to support our students financially. We offer Access Awards for students with the most financial need to cover any unmet need, up to the cost of standard tuition and fees. Last year, more than 1,200 high-need freshmen had zero out-of-pocket costs for tuition and fees — and that is without loans.

Results and programs like these demonstrate that Wayne State is delivering on the promise of higher education. But we continue to search for innovative ways to get more students in the pipeline — or back in the pipeline — and feed the growing workforce demand for college-educated workers in our state.

For example, Wayne State is investing in reconnecting with adult students who have stopped out of college. Since July 2018, a specially focused team is working to locate these students and give them the support they need to return to the classroom. More than 1,000 students have re-engaged with Wayne State since this team began its efforts, and we'd like to highlight one special program in particular — a program we call Warrior Way Back.

Warrior Way Back is a first-of-its-kind program in the nation — a debt-forgiveness program that allows stopped-out Wayne State students to earn their way to good financial standing by resuming their education. Qualified students can "learn" away their debt while working toward their bachelor's degree. Since the program began in 2018, 76 students have signed on, and

nine students have already graduated. Eleven more will graduate by August 2019.

This program is addressing a serious problem in an innovative way. It's estimated that 1.4 million people across the state have some college education but no degree. We estimate that since 2005, 13,000 people in the Detroit metro area have some Wayne State education but no degree. This is a very unfortunate predicament for these former students, who often owe money to the university and cannot return or get a transcript until their debts are paid. It also deprives our state of much-needed college-educated talent.

I've brought with me two students from the program today, Shawnte' Cain and Johnathan Williams, who would like to take a moment to share how Wayne State had their backs in their time of need.

*[Warrior Way Back students/graduates Shawnte' Cain and Johnathan Williams testify.]*

I've told you several ways in which Wayne State University is unique. But I think what truly sets us apart from other institutions is that we are a university of opportunity and access. We are a Carnegie Research I institution comprised of about 40 percent graduate students. Our research is among the best in the nation, and we make it accessible to students from a broad array of backgrounds. That is unique. That is an opportunity that very few universities in this country have to offer.

You've asked us to comment on the performance funding formula. I recently published an op-ed in Crain's Detroit on this subject, which some of you may have read. First, I support a metrics-driven performance funding formula. I noted in the article some areas that I thought deserve further discussion, but most importantly, I think we now have enough experience to consider whether a more sophisticated formula may help support the diverse university missions I discussed earlier — one that recognizes research activity as well as graduate and professional students.

There are a number of performance-based models in existence, and studies that measure their effectiveness. I recommend we do what higher ed does best: Study the situation to see if there is a better solution, then adopt best practices and adjust as necessary.

Related to the metrics approach, and its potential areas for improvement, is the restoration of Wayne State funding which was lost in the 2011 cut. The state has increased its funding of its universities incrementally since then, but Wayne State remains the only public university that has not been restored to its 2011 level. We are, in fact, down by \$11.8 million. This directly compromises our ability to serve our distinctive mission as Michigan's only public, urban research university, which means that, ultimately, our students — and therefore our state — are negatively affected. If we were to drop from being a national university with very high research down to merely high research, Wayne State would be at or near the top of the metrics funding. But it is not in the best interests of Wayne State — or the State of Michigan — to decentivize research.

I wish to conclude by thanking you for this opportunity to advocate for higher education and Wayne State specifically. I realize that there are a lot of competing needs in the state and that resources are limited. I do believe, though, that an investment in higher education is in the best interests of the future of this state.

Thank you for listening.

