DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY · FY2028 OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST

Make Growth Permanent. Scale Downtown Dover's Next Chapter.

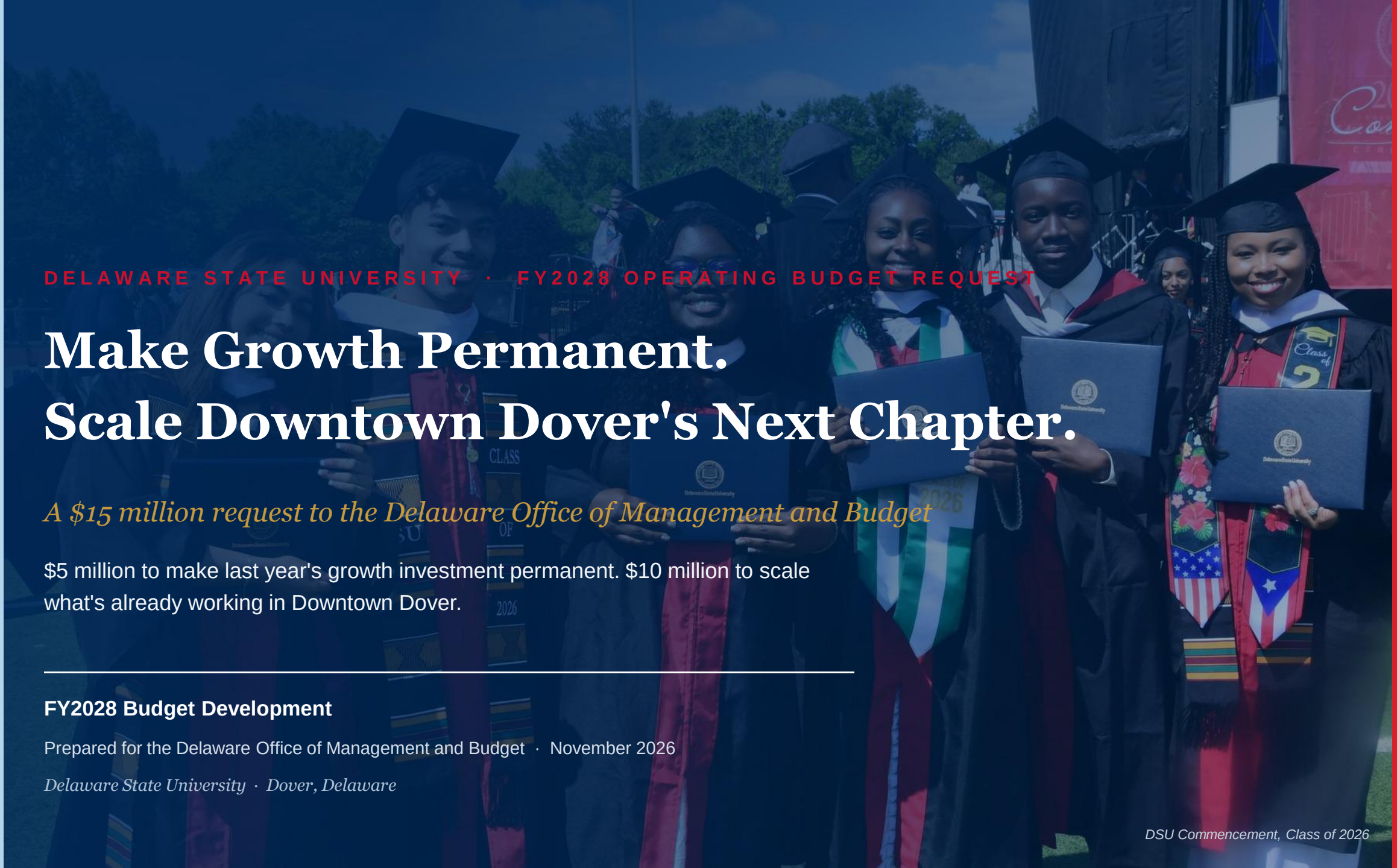
A $15 million request to the Delaware Office of Management and Budget

$5 million to make last year's growth investment permanent. $10 million to scale what's already working in Downtown Dover.

FY2028 Budget Development

Prepared for the Delaware Office of Management and Budget · November 2026

Delaware State University · Dover, Delaware



DSU Commencement, Class of 2026

One Request, Two Purposes: Protect What We Built, Then Scale What Works.

TOTAL FY2028 REQUEST

$15M

Increase to Delaware State University's FY2028 Operations line — a base-budget request, not a one-time ask.

PART ONE · MAKE PERMANENT

$5M

Converts last year's one-time Supplemental Budget appropriation into permanent base funding — the cost of enrollment growth already realized.

