

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
154 PUBLIC COMMENTS
MAY 22, 2025 BOARD MEETING**

Meredith Carter: Alumni
Topic: Commonwealth Campuses
Submitted written comment 5/19/25
<p>Is it WE ARE, or just YOU ARE? Vote to keep ALL of our Commonwealth campuses. This decision is being made too fast; we need more time to find real, viable solutions that do not involve closures. Penn State is NOT upholding its land grant mission by closing 7 branch campuses, which do so much for the communities they are in, but also for PA as a whole. So many potential students will be robbed of a college education, because they will not be able to simply go to a different Penn State campus, which is something assumed to be possible. Even those of us not impacted by closures at all still care deeply about this problem and can recognize the disastrous impact closing these campuses will have -- not just on current Penn State faculty, staff, and students, but on high schoolers, on families, on businesses. We can see that closing campuses would be a mistake, and we have been trying to raise our voices against it for a long time. That should tell you how serious of an issue it is to give up on these campuses, and why more time should be allowed and a broader conversation should be taking place. This issue needs to be viewed from all perspectives, not just the business point of view. Assumptions should not be made on what Penn State believes is best for its Commonwealth campuses, but instead conversations should involve everyone without excluding those most impacted. Those who are part of these Commonwealth communities are not being allowed to be a part of this conversation. Instead of deciding to implement a quick fix that breaks Penn State's promise to its communities, vote against closing these 7 Commonwealth campuses if you believe in the true mission of this university. WE ARE so much more than just numbers.</p>
Randy Shamberger: Alumni
Topic Commonwealth Campuses
Submitted written comment 5/19/2025
<p>Penn State New Kensington means so much to the communities in the surrounding areas. It gives local students an opportunity for a Penn State degree close to home. The campus is absolutely beautiful and the staff is very friendly. Without Penn New Ken being an option for me, there is no telling what career field I would currently be in.</p>
Charles James: Faculty
Topic: Commonwealth Campuses
Submitted written comment 5/19/25
<p>I don't disagree with data presented in the document detailing the economic challenges associated with maintaining the current Penn State campus "ecosystem", and that President Bendapudi has used to put forth a recommendation for closing 7 branch campuses.</p> <p>However, the document does not address whether alternative means of maintaining the current ecosystem have been thoroughly investigated. For example, has there been any dialogue with city council members of the 7 communities that would be affected by the closures for exploring community financial support of their branch campus. Branch campus closures will have significant negative economic impact on their corresponding communities, and such closures would undoubtedly provoke further population declines in these communities. Community investment in their branch campus could well be an attractive alternative to the grim realities associated with branch campus closure.</p> <p>I am in agreement with comments from state senator Doug Mastriano who referred to the proposed campus closures as being short-sighted, and that Penn State has numerous financial resources for maintaining satellite campuses (https://www.abc27.com/local-news/chambersburg/sen-mastriano-reacts-to-potential-penn-state-campus-closures/). One of these resources might be the affected communities themselves, as indicated above.</p>
John Dyson: Alumni
Topic: Commonwealth Campuses
Submitted written comment 5/19/25
<p>My name is John "JP" Dyson, and I'm a proud 2023 graduate of Penn State York. I played baseball there, and I was honored to be the first student to graduate from its new cybersecurity program.</p> <p>I understand the serious challenges the University is facing and the difficult decisions that must be made. But I'm here to ask that you reconsider the recommendation to close Penn State York.</p> <p>From a performance standpoint, York stands out. It has the highest six-year graduation rate among the 12 campuses under review - nearly 64% - and it operates with a smaller financial deficit than several of the others recommended for closure.</p> <p>I've heard it said that York lacks on-campus housing, but I want to clarify: while it's true that Penn State doesn't own dorms, there's a dedicated apartment complex less than a mile from campus where many students live (Ribbon Place Apartments). While the majority of students do commute, York still fosters a strong, connected community that</p>

supports student engagement and success.

And for me, that experience was life-changing.

As a student-athlete, I learned leadership, time management, and resilience. In the classroom, I had the opportunity to be part of something new - becoming the first cybersecurity graduate at York. I found my purpose and built a foundation for my future because of the opportunities that a small, student-centered campus like York provides.

This campus isn't just functional - it's exceptional in the ways that matter most. It provides access, opportunity, and impact. It changes lives. It changed mine.