Figure 1

### Six-Year Graduation Rates

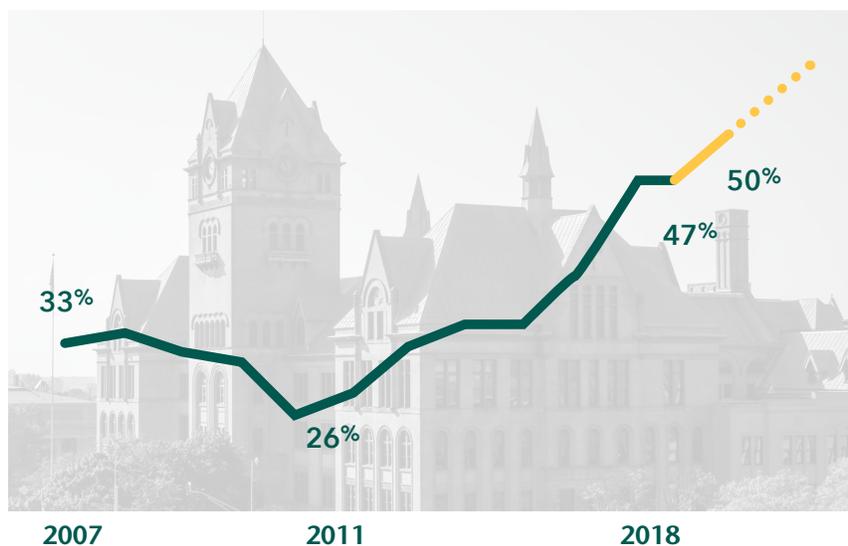


Figure 2

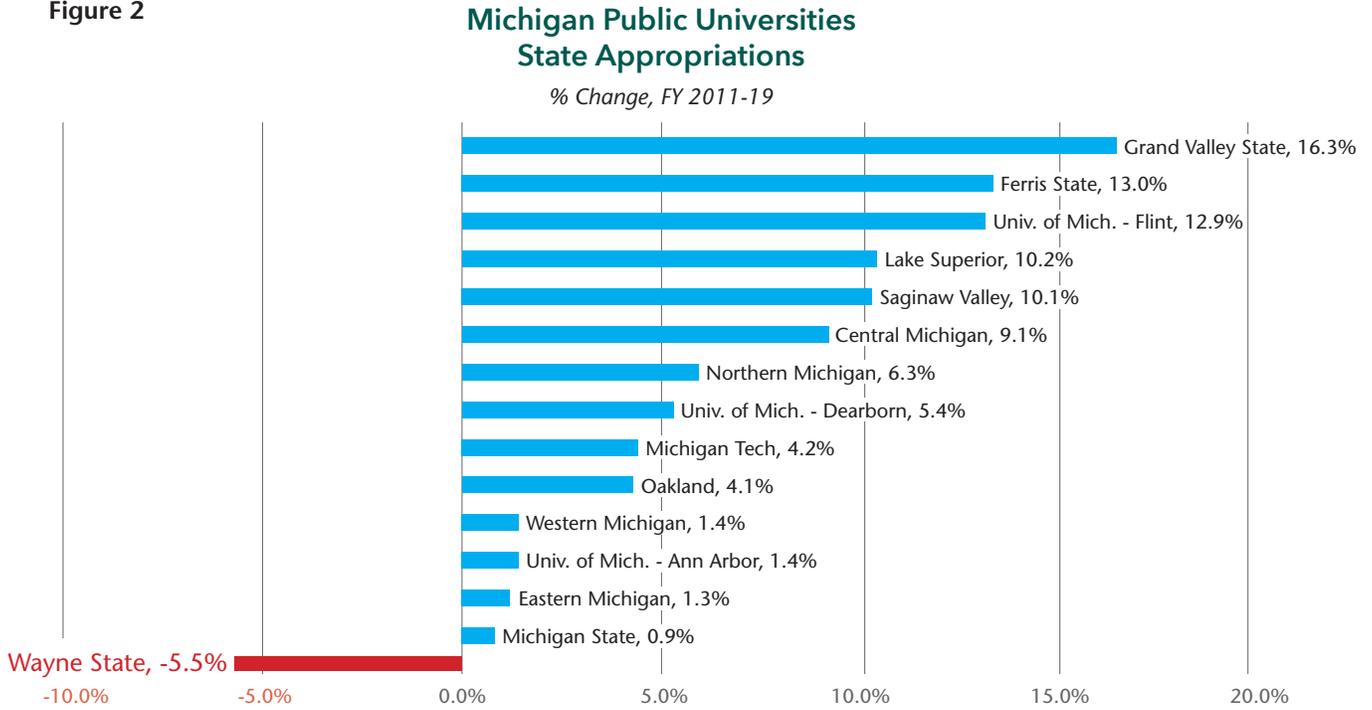


Figure 3

### New York Times Report: Economic diversity and student outcomes at Michigan's public universities

University	Share of students from the bottom fifth*	Overall mobility index**
Other Michigan Public Universities	3.6%	10%
	6.8%	11%
	4.7%	12%
	4.4%	12%
	5%	12%
	6.6%	12%
	11%	13%
	9.6%	13%
	8.9%	14%
	9.7%	15%
	14%	16%
	9.2%	16%
	10%	18%
	3.8%	18%
<b>Wayne State University</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>19%</b>

[nytimes.com/interactive/projects/college-mobility](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/college-mobility)

\*Families who made about \$20,000 or less per year

\*\*This measure reflects both access and outcomes, representing the likelihood that a student moved up two or more income quintiles

Figure 4



# WAYNE STATE'S IMPACT IN MICHIGAN

Wayne State revolutionizes education on campus and across the state, contributes to the local economy, and is a leader in groundbreaking research.