PART TWO · SCALE FOR GROWTH

$10M

Scales proven investments anchored in Downtown Dover, consistent with Delaware's economic development priorities.

This is a structural request, not a new-program ask — it protects capacity Delaware already funds and grows what is already working in Downtown Dover.

Source: DSU FY2028 Operating Budget Request ("Door Opener")

Delaware's Investment Is Already Paying Off — And the Need Keeps Growing.

7,407

Students enrolled in Fall 2026 — with an 11.8% increase since last year, a University historical record.

$50M

Annual research enterprise, up 88% — now a Carnegie R2 institution.

$700M+

In statewide economic impact every year — more than $6 returned for every $1 the State invests.



DSU students celebrate a top 10 national HBCU ranking (U.S. News, 2026).

Without adequate operating support, the University cannot sustain the enrollment growth, retention, and graduation-rate performance behind its ranking as a premier HBCU.

Sources: DSU FY2028 Operating Budget Request ("Door Opener"); DSU institutional data; U.S. News & World Report, 2026 HBCU Rankings.

STUDENT SUCCESS

Training the next generation of healers and scientists

From the lab to the clinic to the classroom.



NURSING CLASS OF 2026







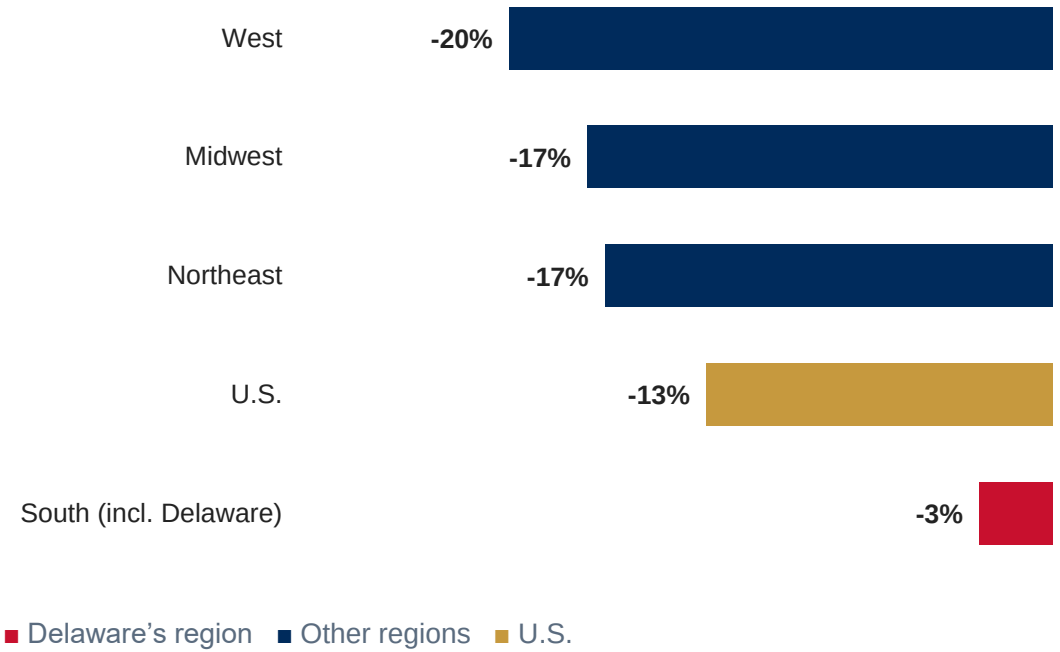




High school graduates peaked in 2025 and are projected to decline in every U.S. region through 2041.

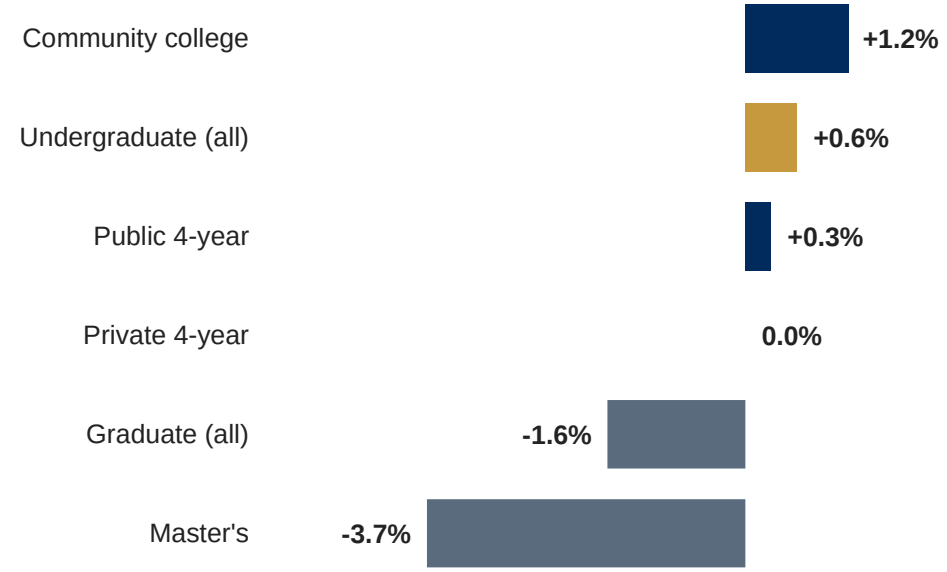
Projected change in high school graduates, 2025 peak to 2041