I respectfully urge you to look again at the data, the outcomes, and the unique strengths York brings to the Penn State system. If tough decisions must be made, let's make them with full clarity on what we're giving up.

Amy Rustic Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

I urge the BOT to pause the campus closures until a wholistic, thoroughly researched, with significant faculty and staff input plan can be explored. The Land Grant Mission of the system is fundamental to increase the opportunities available to students and their families surrounding the campuses the President has listed to close. Penn State New Kensington is fundamental to the region. Students choose New Kensington for a quality, close to home, individualized education. These students likely would not enroll at PSU any other way beyond the New Kensington campus.

Transparency has not been demonstrated in this process and will cloud the decision making process, in addition to the legacy of the hard work dedicated employees, faculty and staff, have committed to this institution and it's students.

Please pause the process to allow for a real research and investigative process to take place with all stakeholders involved, not just a closed door, hidden process that can obscure the factual information.

Jack DelloStritto: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

Dear Members of the PSU Board of Trustees,

I am writing to express my concern about the proposed closure of some of PSU's campuses—specifically, Penn State New Kensington. This campus offers a program that cannot be found anywhere else in the Pittsburgh region: Biomedical Engineering Technology. This two-year degree program provides students with access to a high-demand field that bridges healthcare, technology, and innovation. Eliminating it would force students to either leave the area or abandon this career path altogether—at a time when there is already a critical need for biomedical engineering technicians.

Everyone visits a healthcare facility at some point, and most—if not all—of those visits involve a medical device interacting with the patient. Our work may be behind the scenes, but it is absolutely critical to patient care.

I have worked in this field for over six years and have advanced to become the CT scanner modality lead for our health system in Raleigh, NC. I am constantly helping to get life-saving equipment back online so that critical patients—stroke victims, cardiac cases, and others—don't have to be diverted to another facility, losing precious time they can't afford. None of this would have been possible without the foundational knowledge and hands-on experience I gained at Penn State New Kensington in the Biomedical Engineering Technology Program.

The professors at Penn State New Kensington, both within and beyond the BMET program, provided thoughtful instruction and took great pride in their work. Because of them, I am always proud to call myself an alum—even sporting PSU vanity plates on our cars down here in North Carolina!

I fully understand that financial adjustments may be necessary. However, I urge you to consider the long-term value of keeping these campuses—and their unique programs—open to future students. Please explore alternative areas for budget cuts that do not involve sacrificing educational access or critical workforce pipelines.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jack DelloStritto

Alumnus – Penn State New Kensington

Rachel Henschel: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

Dear Board of Trustees,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the President's recommendation to close the Penn State Fayette campus. As a proud graduate of the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program at Penn State Fayette, I want to share my personal experience and highlight the critical role this campus plays in our community.

Due to financial constraints and my desire to pursue higher education close to home, Penn State Fayette provided me with an invaluable opportunity. The ability to commute allowed me to obtain a quality education without the financial burden of relocating or paying for on-campus housing. This accessibility was essential for me and many others facing similar

circumstances.

Beyond academics, the Fayette campus offered a rich and supportive environment. The quality of student activities and services greatly enhanced my college experience. Most importantly, I was taught by experienced faculty, not teaching assistants, which ensured I received a high-quality education. The mentorship and personalized attention I received from professors were instrumental in shaping my career.

Today, I am proud to serve as a physical therapist assistant here in Fayette County, providing essential care to elderly patients who often lack the means to travel for treatment. Programs like PTA and nursing at Fayette are crucial in addressing the healthcare needs of our rural communities. If these programs were to close or relocate, it would only worsen the current shortage of healthcare providers in the region.

The President's Future State report suggests that Fayette's programmatic offerings could be replicated at other campuses or online through Penn State World Campus. However, this perspective fails to consider the specific needs and challenges of our local community. The nursing and PTA programs at Fayette require collaborations with local healthcare providers, which cannot be easily replicated elsewhere. Pittsburgh area hospitals and clinics are already saturated with students from other programs, making it impractical to relocate our students.

Graduates of Penn State Fayette play a vital role in strengthening our local and state workforce. In fact, thirty percent more Fayette alumni remain in Pennsylvania after graduation compared to those from University Park. These graduates support local industries, healthcare systems, and the broader economy.

