

HOWARD FORWARD



FIVE YEAR PLAN 2019-2024

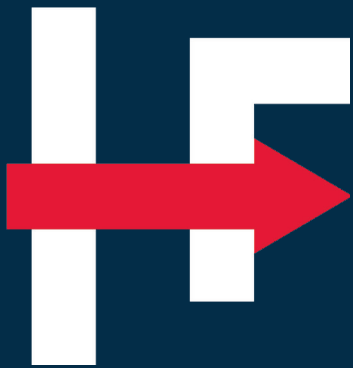


HOWARD
UNIVERSITY

HOWARD FORWARD

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BACKGROUND ON THE HOWARD FORWARD PLAN

Approved by the Howard University Board of Trustees in Spring 2018, the Howard Forward 2019 – 2024 Strategic Plan was developed to position Howard University as a model of excellence in academics and operations. The Howard Forward Strategic Plan held attainable aspirations outlined by overarching priorities that our University was uniquely positioned to address. Coupled with our mission to provide an educational experience of exceptional quality and our commitment to produce distinguished global leaders, Howard Forward became the pathway to a more sustainable and effective Howard University.

The initial Framework Committee began the important process of developing the backbone for the strategic plan. This included: outlining the strategic planning process, hosting focus groups with internal stakeholders, facilitating community engagement activities with stakeholders, and administering a survey to a subset of faculty, staff, students, and alumni to solicit their input. The result was the creation of a strategic plan focused on driving a culture of continuous improvement, reinforcing the importance of measurable objectives which are rewarded with success. As this report outlines, Howard found strong success and forward momentum through this five-year period, supported and structured by the five Howard Forward pillars reported on in this document.



A NOTE FROM HOWARD UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

BEN VINSON III, PH.D.

As our community prepares to transition into new priorities and directions, it is fitting that we pause to reflect on the strategies and efforts that have led us to where we are today. The past five years have been pivotal in our pursuit of continued excellence. With economic growth, campus expansion, and increased graduation rates, together under Howard Forward we have seen our University progress in real time. We have surpassed our goals, even in the face of global changes. As we continue to press forward with maximum strength, I am delighted to celebrate the many victories of the Howard Forward Strategic Plan.

My predecessor President Emeritus Wayne A. I. Frederick M.D. set ambitious goals to invest heavily in Howard University, to increase our academic and administrative success. As he recognized the need to move forward as a higher education institution, the Howard Forward Strategic Plan was developed to improve not only our University's infrastructure and processes, but to increase our service to our communities as well.

Howard Forward identified five key pillars to uphold this mission:

1. Enhance Academic Excellence
2. Inspire New Knowledge
3. Serve the Community
4. Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness
5. Achieve Financial Sustainability

By focusing on these five pillars, Howard positioned itself to move forward into a new era of momentum while also building on a legacy of longevity. I am honored to have had the opportunity to continue driving its success and fulfillment. The leadership transition and hand-off from President Emeritus Frederick to myself became another positive change during this transformative period, symbolizing the success of this plan and its ability to keep Howard focused on reaching its maximum strength. Our commitment to this plan brought Howard Forward's proposed tangible impact across academics, research, community engagement, efficiency, and financial sustainability to fruition, even surpassing the goals it laid out years ahead of the scheduled time frame.

In marking the end of Howard Forward's five-year tenure, we acknowledge the successes of our collective institutional efforts for our improved and sustainable future. This future paints a full, clear picture of the global impact of every Bison member, from current faculty, staff and students to proud alumni and the future Bison yet to join our ranks. Now, with this solid foundation, we can keep pushing toward even more operational transformation, resource innovation, and institutional and academic excellence in our next strategic plan. Let's keep moving Howard at maximum strength, together as a community.

Warm regards,
Ben Vinson III, Ph.D.
President, Howard University

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PLAN PILLARS

This Howard Forward Strategic Plan Five-Year Update Report has been created to reflect on the successes and achievements of the Howard Forward Strategic Plan, initiated in 2019 and concluded with the 2023-2024 academic year. The Howard Forward Strategic Plan transformed many aspects of our University, aligned through five strategic pillars and their respective priorities.



1. Enhancing Academic Excellence

Supporting faculty, research and student development, academic rigor and retention, through strategic recruitment and continuous improvement of academic programs.



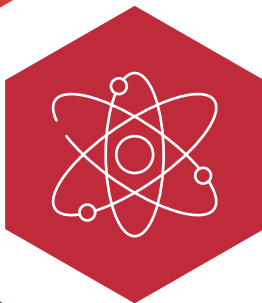
2. Inspiring New Knowledge

Innovating in instruction, research, entrepreneurship, collaboration and capacity building that maximizes our impact, and challenges, enlightens and inspires our faculty and students to change the world.



