



SPONSOR: Sen. Bushweller on behalf of all Senators
Rep. Lynn, on behalf of all Representatives

DELAWARE STATE SENATE
148th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 8

HONORING DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY ON THE OCCASION OF THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS
FOUNDING ON 15 MAY, 1891.

1 WHEREAS, on the 15th Day of May, 1891, the Delaware General Assembly enacted legislation establishing an
2 institution of higher learning to be known as “the State College for Colored Students”; and

3 WHEREAS, the legislature’s action came in response to the enactment by the U.S. Congress the year before of the
4 Second Morrill Act, which provided for the establishment of land-grant colleges for African American students in states
5 that maintained separate educational facilities for white and black students; and

6 WHEREAS, the new college first opened its doors for classes on the Second Day of February, 1892, with a total of
7 twelve students, a number which had risen, by 1895, to 28 students, with the first class of degree candidates graduating in
8 1898; and

9 WHEREAS, when the college began, five courses of study leading to a baccalaureate degree were offered:
10 Agricultural, Chemical, Classical, Engineering, and Scientific; with a Preparatory Department being established in 1893 for
11 students who needed remedial education upon entering the college before pursuing a major course of study; and

12 WHEREAS, a three-year “normal course,” leading to a teacher’s certificate was initiated in 1897, which was
13 extended to a full four-year bachelor’s degree course in 1911; and

14 WHEREAS, to provide an opportunity for its students who were preparing to become teachers, the college opened
15 a “Model Grade School” during the 1916–1917 school year to provide a higher quality education for students in grades four
16 through eight from both Delaware and out-of-state; and

17 WHEREAS, in 1921, at a time when Delaware public schools were segregated, with most Delaware African
18 American students without ready access to the City of Wilmington—which then had the state’s only high school open to
19 African American students—having to end their studies after completion of the Eighth Grade, Delaware State College also
20 undertook the extremely important role of establishing a high school in the then-DuPont Building (which operated for the
21 next 31 years) to provide downstate students with a full high school education, granting a high school diploma on

22 successful completion of a four-year course of study, after which many of these students entered a regular course of college
23 study; and

24 WHEREAS, in 1944, the college received provisional accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher
25 Education, followed in 1947 by an act of the Delaware General Assembly renaming the institution “Delaware State
26 College”; and

27 WHEREAS, in November, 1949, the continued existence of the college was threatened when its accreditation was
28 revoked, leading to strong and concerted effort to maintain the existence of the institution and regain its accredited status,
29 an effort led from 1953 to 1960 by Delaware State College President Jerome H. Holland, whose pivotal leadership is
30 widely credited with guiding the institution to the point where it regained its Middle States accreditation in 1957, a status it
31 has retained ever since, and, concurrently, has achieved and maintained national accreditations of its Teacher Education,
32 Nursing, Social Work, Hospitality and Tourism Management, and Food and Nutritional Science degree programs, as well
33 as the international accreditation of its College of Business; and

34 WHEREAS, since 1957, Delaware State has grown in stature as a center for teaching, research and public service
35 and has broadened its programs and course offerings greatly; and

36 WHEREAS, while Delaware State - which, in 1993, officially became Delaware State University - has remained
37 among the finest “Historically Black Colleges and Universities” in the United States, it now serves a diverse student
38 population, with undergraduate studies organized into six colleges containing a total of 21 academic departments offering
39 53 bachelor’s degree programs, 25 master’s degrees and five doctoral degrees; and

40 WHEREAS, Delaware State University has in recent years achieved national leadership as a research institution, a
41 status exemplified by its new four-story, 70,000 square foot Optical Science Center for Applied Research (OSCAR), now
42 serving as the home of the university’s optics research program, which since 2006 has received some \$23 million in
43 research grants, has produced the university’s first two intellectual properties, and is presently involved with NASA in its
44 on-going Mars Curiosity Rover mission; and

45 WHEREAS, by the fall of 2014, Delaware State University’s student enrollment had grown to 4,644 students, and
46 its campus had grown from a 95-acre property with three buildings to the present 356-acre pedestrian campus with over 40
47 buildings and four outdoor athletic fields, as well as two farm properties in the Kenton and Smyrna areas, subsidiary
48 locations in Georgetown and Wilmington, and an Airway Science Program that maintains a fleet of aircraft and a base of
49 operations at the Delaware Air Park in Cheswold; and

50 WHEREAS, throughout its history, Delaware State has been led by many outstanding educators and trustees, as
51 well as ten presidents: Wesley P. Webb (1891–1895); William C. Jason (1895–1923); Richard S. Grossley (1923–1942);

Howard D. Gregg (1942–1949); Oscar J. Chapman (1950–1951); Jerome H. Holland (1953–1960); Luna I. Mishoe (1960–1987); William B. DeLauder (1987–2003); Allen L. Sessoms (2003–2008); and Harry L. Williams (January, 2010–Present); with Maurice E. Thomasson serving as acting president from 1949 to 1950 and again from 1951 to 1953, and Claibourne D. Smith serving in that capacity from 2008 until 2010; and

WHEREAS, Delaware State University remains today, as it has been throughout the past 125 years, a great treasure in the life of the First State, which has given its many thousands of students the keys to lives of success and accomplishment;

NOW, THEREFORE:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate and House of Representatives of the 148th General Assembly of the State of Delaware, with the approval of the Governor, that we do hereby extend to Delaware State University, its students, alumni, faculty, staff and administration, the heartfelt congratulations and best wishes of the State of Delaware on the occasion of the 125th Anniversary of this great educational institution, together with our thanks for the positive role the university has played in so many lives over the years.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we also extend to them the sincere hope that Delaware State University will continue to prosper and serve as an important force for good in the State of Delaware for many more years to come.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that May 15, 2016 will be known as Delaware State University Day in Delaware.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitably-prepared copy of this document be presented to Dr. Harry L. Williams, President of Delaware State University, upon its enactment.

SYNOPSIS

This Senate Joint Resolution honors Delaware State University on the 125th Anniversary of its founding on 15 May, 1891 and declares May 15, 2016 as Delaware State University Day in Delaware.

Author: Senator Bushweller