In closing, the proposed closure of Penn State Fayette would have profound and lasting negative impacts. It would restrict educational opportunities for financially disadvantaged students, diminish the availability of local healthcare services, and undermine Penn State's mission to serve all Pennsylvanians, especially those in rural areas. I respectfully urge you to reconsider this recommendation and explore alternative solutions that preserve and strengthen the Fayette campus.

Sincerely,

Rachel Henschel

Physical Therapist Assistant

Proud Penn State Fayette Graduate

Randall Newnham: Alumni, Faculty, Parent of current student

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

I bleed blue and white. My father, Dr. Robert Newnham, graduated from Penn State in 1955. He came back to teach at University Park in 1966, the year I was born. I grew up on the campus, and there was no question where I would go to school. I received my BA in International Relations in 1988. I was so incredibly proud to become a PSU professor myself—I have taught at Penn State Berks for thirty years now. On the Penn State email system my father was ren1@psu.edu. I am ren2. My own son is about to start his Junior year as a Business major at University Park, after two wonderful years with us at Berks.

With that background, and my training in Political Science, I can tell you clearly: closing Commonwealth Campuses is a huge mistake.

Politically, much of the country is now turning against universities. They see college leaders as out of touch, thinking only of fancy buildings, high administrative salaries, elite students, and esoteric research projects. Where, the average person asks, can MY son or daughter go to school? And get a real education? Does anyone care about that? By closing campuses, you will send a clear message to the average voters in our state: you are right. We don't care about you or your children. We want to focus only on the Ivory Tower at University Park, spending \$700 million on renovating a football stadium, \$400 million on new buildings for the Engineering school, untold millions on 'necessities' like an Arboretum and a new Art Museum...yet we can't afford \$50 million to keep campuses going across the state. We want to focus on elite students, especially at the graduate level (many from out of state, even out of the country). We want to focus on research faculty, most of whom avoid teaching undergraduates if they can. If we do teach undergraduates, it will be in the Forum or Schwab Auditorium...in classes of 500-1,000, where no faculty member ever knows the name of a student. And often with an adjunct or graduate instructor 'teaching' 100 yards away at the front of the auditorium.

If you close local campuses, why on earth would you ever expect that average voter to support funding for Penn State? Why would you think that state legislators would do anything but laugh in your face when you ask for state support? And why would those voters oppose people like Elon Musk when they say huge research grants for 'Ivory Tower' universities like PSU must be cut off? After all, THEY don't see any benefit to them or their families at all.

The Commonwealth Campuses are the arm of Penn State that DOES reach the average voter. Where an average student can get one on one attention from a PSU faculty member. And they, and their parents, will become supporters of PSU for life. For PSU's future, we CANNOT give that up!

Pat Fridgen: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

Keep Mont Alto open. Please actually read the PSMA Business Proposal, which you all have copies of. Yes, you are overwhelmed right now, but the document is outstanding.

Jeffrey Grimm: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

As a past graduate of Penn State New Kensington with an Associates in Engineering, Biomedical Technology degree, I am extremely concerned over the proposed closing of the New Kensington campus and in particular the impact of the devastating loss of the Biomedical Technology program.

I graduated in 1987, with about 30 fellow classmates in the BET program that year. In the 80's the Biomed program routinely produced 25 to 35 Biomedical Technicians every year. Everyone of these students immediately found internships followed by employment. The need for credentialed biomedics in 2025 is higher now than when I graduated. My classmates and I are nearing retirement after almost 40-year careers....we need the next generation of graduates to fill the ever growing void.

Healthcare Technology Management and the Healthcare industry require biomedical technicians to bridge the gap between patients and clinicians, and the complex cyber connected technological world where treatment occurs.

If Penn State would allow the 2-year Biomedical program at PSNK to be properly marketed to the entire region, and across all campuses, you'd see the Biomedical Technology program back to graduating 30+ students every year.

As a 40 year veteran in this industry, I can guarantee that all Penn State Biomed grads would be snatched up by Regional hospitals, medical device manufacturers, and medical service companies immediately.

Please reconsider closing this campus, if for no other reason than to save the Biomedical Technology program, and avoid the terrible impact that it's loss would mean for the Healthcare industry.

Kuei-Nuan Lin: Faculty, Mother of student

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

To the Penn State Board of Trustees,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the potential closure of Penn State's small campuses. These campuses are not just educational sites—they are critical access points for commuter students across the Commonwealth. Closing them would effectively shut out students whose life circumstances make relocation or long-distance commuting impossible.