3. Serving the Community

Serving our diverse community with high impact outreach and collaborative partnerships across divisions and beyond campus borders, while cultivating an atmosphere of inclusivity, wellness and civility.



4. Improving Efficiency and Effectiveness

Investing in upgraded technology and systems to promote process automation and strategic incentive programming for customer satisfaction metrics, while consistently delivering the highest quality products and services.



5. Achieving Financial Sustainability

Pursuing revenue diversification, process optimization, asset management, fundraising and investment in high return business opportunities, communicating in transparency and operating with accountability, all while being good stewards of our resources.



1. Enhancing Academic Excellence

The first pillar of the Howard Forward Strategic Plan focused on Enhancing Academic Excellence through measurable achievements in the following initiatives: **Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Student Success**; **Academic Innovation**; **Recruitment, Retention, and Access to Education**; and **Professional Development**.

► Initiative 1.1

INITIATIVE: Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Student Success through review of academic offerings, investment in programs and faculty, and restructuring of programs.

Howard carried out a comprehensive review of 141 academic programs during Program Prioritization and established a framework to measure program effectiveness in five key areas through a continuous improvement process. Millions of dollars were awarded to academic programs through the university's newly minted Prioritization Investment Grants Program. Howard also made university-wide increases to faculty salaries along with strategic investments in new faculty hires to ensure students have an educational experience of exceptional quality. New academic centers, online degrees, dual degree programs, and undergraduate degree completion options have been established to address contemporary academic demands and to foster interdisciplinary collaboration. Underenrolled programs are being sunset, consolidated, restructured, and contemporized to ensure relevance and operational efficiency.



A \$2.5 million contribution from the Cameron Schrier Foundation allows for the formation of an Afro-American Studies doctoral program, a highly sought after degree.

► Initiative 1.2

INITIATIVE: Academic Innovation through the development of new academic programs, improved classroom technology campus-wide, and increased online learning opportunities.

Howard has established the Office of Academic Innovation and Strategic Initiatives (OAI) to drive development of new and innovative academic programs. Under the inaugural leadership of Dr. Barron Harvey, over 10 new degree and certificate programs have been implemented, with many more in the pipeline to be launched over the next two years. OAI was also instrumental in the development of two new centers: the Center for Applied Data Science and Analytics (CADSA) and the HU-PNC National Center for Entrepreneurship, supporting strategic partnerships, international collaborations, and the commitment to providing students with unique opportunities to engage in research and the society.

Howard faculty members, serving as content developers, have collaborated with Coursera to launch three specializations and eleven courses covering topics such as project management, data science, business modeling, and cloud technology. These offerings boast more than 23,000 actively enrolled users worldwide, providing valuable learning opportunities for academic advancement and professional development. OAI is working with faculty across the various schools and colleges to develop innovative and in-demand content to further Howard's impact and global reach.



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► Initiative 1.3

INITIATIVE: Recruitment, Retention, and Access to Education improvements by incorporating new strategies for increasing need- and merit-based funding, using data analytics and AI technology to analyze and plan improvements to retention rates, and champion financial and academic programs that drive student success.

Increasing student retention means addressing the circumstances such as financial hardship and navigating academic challenges that can lead to dropouts and temporary stopouts. Under Howard Forward, we have increased the number of recipients of national and competitive scholarships by nearly 50 percent. We also know that retention must lead to success, and worked hard to increase Howard's graduation rate, seeing four year-graduation rates rise from 52% for the class of 2019 to 62% for the class of 2023, while six-year graduation rates improved from 65% for the class of 2019 to 69% for the class of 2023. Also, first-year retention increased from 90% to 96% from 2019 to 2024.

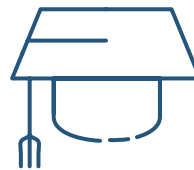
To support students with navigating academic challenges, we completed a major revision our General Education requirements, developed more flexible curricula, removed legacy requirements that commonly stifled student matriculation, and introduced a new degree-audit system via BisonHub.

► Initiative 1.4

INITIATIVE: Professional Development by prioritizing educational development for faculty and staff, placing emphasis on retention through improved student learning, and creation and implementation of professional advancement plan to continue preparing students for the workforce.

Under Howard Forward, our University increased the number of new faculty completing the New Faculty Orientation (NFO), with a completion rate of 70%, from the original goal of 20%. Additionally, all new Department Chairs and Associate Deans, whether permanent or interim, participate in year-long Chair Leadership Academy (CLA) which

offers approximately 35 hours of training. As 60% of other Universities and Colleges do not offer this level of training and support of academic leadership and the remaining percentage of Schools and Colleges only provide on average 4-6 hours total, this program received two commendations from the Middle States in the last accreditation report, acknowledging our pursuit of academic excellence.