U.S.: ~3.9M graduates in 2025 → under 3.4M by 2041 (−13%)



Fall 2026 enrollment change vs. Fall 2025 (preliminary)

Growth has stalled: undergraduates +0.6%, graduate −1.6%



Sources: WICHE, Knocking at the College Door (Dec. 2024), public + private graduates, 2025 to 2041 (WICHE regions; South follows the SREB states plus D.C.); Delaware Division of Public Health vital statistics; National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, Preliminary Fall Enrollment Trends (Oct. 2026; 46% of institutions reporting).

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Financial strain is prompting hiring freezes and layoffs across HBCU peers nationwide.

HOWARD UNIVERSITY

600

Buyout offers

Buyout offers to 16% of staff August 2026

BOWIE STATE

79

Positions cut

79 positions cut to close an $18M deficit May 2026

MORGAN STATE

35

Positions cut

Hiring freeze, 35 vacant positions eliminated 2025

TENNESSEE STATE

114

Layoffs

114 employees laid off in insolvency crisis Oct 2024

XAVIER UNIVERSITY

46

Layoffs

46 staff laid off November 2025

DSU, by contrast, has avoided buyouts, layoffs and position cuts: 40 budgeted positions have been frozen since FY24, yet headcount grew from 787 (FY24) to 843 (FY26).

Sources: Journal of Blacks in Higher Education; Higher Ed Dive; Maryland Matters; HBCU Gameday; WWL-TV; local news reporting (2024–2026).

Closures are now a steady annual event, and rating agencies expect more.

126

HIGHER ED CLOSURES SINCE 2020

At least 68 nonprofit and 58 for-profit colleges have closed since 2020.

40

MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS SINCE 2020

12 announced in 2024 and 7 in 2025, including Villanova–Rosemont and Kean–NJCU.

Negative

RATINGS AGENCY OUTLOOK

Fitch: Deteriorating

Moody's: Negative

S&P: Negative

Up to 80

ADDITIONAL CLOSURES BY 2029

Philadelphia Fed model of an abrupt 15% enrollment drop; a gradual decline adds about 5 per year.

Sources: Inside Higher Ed closure and merger tracking (Dec. 2025); Higher Ed Dive; Moody's Ratings (Nov. 2025); Fitch Ratings (Dec. 2025); Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia working paper (Dec. 2024); ABC11 / court filings (Apr. 2026)

FALL 2025 TO FALL 2026

Enrollment Deep Dive

INSPIRE DATA

1,343

Current recipients; up 4.0% from Fall 2025

Average GPA
3.27 (3.25 in Fall 2025)

Top 3 majors
Pre-Nursing
Management
Psychology

Top 3 high schools
Dover High School
Caesar Rodney High School
St. Georges Technical School

DUAL ENROLLMENT DATA

684

Current enrollment; up 56.9% from Fall 2025

Credits earned in prior academic year
3,758, up 113.4%

Avg. credits earned by students who continued to DSU

27 (22 in Fall 2025)

Participating schools/partnerships
13 (11 in Fall 2025)
Largest: NYC HBCU Early College Prep (199), DSU Early College High School (185), Middletown High School (61)

eHBCU DATA

993

Total online enrollment; up 21.0% from Fall 2025

Largest programs
Grad Social Work: 222 (+98)
EdD Educational Leadership: 95 (+18)
Clinical Psychology: 71 (+26)

Participating schools (6)
Delaware State University
Alabama State University
Southern University and A&M College
Southern University at New Orleans
Southern University at Shreveport
Pensole Lewis College of Business & Design

Total enrollment grew by 11.8% from Fall 2025 to Fall 2026, led by dual enrollment (+56.9%) and online programs (+21.0%).