## WE PREPARE FUTURE LEADERS

### LARGEST FRESHMAN CLASS IN OUR HISTORY

FALL 2018



More than 90%  
of our students  
come from  
MICHIGAN



More than 2,000 metro Detroit middle school students gained a firsthand look at Wayne State during our annual



### STEM DAY

APLU 2018  
Degree Completion  
Award recipient

### GRAD IMPROVEMENT RATES NEARLY DOUBLED

BEST IN THE COUNTRY



*WITH A 51% DROP IN  
CRIME SINCE 2009,  
WE HELP BUSINESSES  
START, GROW AND THRIVE*

MORE THAN  
**\$221.5 MILLION**  
in annual research  
expenditures



New housing  
facilities providing  
**800**  
beds for students from  
around the globe

**TECHTOWN**, our business incubator, has served **1,465** companies and helped create nearly **1,200** jobs since 2009

*MORE THAN 80% OF OUR  
265,000 ALUMNI LIVE  
AND WORK IN MICHIGAN*

## WE IMPROVE AND SAVE LIVES



More than **20,000**  
at-risk mothers helped by the  
**PERINATOLOGY RESEARCH BRANCH** since 2002

### WARRIOR WAY BACK

allows former students to  
finish their degree programs



The IBio is revolutionizing  
research of health care  
disparities

**\$2.5  
BILLION**

in overall economic  
impact in Michigan

# ◀ WARRIOR WAY BACK

Warrior Way Back is a groundbreaking debt forgiveness program – the first in the nation to welcome students to earn their way back to school.

Wayne State University students who have stopped out for over two years and have an outstanding account balance of \$1,500 are now welcomed back to finish their degree through the Warrior Way Back (WWB) program. Over three semesters (or upon graduation) their debt is discharged and the student regains financial standing at the University.

Students with a 2.0 GPA can enter the program and must maintain a 2.5 GPA over three semesters as a part of WWB. During their participation in WWB and beyond, program participants will have access to newly invigorated services aimed at improving student success.

A team of dedicated staff, including a returning student advisor, work with students to ensure they have the support they need academically and financially. Students must also meet all financial aid and account balance requirements and limit coursework only to those required for graduation.

## Wayne State programs that support adult returning students:

- Student Success Workshops
- Counseling and Psychological Services
- Math Literacy Services (MLS)
- Math Resource Center
- Peer Assisted Learning (PAL)
- Student Disability Services
- Study Skills Academy
- Transfer Student Success Center (TSSC)
- Tuesday Talks – Monthly Success Workshops for Adult Students
- Veteran Services (OMVAE)
- Writing Center

WWB was created to support students and strengthen the communities they live in. This program has become an inspiration to several other institutions in the nation that also have a dedication to improving completion rates and securing the futures of their students. It is expected that this program and Wayne State will become a model for student success driven debt forgiveness programs across the country.



## WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

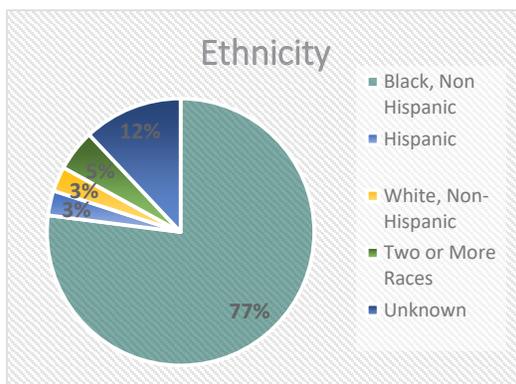
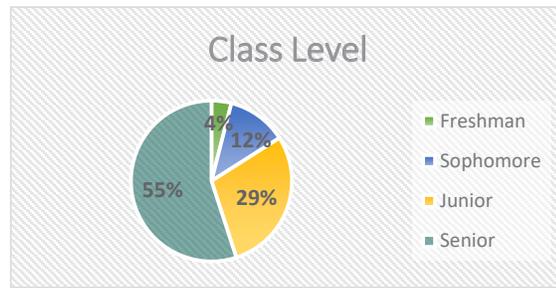
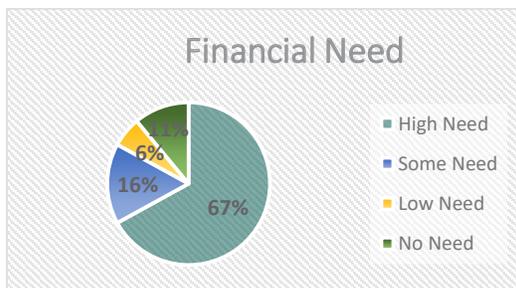
# WARRIOR WAY BACK

## Warrior Way Back Facts and Demographics:

- Wayne State University welcomed back 56 student in the first WWB cohort, which re-enrolled in Fall 2018
  - 9 students graduated their very first semester back and had their full balances forgiven.
- The program now has 76 students, 11 of which are expected to graduate by August.
- The program is on track to bring over 100 students back to Wayne State University before Warrior Way Back's first anniversary.

Wayne State University is dedicated to improving student success and degree completion rates for Metro Detroiters.

There's no single characteristic that defines a Wayne State Warrior, and the same is true for Warrior Way Back students. While not considered typical college students (with an average age of 39) enrollees are representative of the Detroit community. The WWB program increases the number of bachelor's degrees held by students of color and people with high financial need; 77% of our students are black and 67% have low estimated household contributions. In addition to socioeconomic stressors, many WWB students have families and full-time jobs that compound the difficulty of completing a degree.



Age	
Median Age	39
Mean Age	39
Youngest Student	21
Oldest Student	60



WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY