On May 15, 1891, the Fifty-Eighth General Assembly of the State of Delaware passed “An Act to Establish and Maintain a College for the Education of Colored Students in Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts” by virtue of the Second Morrill Act of Congress approved August 30, 1890. The Morrill Act of 1890 provided a permanent annual endowment of twenty-five thousand dollars ($25,000) for each land-grant institution established under the provisions of the Morrill Act of 1862 and allowed a portion of the federal appropriation to be used for the endowment, support and maintenance of land-grant colleges for Negro youths in states that maintained separate educational facilities. This legislation provided for the establishment of Delaware State College.

Over the years, Delaware State College has developed into a 400-acre complex containing numerous modern buildings, the result of an intensive construction program inaugurated in 1960. Erection of a $9.3 million dollar residence hall was completed in 1993 and construction of a $14 million dollar addition to the Science Center was completed in the summer of 1995. The MBNA America Building, dedicated in September of 2000 is the home of the Delaware State University School of Management. It is a $17.8 million dollar technologically advanced building.

The student population is comprised of students from twenty-three countries and enrollment is steadily increasing. The 137th Delaware General Assembly changed the name of the institution to Delaware State University in June 1993.