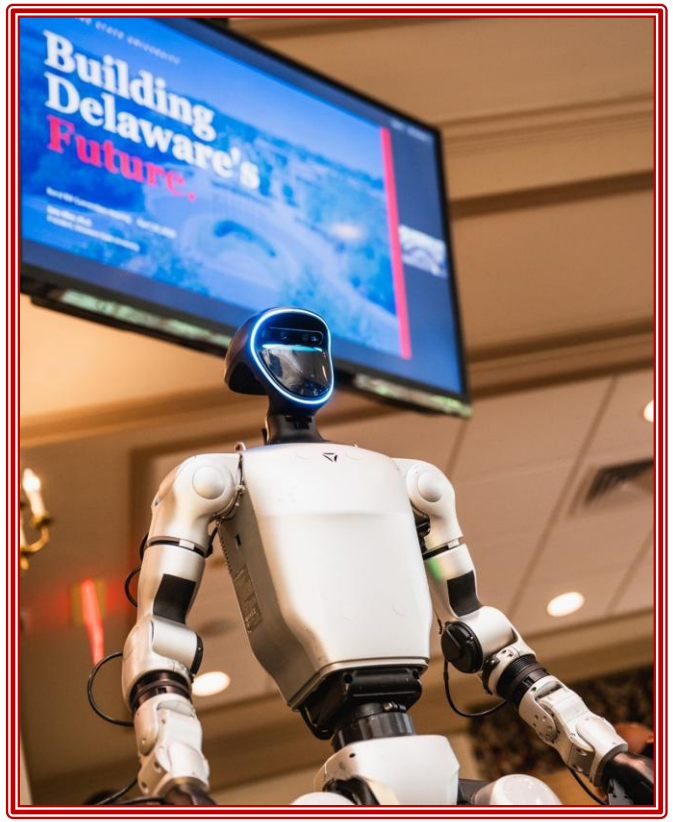
Source: DSU enrollment data, Fall 2025 and Fall 2026.

Two Engines: A 12-to-26 Credential Pipeline, and an Innovation Center Anchored in Agribusiness.

Delaware State is the only institution in the state with a 12-to-26 pipeline — Early College at twelve through doctoral study, with credentials embedded throughout.

Maryland and Pennsylvania have named their bets; Delaware's is Delaware State — the state's 1890 land-grant and one of five national AWS Machine Learning University lead institutions, anchoring an innovation center in agribusiness.

Delaware State is also a partner in the five-year, $21.5 million NSF AI Institute for Human-AI Cooperation, with a DSU laboratory, summer AI camps for HBCU and community college students, and a lead role in bringing other HBCUs into the work.



THE PIPELINE

12–26

Age range spanning Early College entry through doctoral study. The state's only such pipeline.

NATIONAL STANDING

1 of 5

National AWS Machine Learning University lead institutions.

THE PRECEDENT

$160M

Federal award drawn by North Dakota's ag-tech initiative, seeded with a $10M state match.

Two engines, one strategy — credentials that shorten the path to work, and an innovation center that turns Delaware's land-grant mission into the next economy.

Convert Last Year's One-Time Support Into This Year's Base Budget.

Delaware State University has grown by 47 percent since 2020, with record enrollment. Last year's $5 million one-time operating supplement is now funding the capacity the University needs every year, not once: the instruction, advising, and student support that record enrollment requires.

Growth is concentrated in health care, education, and business, and DSU is a leading producer of the state's nurses, social workers, teachers, and accountants.

This request is structural, not new. It converts that $5 million into permanent base funding for FY2028 — the same work already underway, made sustainable.

As one measure of how far operations have expanded to meet growth, the University has added nine full-time budgeted positions in its Police Department over the past two years. This is a University with a proven fiscal record: five successive balanced budgets, including the absorption of Wesley College — an estimated $100 million-plus in cost avoidance to the State.



THE GROWTH

FY2028 ASK

$5M Converted from one-time to permanent base funding.

ENROLLMENT GROWTH

47% Growth since 2020, to a record 7,407 students.

OPERATIONAL REACH

9 New full-time Police Department FTEs added in two years.

WHAT GROWTH COSTS

ENERGY COSTS

22% Increase in energy costs from FY24 to FY26.

BRAVEN / CAREER SERVICES

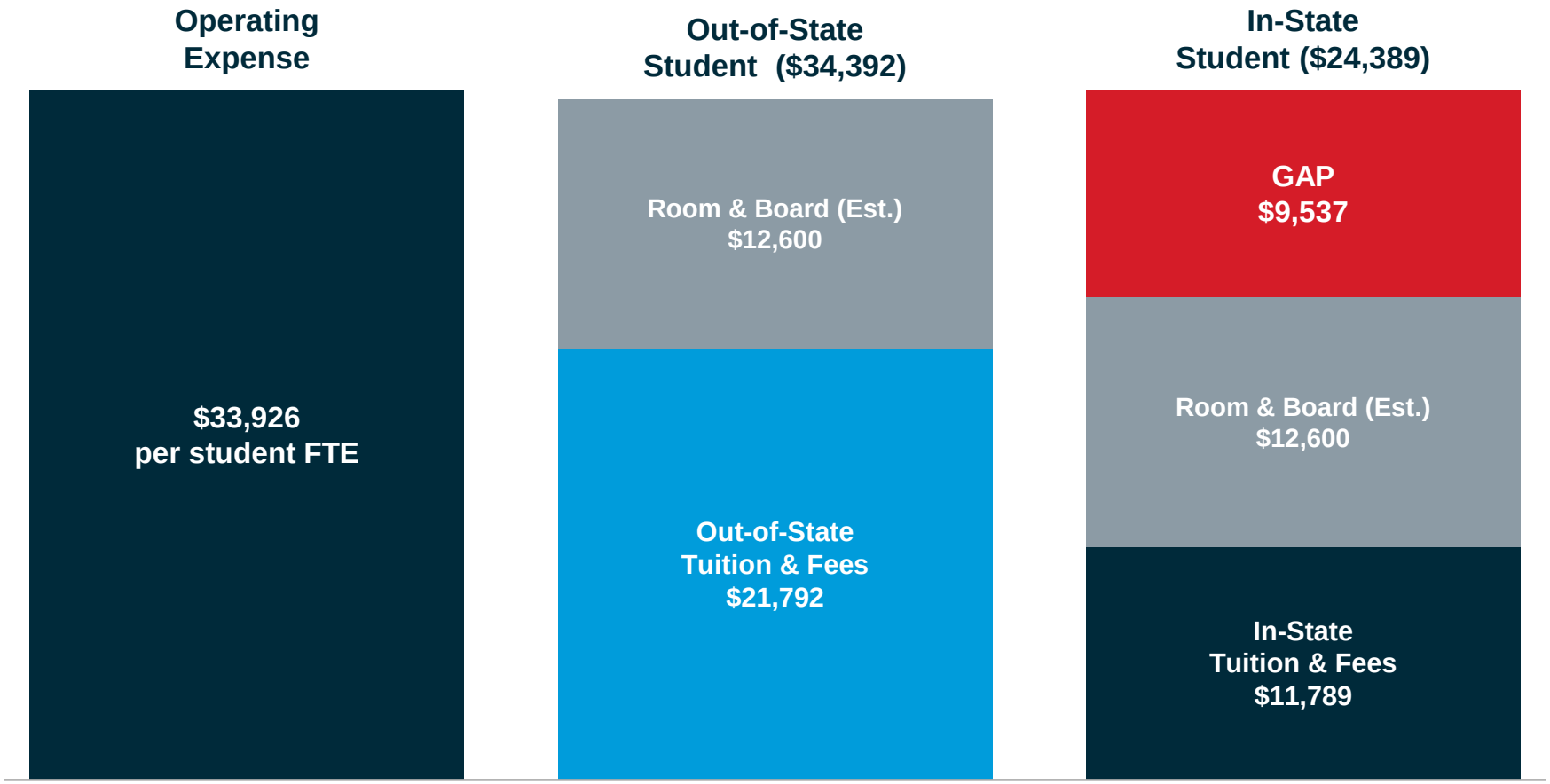
485 DSU students completed the Braven career course, 2025-26.

WORKFORCE

843 Total headcount at FY26 year-end, up from 787 in FY24.

This is the cost of growth Delaware already chose to fund — now due for the base budget.

Every In-State Student Leaves a $9,500 Gap

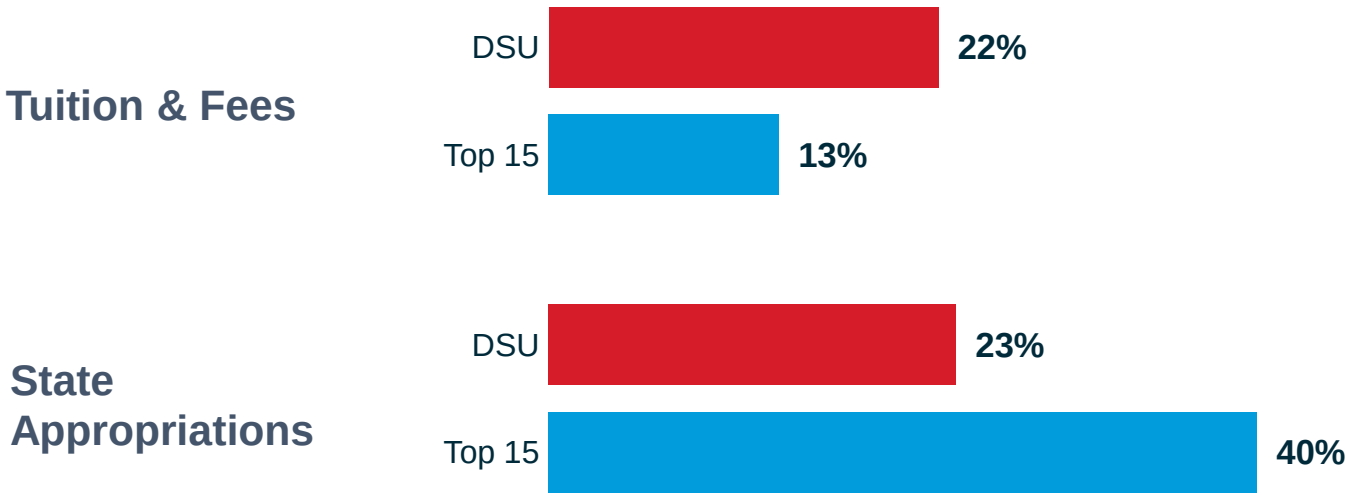


Out-of-state enrollment nearly covers the full cost of instruction and operations, but in-state students have a gap of $9,500.

Source: Preliminary Fall 2026 FTEs, FY27 operating budget

DSU Is More Tuition-Dependent Than Peer Public HBCUs

As a % of Core Revenues:



"DSU is doing more with less."

#32 of 37

public HBCUs, ranked by state-appropriations share of core revenue

#9

among public HBCUs ranked in U.S. News & World Report

Even with a comparatively low ranking on state support, DSU's outcomes place it among the top public HBCUs nationally.

Source: IPEDS; U.S. News & World Report public HBCU rankings.

Delaware State University Is Part of the Solution to Dover's Challenges.

CRIME RATE

3×

Dover has about 4% of Delaware's people but about 12% of its violent-crime charges (2024).

Violent-crime charges, 2024 to 2025
221 → 160; homicides fell from 7 to 3

Shootings reported in 2025
47, after 46 in each of 2023 and 2024

DSU'S ROLE

Public safety partnerships, campus and downtown presence, programs.

POVERTY

15.0%

Poverty rate: about 1 in 7 residents, roughly 1.5 times the statewide rate of 9.6%.

Median household income
$60,199, about $25,000 less than the typical Delaware household (Kent County $74.5K; Delaware $85.0K)

Homeownership
46.9% (Kent County 72.5%)

DSU'S ROLE

Access, scholarships, workforce pathways, local hiring.

PUBLIC HEALTH CHALLENGES

63

Overdose deaths in Kent County in 2025.

Trend
Nearly flat in Kent County, while statewide overdose deaths fell 7%

DSU'S ROLE

Health workforce pipeline, community health programs, etc.

Invest in the Capital City through Delaware's STATE University

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts, ACS 5-year estimates 2020–2024, and 2025 population estimate. Delaware Dept. of Justice, Violent Crime Charges, Jan. 1, 2024–Dec. 31, 2025 (charges by arrest date, not incidents; 221 of 1,832 statewide in 2024). Dover Police Dept. Annual Reports, 2024 and 2025. Delaware Division of Forensic Science, 2025 Annual Report.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN DOWNTOWN DOVER

A $10 Million Investment to Make Downtown Dover Delaware's Revitalization Anchor.

Consistent with Delaware's economic development priorities, this request scales three initiatives already anchored in Downtown Dover — work the University calls its Promise Pipeline in philanthropic and community materials. (The University's tuition-free Early College pipeline continues to extend alongside this work)

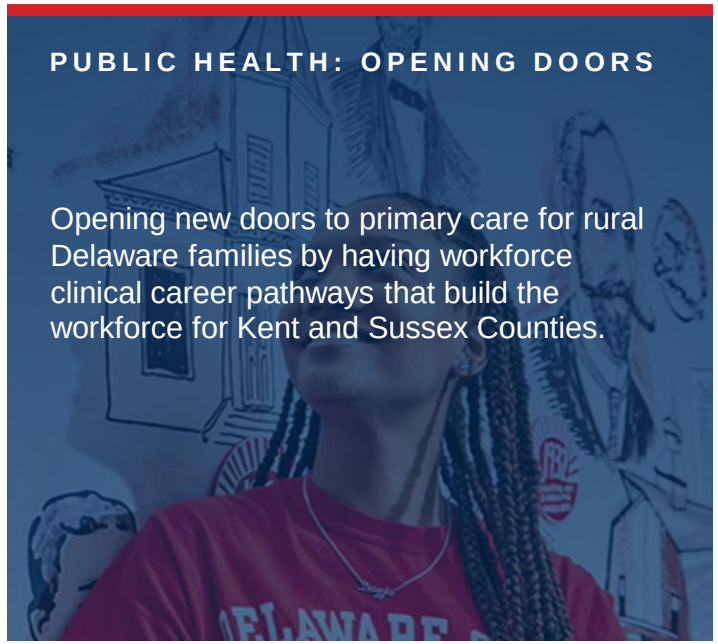


REVITALIZE DOWNTOWN DOVER: CURE, SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Strengthening the **CURE** small business incubator.

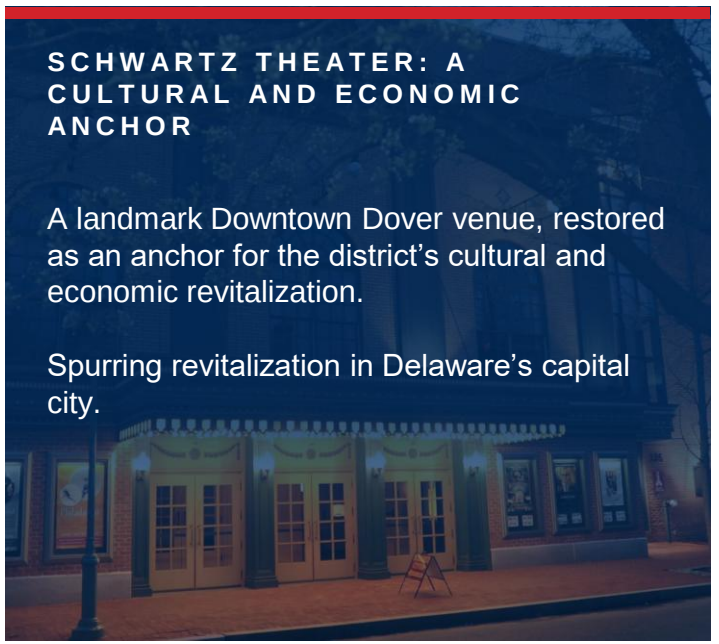
Strengthening small business and entrepreneurial support.

Supporting revitalization in Delaware's capital city.



PUBLIC HEALTH: OPENING DOORS

Opening new doors to primary care for rural Delaware families by having workforce clinical career pathways that build the workforce for Kent and Sussex Counties.



SCHWARTZ THEATER: A CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC ANCHOR

A landmark Downtown Dover venue, restored as an anchor for the district's cultural and economic revitalization.

Spurring revitalization in Delaware's capital city.

One anchor, Downtown Dover — one goal, economic opportunity for Dover families and the community at large.

Delaware's Neighbors Are Making University-Anchored Bets — Dover Already Has the Anchor.

Our region's governors are placing university-anchored bets. Maryland put its flagship at the center of a $1 billion quantum initiative. Pittsburgh convened $90 billion in AI and energy investment at Carnegie Mellon University. Delaware's capital should carry the same ambition — and it already has the anchor.

The Wesley College of Health and Behavioral Sciences, the Schwartz Center for the Arts, the CURE small-business incubator, and our Early College school already hold downtown Dover — returning more than $100 million in economic value to the city. Danville, Virginia — close to Dover in size — rebuilt its economy around an education anchor, the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research, now a model for post-industrial cities nationwide.

This allocation makes the University Dover's revitalization operator: clinical training and care in the state ranked last in the nation for primary-care access, storefront and small-business renewal, and civic life restored to Delaware's front porch — multiplied by the Rural Health Transformation dollars we are already bringing home.

MARYLAND'S BET

$1B

Quantum initiative centered at Maryland's flagship university.

PITTSBURGH'S BET

$90B

In AI and energy investment convened at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

DOVER'S RETURN, TODAY

$100M

In economic value downtown Dover's anchor assets already return to the city.

Dover's scale is not the ceiling — it is the multiplier. Delaware's capital deserves the same ambition its neighbors are showing theirs.

Sources: Pennsylvania Energy and Innovation Summit at Carnegie Mellon Univ., July 2025; Gov. Moore, Capital of Quantum Initiative, Jan. 2025; Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (Danville, Va.); Delaware Rural Health Transformation Program, 2026.

1% REDUCTION

Any reductions would affect Operations.



Should revenue estimates decrease and the University face a 1% reduction ($650,548), this would affect the Operations line that broadly supports University services. As base costs like energy continue to grow, this would require cuts in critical areas like student and academic services, information technology, and public safety.

CRITICAL AREAS AT RISK

01 **Student and Academic Services**

02 **Information Technology**

03 **Public Safety**

CAPITAL BUDGET REQUEST

$45 Million

- *Deferred Maintenance*
- *Campus Improvements*
- *Athletics Transformation*

Taking stock of the University's footprint

WHERE WE STAND TODAY

676
acres statewide

2.14M
square feet statewide

37%
of square feet added since FY21



Acquired Wesley & Riverfront

Wesley added 29 acres and 750,000 SF in Downtown Dover to University footprint

Property Review

Review of University inventory for occupancy, usage and value.

Disposition

Completed sale of Living & Learning Commons (Sheraton), considering other potential sales

Looking forward

Investment in main and downtown campuses and student housing

MASTER PLAN

A Strong Foundation, and a Plan for What's Next.

CAMPUS FOOTPRINT GROWTH SINCE 2021

41%

THE DRIVER

The Wesley acquisition accounts for most of this growth.

WHAT'S NEXT

Our real estate rationalization effort, now underway, will define the space the University needs to support future growth.



Athletics Transformation

Full vision:

- Alumni Stadium improvements
- New team spaces, event space and Athletics spaces in new building adjacent to stadium
- Downtown improvements
- Convocation Center

Current Project

Status:

- Construction Documents in development
- Demolition out to bid

Timeline:

- Begin demolition Dec/Jan
- Begin construction March 2027
- Complete construction August 2028

STADIUM PROJECT UPDATE

Athletics Transformation: Stadium Upgrade and New Facility

STADIUM

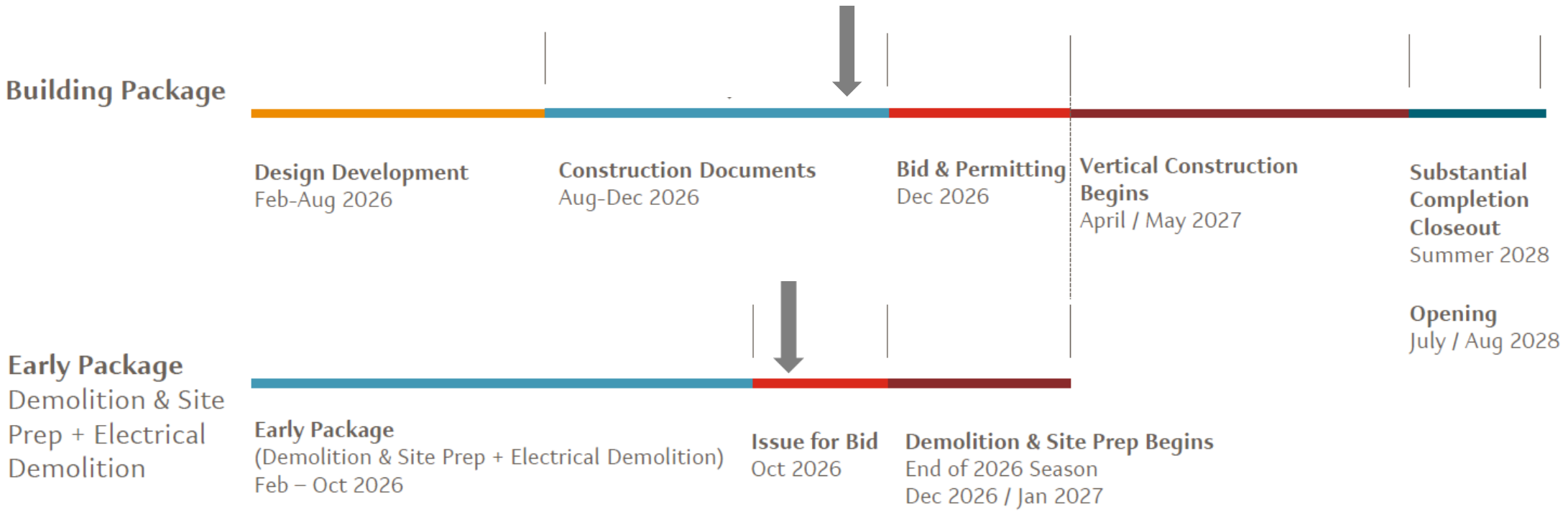
- Demolish & replace Home side stands
- New restrooms & concessions areas



NEW BUILDING

- Press box
- Player Facilities
  - Home team locker room, treatment areas, tiered team room, lounge and nutrition bar
- Support
  - Equipment, laundry, storage
- Team and Athletics office and meeting spaces
- Flex/Visitor Locker Room and Coaches & Officials Locker Rooms
- VIP and other event spaces

Working Schedule




DELAWARE STATE


DELAWARE STATE

NEXT STEPS

The proof is already here – the Promise Pipeline!

Make it permanent. Then help it grow.

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