Many of our students are Pennsylvania residents, first-generation college students, adult learners, or spectrum learners who have intentionally chosen smaller campuses for their supportive and accessible environments. These students often juggle work, family responsibilities, and financial constraints. For them, attending a nearby campus is not a matter of preference—it is a necessity. Losing access would mean abandoning their academic goals, not due to lack of ability, but because of practical barriers.

Small campuses offer more than just coursework. They create strong faculty-student connections, smaller class sizes, and inclusive learning environments—especially important for students who may feel overwhelmed or invisible on a large campus. These campuses also serve as local economic anchors and centers of civic engagement. Many graduates stay and contribute to the vitality of their hometowns.

Closing these campuses would run counter to Penn State's land-grant mission: to provide access to high-quality education across the entire Commonwealth. Limiting access to students who can afford to move to University Park or larger campuses diminishes that mission and risks creating a two-tiered system of opportunity.

The prestige of the Penn State name must be matched by a true commitment to inclusion. That includes preserving the campuses that serve the most vulnerable and determined students—those working hard to build better futures close to home.

I urge you to reconsider any closure plans and instead invest in the strengths and potential of our small campuses. Commuter students deserve the same access, support, and Penn State promise as anyone else.

Sincerely,

Kuei-Nuan Lin

Associate Professor, Penn State Greater Allegheny

Mary Poe: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

Mont Alto

Oldest Commonwealth Campus

1st & Oldest Forestry Program in the State

1st PTA program @ UC

1st OTA Program @ UC

History matters. Legacy matters.

Honestly - no words beyond WeAre disappointed with the entire process.

WeARE better than this decision to cross-out 7 commonwealth campuses.

Aaron Feather: Staff, Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

From: Class of 2005, 2Fort

I'm one of the few lucky enough who can say they use their college education every day. As a tree care professional (arborist) employed at Cumberland Valley Tree Service (Chambersburg PA), I get the opportunity to use my knowledge gained from the 2 year forest technology program at PSU MA every day. I currently work with 14 other PSU MA 2 FORT alumni at CVTS, 5 of those in leadership positions. We have the unique opportunity to provide the campus with professional tree care services, recruit it's fine graduates, participate in work days and forestry specific events, and provide my time as an adjunct arboriculture instructor. This campus and specifically the forestry program are a key component to the local residential tree care industry. The loss of this campus will not only affect our company, but several other professional tree care providers. It would be a loss of a legacy, a tradition, a client, a source revenue, a source for recruitment, an employer, and ultimately a decline to the skill level of professionals that care for our region's residential trees.

Ripslam,

Aaron Feather

Clifford Manlove: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

While I understand the need for some consolidation regionally among the small campus locations, the manner in which this process is being carried out is chaotic, leading to a sense of some panic among those at the campuses, employees, students, and I daresay prospective students. This should have been done better--this process is not only damaging to the Penn State brand, it is damaging which every campuses remain after closures.

This WILL happen again to campuses in 3-5 year unless the myopic budget model is final scrapped and addresses the real, deep legacy differences in how the many academic units at the university are decided. While differential tuition has helped to attract and support those choosing to be at a campus--whether for 2 or 4 years--that very benefit has been a detriment to campus units in the budget model. Keep the differential tuition, but it is subvention which makes up for the differences in the funding streams between locations. The bottom line is that if a student earns part or all of their degree at a campus, that degree is a Penn State degree; period. All locations that offer part or all of such degrees should have more equity in the budget

Nicole Hill: Faculty; Current Student

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

Our campus community provides students with other financial support such as, helping them get tires for a car, paying for rent, buying textbooks, giving gift cards to buy food, connecting them to services in the community...our campus and community cares about eliminating stress for students to help them focus on their studies.

The vote will take place on Thursday. I welcome each of you to visit our campus, FE, before you vote to meet the people and students, and if you don't walk away feeling like you are part of a family or community, then vote as you please.

Today I read my student feedback from the spring semester. I teared up reading how my students spoke about the positive impact I made on them in our short 15 weeks. I run into my former students who graduated at FE or by doing 2+2, and get to hear about their jobs. Many find jobs in our surrounding area or near Pittsburgh.

Our student population does not have the time or resources to travel to a further campus. Our students have to work. The longer travel time limits their working hours. I know because I am not only a faculty member, but also a student. My classmates tell me how they didn't get much sleep because they were working and studying for the exam. I would feel bad if a student fell asleep at the wheel driving to a campus further away, wouldn't you?

I have been with the Fayette Campus for over 26 years. I have noticed how less prepared our students are as they enter their first year of college from when I first began teaching. Our students spend a lot of time their first semester just learning how to study. We are lucky to have no more than 30 students in a class, as this allows me to really know the strengths and weaknesses of each student. They visit me often in my office, and I teach them how to study because I know what techniques would work best for them as an individual.

Being able to work with individual students on a personal level provides me with the ability to help them flourish. One student started in a low-level math course and is now a successful engineer who completed his last two years at UP. Another also started in a low-level math course, completed his degree at UP, completed his Master's at UP, and is now teaching full-time at UP.

As a student, I will not be able to complete my four-year degree because I attend part-time, and very few campuses have EMET, and I have a family that I cannot uproot. I was a student in the 1990's, and there are more obstacles students face these days. Being on both sides, I have a better understanding of this generation. The little impact that CCW has on the overall budget, I assure you FE makes a huge impact on those who walk through our doors.

Peggy Coppolo: Parent of employee and two graduates

Topic: DuBois

Submitted written comment 5/19/2025

If the campus is closed, it will prove to be a hardship on many students. Some students are staying at home and also working to pay for their tuition and saving on housing. I believe the small setting provides the students and teachers the opportunity to interact better with each other and can offer more in person help. There will be many people out of work with families to support. I believe it helps with the local economy. It provided many jobs for people who will now not have a job. Penn state DuBois has been an important part of DuBois and the surrounding area for decades. We need to keep this campus open. I also believe it is a safe area for the students. So please, keep the campus open to offer students the best education they can receive. Everyone benefits from the campus in one way or another. Thank you.

Carl Tutak: Alumni**Topic: Commonwealth Campuses****Submitted written comment 5/19/25**

Our community thrives on a foundation of accessible and high-quality secondary education. It's more than just classrooms and textbooks; it's an investment in our collective future, driving economic growth, fostering engagement, and ensuring access to vital healthcare services. The potential loss of this campus and programs like the radiology program at Penn State New Kensington presents a significant threat to that foundation.

Why is secondary education so critical? First, it fuels our local economy. Institutions like Penn State New Kensington are economic engines, attracting students, faculty, and staff who contribute to local businesses and support community growth. More so, equip our residents with the skills and knowledge necessary to compete in today's job market, increasing earning potential and reducing dependence on social services. A well-educated workforce attracts new businesses and encourages innovation, creating a positive cycle of economic prosperity.

Second, secondary education strengthens our healthcare infrastructure. Penn State New Kensington's radiology program is a prime example. It provides a pipeline of skilled radiologic technologists who are essential for accurate diagnoses and effective treatment in our local hospitals and clinics. Without this program, we risk facing a shortage of qualified professionals, leading to longer wait times, increased healthcare costs, and potentially compromised patient care. The impact would be felt most acutely by our most vulnerable populations, who already face barriers to accessing quality healthcare.

The radiology program at Penn State New Kensington is uniquely positioned to serve our community. It offers affordable, accessible education to local residents, many of whom might not otherwise have the opportunity to pursue a career in healthcare. Its graduates are deeply invested in our community and are more likely to remain here after graduation, contributing to the long-term stability of our healthcare workforce.

Maureen Dunn, Faculty**Topic: Commonwealth Campuses****Submitted written comment 5/19/25****Key Points of Advocacy for PSU Shenango****1. Enrollment Growth Through Athletics**

Since bringing back intercollegiate athletics in 2018, Penn State Shenango has shifted from a population of 60% adult learners to 75% traditional college-aged students. The introduction of sports such as men's and women's basketball, volleyball, co-ed golf, and baseball contributed to an 18% increase in enrollment for the 2023–24 academic year.

2. Community Support and Investment

Community leaders, including the Hermitage Board of Commissioners, have advocated for keeping the Shenango campus open. They cite the recent enrollment surge, new student housing, and the growth of workforce development programs as vital contributions to the region's economic and educational landscape.

3. Nursing Program's Impact

Penn State Shenango's nursing program plays a crucial role in addressing regional healthcare demands. Dr. Nagy, a graduate of the RN to BSN program, stresses the importance of in-person learning, highlighting the personalized attention it offers compared to online formats. The program continues to grow, with new student meetings scheduled for summer and fall.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2024) asserts that BSN-prepared nurses are better equipped for modern healthcare, demonstrating strong skills in leadership, critical thinking, and comprehensive patient care. Organizations such as magnet hospitals, military branches, and the VA prefer baccalaureate-trained nurses due to their enhanced capabilities.

Should the campus close, advocates hope the program can transition to Penn State Beaver to ensure local RNs maintain access to in-person BSN education. National advisory groups and expert panels, including the Pew Health Professions Commission, also support expanding BSN pathways to meet the evolving needs of healthcare.

4. Financial and Community Support for Athletics

Shenango's athletic programs have received robust backing from the local community. According to the Athletics Director, over \$260,000 has been raised, which is being reinvested into campus initiatives, student-athletes, and community engagement efforts.

5. Upholding the Land-Grant Mission

Faculty members Drs. Nagy and Dunn emphasize that closing the Shenango campus would undermine Penn State's land-grant mission of providing accessible, affordable education to all Pennsylvanians. Shenango offers educational opportunities to students who may not be able to attend larger campuses or relocate.

Conclusion

Penn State Shenango has demonstrated resilience and growth through its athletic and nursing programs. The campus has fostered local engagement, expanded enrollment, and supported essential workforce development, particularly in healthcare. Advocates argue for continued investment and view Shenango as a critical resource for both the university system and the wider region.

The demand for BSN-educated nurses is increasing. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, registered nurse employment is projected to grow 6% from 2023 to 2033, with about 194,500 job openings annually due to retirements and career transitions. The future of nursing is strong, and local access to in-person education remains essential.

References

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2024, June). The Impact of Education on Nursing Practice. <https://www.aacnnursing.org/news-data/fact-sheets/impact-of-education-on-nursing-practice>
- United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (n.d.). Occupational Outlook Handbook: Registered Nurses. <https://www.bls.gov/>

Cody Hmelar: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

As an instructor at Penn State New Kensington, I've seen first hand the impact this campus has on our students. Teaching mainly engineering and computer science students, they do not want to transfer to main. Most of their programs are only offered at commonwealth campuses. Additionally, I struggled with students being able to successfully complete class materials due to broadband internet insecurity or issues with personal devices. Most of my students are location bound and the world campus is not a suitable option for them. They already barely are able to make it to class due to the distance. Greater Allegheny would encourage them to transfer to other universities or drop out of college entirely.

Cassidie Crebs: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

The recommendation to close Penn State York as part of a broader restructuring effort deserves careful reconsideration. While financial decisions are necessary, Penn State York offers unique academic, economic, and regional value that aligns with the University's land-grant mission—and makes its closure counterproductive.

Academically, Penn State York has the highest six-year graduation rate (63.8%) among the 12 campuses under review. It also operates with a smaller financial deficit than many of the others and has one of the lowest costs per degree conferred. These indicators speak to efficiency, student success, and long-term return on investment.

Beyond academics, Penn State York is deeply woven into the fabric of the York community:

The Pullo Family Performing Arts Center serves as a cultural hub for York County, hosting performances, lectures, and community programming that draw thousands each year.

WellSpan Park, just blocks from campus, has hosted collaborative events with the University, such as student-athlete showcases and community engagement nights.

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) offers non-credit courses to older adults, reflecting Penn State's commitment to lifelong learning and intergenerational engagement.

Penn State York also supports military-affiliated students with dedicated services and staff, reinforcing Penn State's values of access, inclusion, and public service.

The campus is home to the Graham Fellows Program for Entrepreneurial Leadership, a distinctive initiative that offers students practical leadership training, hands-on business experience, and mentorship opportunities. This program cultivates innovation and career readiness in a way that distinguishes Penn State York from its peers—and connects students with local and regional industry leaders.

Although the campus lacks University-owned housing, it provides a residential-style experience through student housing located within a mile of campus. Most students come from the local area, and Penn State York remains one of the few accessible pathways to higher education for York County and its surrounding communities.

In short, Penn State York is a high-performing, cost-effective, and community-integrated campus. Closing it would mean severing vital partnerships and limiting access for a region that benefits deeply from its presence. If restructuring is necessary, it should prioritize long-term outcomes, educational access, and regional impact. By those measures, Penn State York should remain an essential part of the Commonwealth Campus system.

Gina D'Auria: Parent and Community employer

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

As a parent of a current student and an employer in our community, I respectfully request that you vote against closing the Penn State Fayette Campus. This campus offers an opportunity for many individuals who lack access to a college education elsewhere due to circumstances beyond their control. The university also provides continuing education opportunities, including emergency services, real estate, and adult classes, which are not available in our community. Having this campus available also offers qualified individuals for employment, which is necessary in our current employment crisis. The faculty and staff provide an excellent education and are integral to the community at large. They assist their students in finding employment in their field, going above and beyond to be supportive of each student. To close this campus would be a disservice to the University, students, and the community of Fayette County.

Jackie Atkins: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

Please consider that several of the "problems" mentioned in the President's report are of University Park's own making. No dorms? UP said no. Not enough personnel to operate programs/services? UP said no to hiring. UP wrings the campuses dry and then complains they're too thirsty.

Also, please realize that, despite what the report says, many commonwealth campus students will not go to UP if the campuses close. They will go outside of Penn State to schools with less costly tuition, yes, but especially school to which they can commute. Students from the campuses' service areas often cannot afford to do otherwise.

Finally, although I may seem naive, please think beyond the money. Education is not a business; its purpose is not to make a profit. Let's be honest--University Park could fund the campuses by fixing the budget model that has punished the campuses for decades, simply not constructing one new building, or via cuts to the top-heavy layers of administration. I'm not clear that much research has been done on other alternatives, but I do know that losing a major educational institution in many of these areas will lead to "brain drain," devastate local economies, and deprive the people who perhaps need it most of the opportunity for a Penn State education.

Donna Lynch: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

Dear Penn State Board of Trustees:

For the past 3 semesters, I have been an Adjunct Lecturer in Dance at Penn State's York campus. I live in York as well, and I strongly believe in the availability of quality local higher education opportunities. I am writing to you as an appeal to the Board of Trustees to consider the types of student experiences that would be lost without the Commonwealth campuses, York specifically.

When I graduated with my MA in Dance Education in 2022, my first stop was Penn State York. I emailed my resume, went to campus events with a friend on the English faculty to try to get in front of the right people, and visited administration offices until I secured a conversation on the calendar. I finally was able to convince them of the merits of adding DANCE 100, Dance Appreciation to the schedule, and it has been a full class ever since.

These students are hungry to learn, and hungry to broaden their horizons beyond their major course of study. The bullet points below are a small sample of the students' own words, as they were asked to reflect on how their definition of dance has changed over this semester:

****This course helped me grasp how dancing reflects cultural values and identities. It also made me realize how dance can act as a bridge between generations, conserving traditions while growing over time. Going forward, I intend to continue exploring dance in various forms, whether through visiting performances, seminars, or simply moving more freely in my daily life. This lesson has opened a door, and I'm eager to continue stepping through it.**

****A major personal takeaway was how dance builds empathy. Watching and studying dances from around the world helped me connect with cultures and histories different from my own. It is a way of knowing the world, remembering the past, and imagining the future. It is both art and activism, ritual and creation.**

****I thought dance was mostly about moving to music, showing emotions, and having fun. But now, I have learned that dance is much deeper than that. It's a way people tell stories, share their culture, and express who they are. Some dances are about tradition, some are about freedom, and some are about survival. Now, I see dance not just as something you watch or do, but as something powerful that helps us understand ourselves and others better. Dance is more than movement; it's a way of feeling, remembering, and connecting with the world around us.**

I'm not just teaching this course so that students can check a box and fulfill their art or history requirement. I'm creating a community in my classroom, one of diversity, mutual respect, engagement, and curiosity. I hope that the Board of Trustees shares these values, and votes in favor of keeping the York campus open and thriving.