Freshman retention rates up by 6%, four-year graduation rates are up by 8%, and six-year rates improved by 4%

► Initiative 1.5

INITIATIVE: Optimize Faculty Workload and Course Offerings by creating a more effective course enrollment process, reducing under- and over-enrollment, and distributing faculty work equitably within departments to balance teaching, scholarship, and service.

Supporting faculty and students is essential to pursuing academic excellence. By integrating BisonHub with CourseDog and Faculty Success, we are better equipped to understand and balance faculty workloads. We understand that this optimization begins at hiring, and thus have streamlined our onboarding processes within our BisonHub platform to support our faculty from day one. CourseDog, which will drive the course optimization portion of this initiative, is currently being implemented to improve student user experience, the student course selection process, and to track courses and curricula across the campus.



2. Inspiring New Knowledge

Our Howard Forward Strategic Plan also set a priority to reward innovation in instruction, research, entrepreneurship, collaboration, and capacity building that maximizes our impact, and challenges, enlightens, and inspires our faculty and students to change the world. Several goals were defined in this area:

▶ Initiative 2.1

INITIATIVE: Increase the depth and diversity of research and scholarship.

The number and size of externally funded research and sponsored projects awarded to our university has surpassed projections, exceeding \$106 million in FY2023. As a result of this success, Howard has attained and surpassed the metrics for achieving R1 status under the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. R1 status signifies that an institution of higher education is classified as producing “Very High Research Activity.”

Howard University partnered with the University of Illinois Chicago and the University of Miami for a clinical trial addressing opioid use disorder, focusing on the disproportionately affected Black population. The Howard University Center for Sickle Cell Disease also organized its 17th annual Cure Sickle Cell Now Move-On event to raise awareness and show support for those affected by sickle cell disease.

▶ Initiative 2.2

INITIATIVE: Increase the number of students who participate in study abroad experiences and high-impact academic and extracurricular activities that expand thinking, promote diversity of thought, civil discourse, and empathy.



A new exchange program with University College Dublin Business Schools was launched, focusing on Diversity & Inclusion and Sustainability in Business, further enhancing students' international exposure and learning experiences.

▶ Initiative 2.4

INITIATIVE: To support research that addresses local, national, and global health challenges through collaboration with STEM academic fields, such as biology, chemistry, medicine, engineering, and computer science, and the social sciences.

Howard University achieved R1 status under the Carnegie Classification for “Very High Research Activity,” reflecting our commitment to expanding the depth and diversity of our research and scholarship. This accomplishment is underscored by our University’s substantial growth in externally funded projects, which surpassed \$106 million in FY2023. Our university’s research addresses local, national, and global challenges, particularly in STEM fields, with notable projects including a \$5 million NSF-funded Quantum Science Education and Research Program, a \$90 million contract to lead a University Affiliated Research Center (UARC) for the U.S. Air Force, and grants from organizations such as the U.S. Department of Energy, NIH, and the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. Under Howard Forward, the University has excelled in humanities research, contributing significantly to social justice and cultural preservation, with support from entities like the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

▶ Initiative 2.3

INITIATIVE: To support opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and co-creation that produces 20 percent joint academic programs and research partnerships.



3. Serving the Community

The Howard University community is comprised of our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and others who call Howard “home.” We are also a part of a wider community: in our neighborhood, our city, our region, our nation, and beyond. Howard is grateful for our position in the global community, and strives to make meaningful contributions in service of the world around us. The Howard Forward Strategic Plan described our commitment to **high-impact outreach and collaborative partnerships beyond campus borders, while cultivating an atmosphere of inclusivity, wellness, and civility.** Howard has made great strides in each of the initiatives identified to help us further this important goal:

► Initiative 3.1

INITIATIVE: Develop effective models for industry and community engagement through expansion of Howard University’s Alternative Spring Break and Day of Service initiatives. Progressively increase service opportunities and programs, tracking progress through a system that globally monitors service delivery by our students, faculty, and staff to the public.

Howard has begun surveying students, faculty, and staff about their community engagement and volunteer hours. Based on the Independent Sector’s Value of Volunteer Time, we calculate the value of that service each year.

Howard University Alternative Spring Break (HUASB) is a service-learning program designed to connect students with underserved communities and challenge them to discern how their unique gifts and skills can be used to address the problems of communities in need and the world at-large. Through HUASB’s partnerships with cities across the world, Howard University has sent thousands of students to serve in domestic and international sites across the nation and the world.



Howard’s community has contributed service valued over \$350,000 per year, in part through expanded Day of Service and Alternative Spring Break opportunities.

► Initiative 3.2

INITIATIVE: Serve the District of Columbia through strategic and effective engagement with its citizens, businesses, and K-16 institutions to enhance educational outcomes in Washington, D.C.

Through the Girls’ Empowerment and Advocacy Program, Dr. Sandra Kalu, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, engages students in advocacy and research-building skills to support their commitment to equitable educational policies and practices, serving high school girls in the District.

The Howard University Middle School of Mathematics and Science (MS)2 forms a bridge between our University and the District, providing educational opportunities for local middle schoolers and student teaching experiences for School of Education students. In the 2022-2023 school year, student achievement in mathematics increased by 100 percent over the previous year. (MS)2 was selected by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to receive a grant for a project designed to make Algebra 1 more accessible to Black girls.



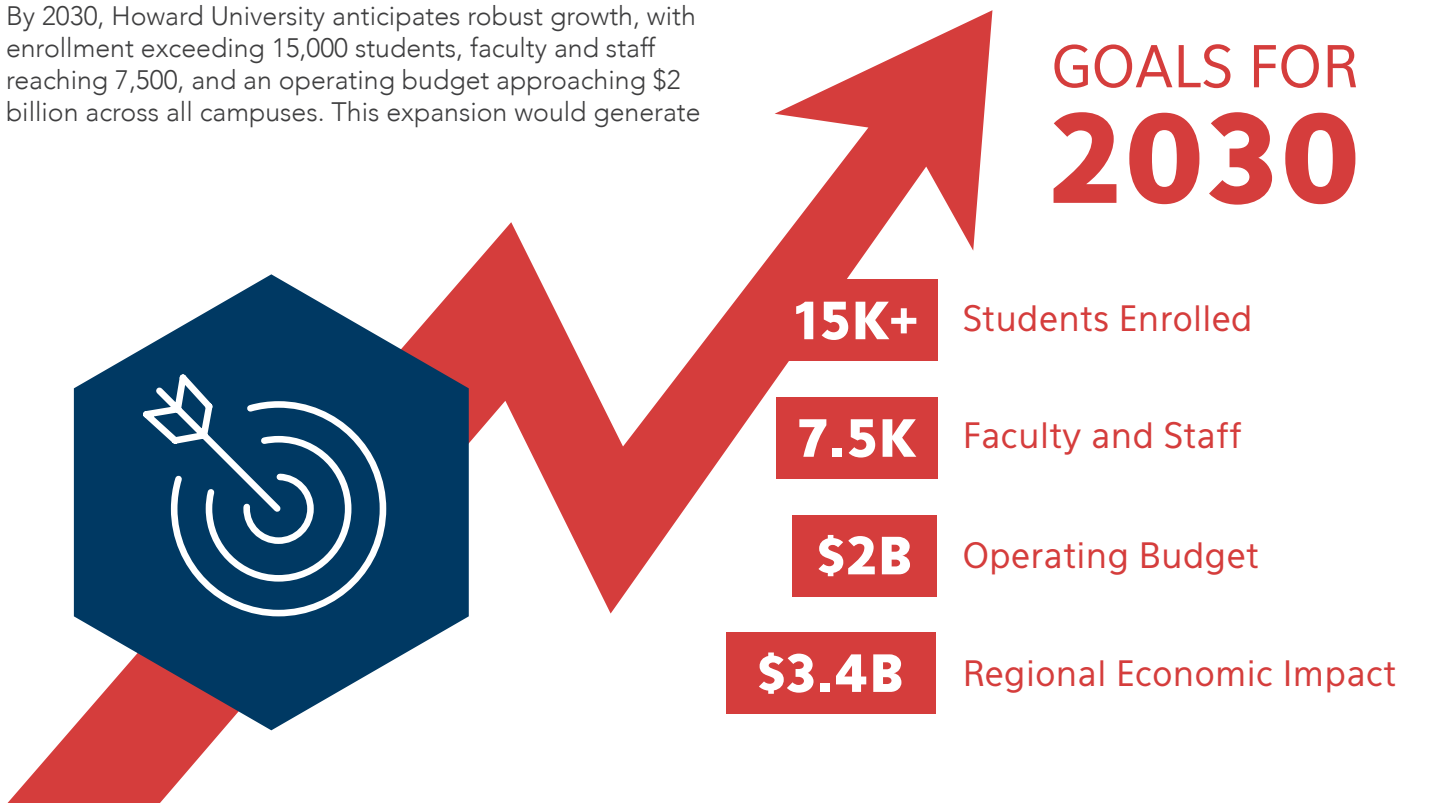
► Initiative 3.3

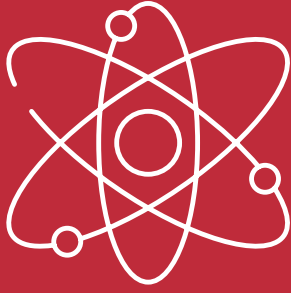
INITIATIVE: Leverage relationships with Corporate partners to maximize job creation, train the workforce of the future, and contribute to economic growth in Washington D.C.

Howard University is a major economic engine for both the District and the Washington metropolitan area, contributing to the local economies through its growth and continued provision of educated workers and community services.

By 2030, Howard University anticipates robust growth, with enrollment exceeding 15,000 students, faculty and staff reaching 7,500, and an operating budget approaching \$2 billion across all campuses. This expansion would generate

significant economic impact, contributing \$2.5 billion to DC's economy and \$3.4 billion to the broader Washington metropolitan area. Much of this impact will be in the form of 28,270 direct and indirect, full-time, year-round equivalent jobs locally, regionally, and nationally. District resident workers are projected to accrue \$358.4 million in new personal earnings, while those in the wider region are expected to accrue \$1.2 billion in new personal earnings.





4. Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness

Under Howard Forward’s Pillar 4, Howard University committed to reviewing the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative and operational systems and processes in an effort to improve the quality of the Howard experience for students, staff, and faculty. This work was shaped through four initiatives: **Operational Excellence and Compliance, Campus Footprint and Sustainability, Procurement, and Customer Service and Engagement**, with a special focus on Student Housing.

► Initiative 4.1

INITIATIVE: Operational Excellence and Compliance achieved by reducing the time to completion of key processes, and reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of administrative, operational, and academic processes.

The Howard Forward investments in technology and training on platforms such as Canvas and Workday, known to the University community as BisonHub, have modernized operations and streamlined administrative processes, particularly in HR, finance, and research administration, which significantly improved the experience for our faculty, staff, and students. During the Howard Forward era, the university embraced cloud technology by migrating 95% of our enterprise servers to the Cloud. This has not only reduced costs, but improved scalability, agility, and security across university operations.

Our University has also increased faculty pay by an average of 20 percent, provided a 7 percent pay raise for staff, and introduced Faculty Success—an online system that captures information about faculty activities in one place, streamlining processes related to appointments, reappointments, promotion, tenure, and sabbatical leave requests.



Howard University has increased faculty pay by an average of 20%, provided a 7% pay raise for staff

► Initiative 4.2

INITIATIVE: Campus Footprint and Sustainability efforts were made to reduce the campus’ carbon footprint and energy use by 20 percent and prioritize the Campus Master Plan’s renovations and new construction alignment with academic and research priorities.

In February 2023, Howard launched the \$785 million Campus Master Plan, the largest campus development project in our history. The Master Plan included building three new state-of-the-art multidisciplinary academic halls and renovating several existing structures, including the historic Myrtilla Miner Building. The new construction projects are expected to be completed by 2026, with four of nine already complete or near completion.



Howard’s \$785 million Campus Master Plan is the largest campus development project in the University’s history



► Initiative 4.3

INITIATIVE: Procurement process changes improved the performance of the procurement function by implementing “source to pay” industry best practices.

The Howard Forward plan saw great strides in identifying monetary savings in our procurements, with over \$11.4 million in savings opportunities from 2020-2024.

► Initiative 4.4

INITIATIVE: Customer Service and Engagement training campus-wide improved the customer service experience for our students and employees, working alongside improvements made to student life via campus housing and streamlined degree programming.

Continuing our University’s commitment to providing top-tier residential environments for our students, Howard enhanced student housing by closing on a \$316 million tax-exempt bond transaction. This strategic financial move was part of a broader \$500 million investment plan to revitalize several key housing and student facilities, including Charles R. Drew Hall, George W. Cook Hall, and Harriet Tubman Quadrangle.

Under Howard Forward, our schools have also reflected on how to offer more efficient and useful programs to our students. The School of Divinity has improved efficiency in education by initiating dual degree programs, such as the Master of Divinity (MDiv) and Master of Business Administration (MBA). The MDiv/MBA degree program allows students to gain a strong theological education and management education to enhance their effectiveness in ministry, business, non-profit, and public sector careers while earning both degrees in less time than completing the degrees separately.



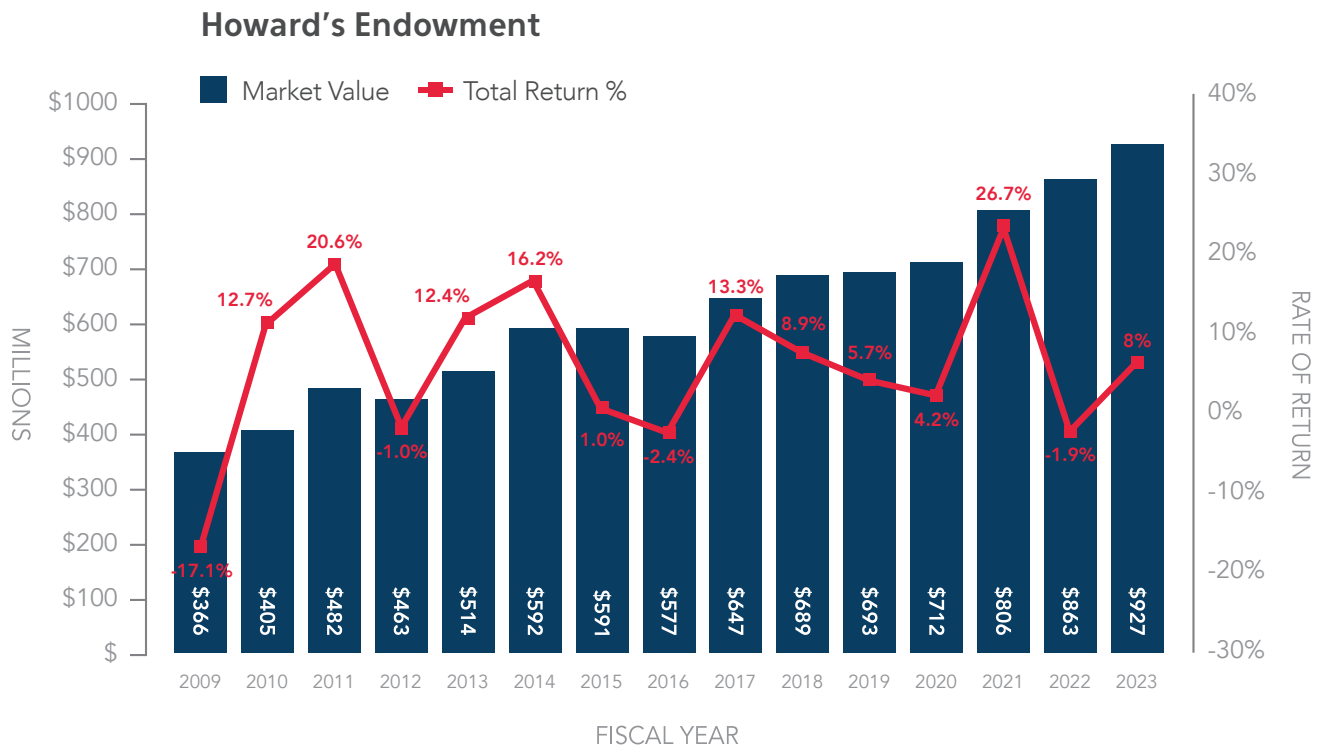
5. Achieve Financial Sustainability

Under Howard Forward’s Pillar 5, the university has made great strides in improving our financial standing. This work occurred through five initiatives: **Endowment Growth, Development, Increase Growth of Revenue Streams, Academic Program Financial Performance Review, and Enhance Fiscal Management.**

► **Initiative 5.1**

INITIATIVE: Endowment Growth sought to elevate the endowment to \$1 billion to increase support for student scholarships and infrastructural investments.

Howard University’s endowment has nearly reached the Howard Forward goal of \$1 billion. The years 2019 to 2024 under the Howard Forward Strategic Plan in particular stand out with significant expansion, from \$693 million to \$927 million, underscoring Howard’s financial capacity to pursue long-term institutional goals.

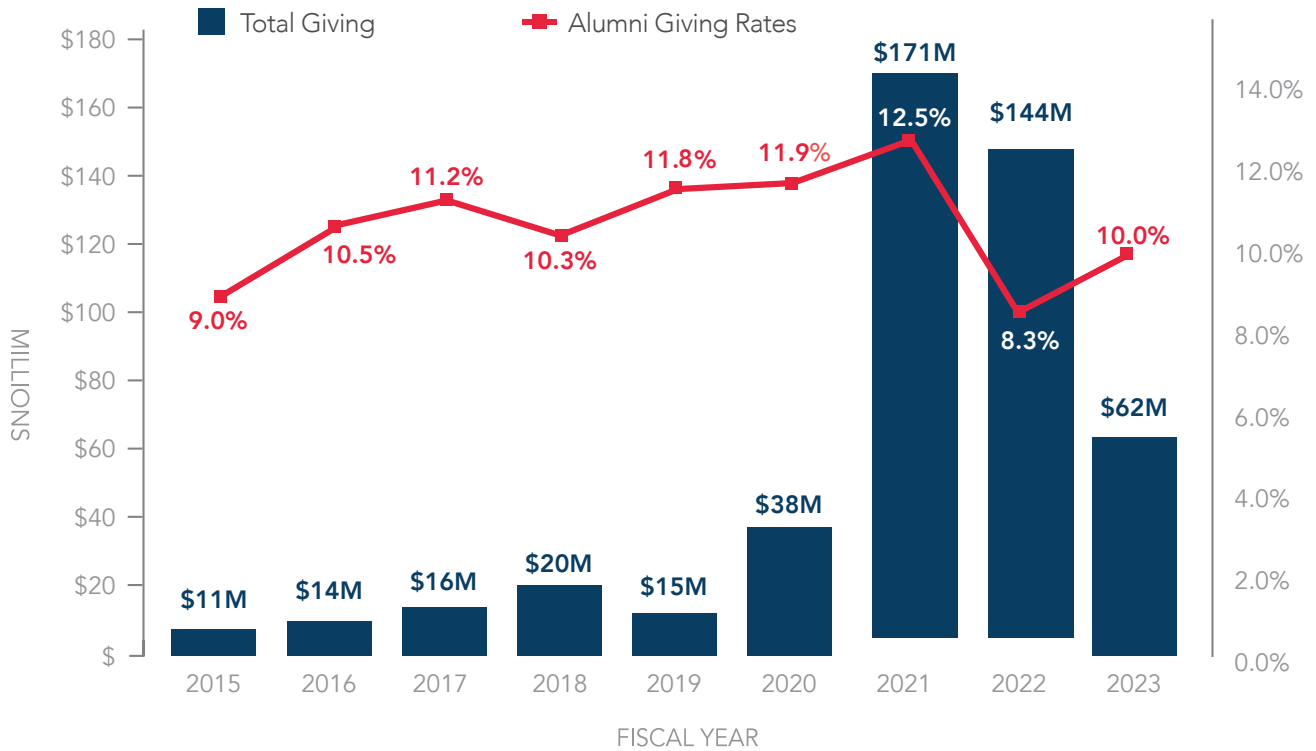


► Initiative 5.2

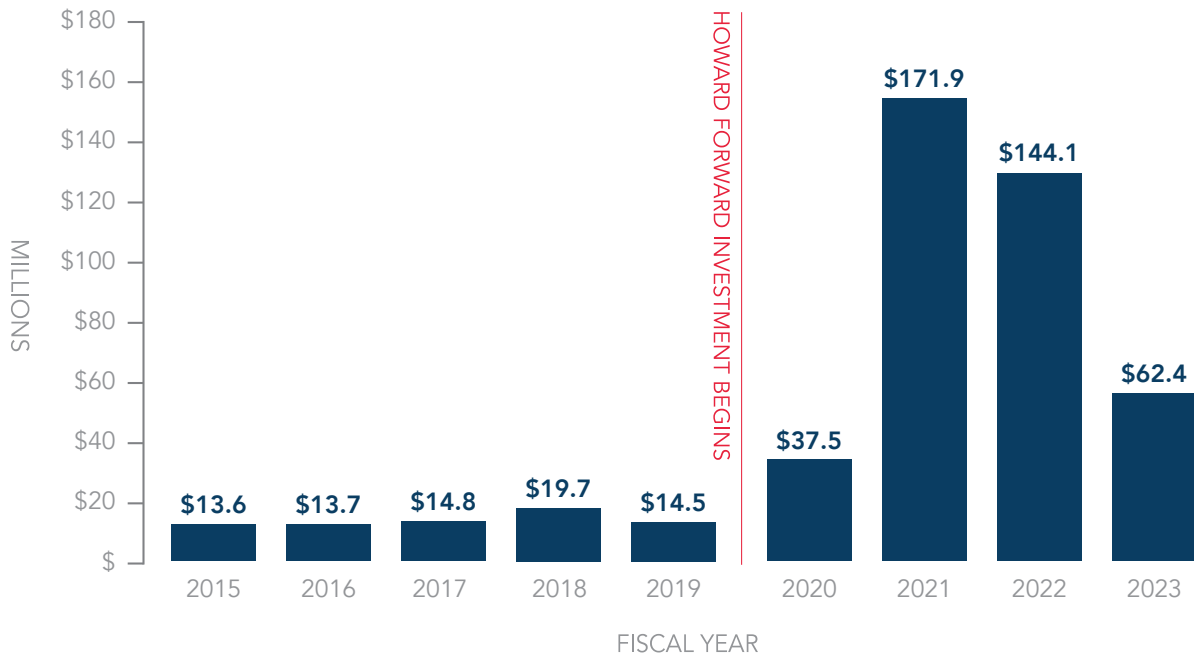
INITIATIVE: Improve Development by building infrastructure for sustained corporate and private philanthropy to launch a robust and successful capital campaign, promote top fundraising priorities, and implement strategies to increase alumni and private donor engagement.

The Howard Forward investments initiative in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 resulted in a surge of donations, peaking at over \$171 million in FY2021. The Office of Development and Alumni Relations exceeded the Howard Forward philanthropic target goal three years ahead of schedule, experiencing significant growth in the number of alumni donors, including securing the largest gifts ever made by living alumni.

Total Giving 2015-2023



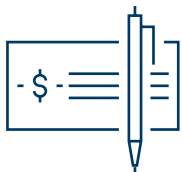
Alumni Giving 2015-2023





▶ **Initiative 5.3**
INITIATIVE: Increase Growth of Revenue Streams through maximized federal funding returns, form real estate partnerships to boost revenue, plan proactively with local governments, and enhance community relations to leverage funding at all government levels.

Working in conjunction with the Campus Master Plan, a \$785 million effort to accelerate renovations and construct the first new academic centers on campus since 1984, Howard Forward saw the construction of much needed infrastructure and housing opportunities for students, faculty, and staff. In 2023, Howard University also achieved significant improvements in grant funding, exceeding the 2024 grant goal of \$100 million with \$106.4 million in grant funding received, and over 60 percent of submitted proposals won.



Howard exceeded its 2024 grant goal of \$100 million with \$106.4 million in grant funding received

▶ **Initiative 5.4**
INITIATIVE: Conduct Academic Program Financial Performance through a set of comprehensive and transparent academic program financial performance reports to inform strategic decisions, balancing student success and financial sustainability.

In line with Pillar 1: Enhancing Academic Excellence, the university's original goal was to increase enrollment to 10,000 students in FY2024. Enrollment surpassed these numbers in FY2020 and the goal was raised to 12,500 students, which was achieved in the fall of 2022. In addition, Howard received a total of \$344 million in its latest federal appropriation, including \$100 million to be used for a new Howard University Hospital and Academic Medical Center, supporting our goals of improving financial sustainability and the academic conditions and opportunities of our students.

▶ **Initiative 5.5**
INITIATIVE: Enhance Fiscal Management through internal audit and compliance to ensure budget adherence, implement improved processes for effective financial planning, and clarify staff roles around performance monitoring and accountability.

Our fiscal management found great strength in the appointment of Robin Whitfield as the new Associate Vice President for Finance and Bursar in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer. With our new steps toward fiscal stability, credit ratings agency Fitch Ratings updated the university's credit outlook from "BBB-" to "BBB" indicating good credit quality. S&P Global revised its outlook from "stable" to "positive."

Howard Forward brought a new era of financial success, allowing our University to support more student financial aid, teaching and research development, innovation, public service, and other strategic initiatives. Howard continues to outpace institutions nationally for alumni giving rates, reaching 10.9% under Howard Forward, a 2.9 percent difference over the National average of 8 percent. The Campus Master Plan has revitalized our University and ensured that our facilities are equipped with state-of-the-art resources to prepare our students for the workplaces and challenges of the future.



Howard continues to outpace institutions nationally for alumni giving rates, reaching 10.9% under Howard Forward



CONCLUSION

As we close out our Howard Forward Strategic Plan, it is imperative to note this work will and does continue. Our goal for a more efficient campus is being completed through our campus master plan. The upcoming release of our Economic Impact Report will more deeply address our University's consistent contributions to the region, and our ability to do more, first for our Howard community, and then beyond. With many successes, Howard Forward brought us into a new era of prosperity

and determination. We have moved closer to realizing our vision for Howard as an institution of excellence, in truth and service. As we close out the Howard Forward plan, we look to the next phase of strategic planning for the University. We are excited for the next phase of our upward trajectory as our community reaches maximum strength, seeing our vision of a brighter and more successful Howard achieved.

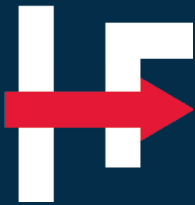
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The accomplishments described in this report represent the collective efforts of the full Howard community, which were made possible by the guidance and direction of University administration and those who provided leadership for each of the specific pillars in the Howard Forward plan. We extend our deepest gratitude to all who contributed to the success of the past five years.





FIVE YEAR PLAN 2019 - 2024



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