I sincerely thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Donna Lynch

Adjunct Lecturer in Dance

Penn State York

<p>Anita Vickers: PSU retiree (Faculty) Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/19/25</p>
<p>Please reconsider the proposal to close the Commonwealth Campuses. These campuses fulfill the Morrill Land Grant Act-- which is PSU's mission. These campuses enrich the intellectual, technological, and economical areas of their communities, and with their loss, the effects would be--in some cases--catastrophic. Potential students from these areas will not option to go to University Park (for them, a financial hardship) and will instead opt for a state school or not attend college at all. A university with over a billion dollar yearly budget can afford to keep these campuses open. (Perhaps cut back on building more parking garages or funding non-essential faculty research agendas. (I know from whence I speak. I was a tenured faculty member for over 31 years. In those years I witnessed egregious use of funding.)</p>
<p>Tamie Mancuso: Parent Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/19/25</p>
<p>Penn State DuBois has been an integral part of DuBois since 1935 and is a great source of pride for the community. It has produced countless graduates who have positively impacted our city and has improved the lives of everyone who lives here. The closure of this campus feels like a betrayal of the people who make Penn State what it is. We stood by the University during it's darkest times only to then be abandoned by them and our community left without educational opportunities. Not only that, but in an area already struggling with a lack of good paying jobs, this will leave many people unemployed who do not have the ability to uproot themselves and their family to transfer to another campus.</p> <p>As an area resident with a child who attends the DuBois campus and as a sibling of two DuBois graduates I implore you to seek other ways to cut costs without injuring an entire community. The ramifications of your decision have far reaching and very dire consequences impacting untold numbers of residents in the counties of Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson and beyond.</p> <p>Thank you, Tamie Mancuso</p>
<p>Scott Simonds: Staff Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/19/25</p>
<p>I have worked at Penn State York for 19 years. This campus deserves investment, and the report's data supports investment if you take a closer look.</p> <p>Penn State York's dashboard is SIMILAR to Scranton's (a campus slated for investment) and has STRONGER data outcomes than Hazleton, Greater Alleghany, Beaver, and Schuylkill. York's graduation rate is 64%, low-enrolled sections just 37%, more students leave York and graduate from UP than at the other 5 campuses. York does not have the financial albatross of half-empty residence halls, and in FY 24, almost broke even. Post-VSIP, the campus is surely on strong financial footing. To top it off, York campus is in a growth area of the state, with population projected to increase 4% in the next decade.</p> <p>The numbers don't lie - York is in a stronger position than GA, SL, BV, HZ, and at least comparable to Penn State Scranton if you look at the data points. Please RECONSIDER and choose to INVEST and INNOVATE in Penn State York. Don't give up on Penn State York, we're not going to.</p>
<p>Becky Morrow: Faculty Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/19/25</p>
<p>As a faculty member at Penn State New Kensington campus, a veterinarian, and a scientist, I am deeply saddened by the lack of effort in seeking out data and input from the commonwealth campuses themselves in the "Future State Recommendation" report. The bias in the report is quite evident and reflects either the ineptitude of those preparing it or, perhaps, disingenuous intentions. An obvious example is that one campus is recommended to stay open based on new laboratories that were constructed. The same report completely ignores the fact that the New Kensington campus has brand new laboratories as well. There is also no mention of our amazing service-learning and community-based research projects linking our campus to the veterinary and animal welfare community where 35 students designed scientific assays to determine, through molecular means, what feral cats were eating and the potential impact on the bird and small mammal population. It ignored the 16 students that used cutting edge molecular biology techniques to better understand feline infectious diseases and helping to determine what is causing eye loss in young kittens. Also, the collaborations with other scientists at neighboring institutions to use nanotechnology with anti-inflammatory compounds to specifically target inflamed tissues or investigating the use of bacteriophages to treat antibiotic resistant infections.</p> <p>It didn't mention the students who have had hands on opportunities in a high-quality high volume spay/neuter (HQHVSN) clinic and gaining experiences that pre-health students cannot get at the University Park campus or our students going to vet school now. The report failed to mention that our students from the New Kensington campus have presented scientific research at national veterinary conferences and have helped facilitate workshops where veterinarians worldwide have come for specialized training in HQHVSN techniques at a non-profit organization 6 minutes away. It failed to mention our master's in public health/Biobehavioral Health students working with the clinic on public health/zoonotic diseases for their Capstone project.</p>

These are areas that the report signaled growth in. We have the ability to quickly adapt to the needs of the veterinary and other health-related industries right here.

The New Kensington campus, as I suspect with many other commonwealth campuses, have not been given the chance to grow. Never before in my career, including 25 years at various academic institutions (including two land-grant institutions), have I seen such a failure in leadership. You have the most motivated, intelligent, and amazing people working at these campuses and to lose any one of them without a fight is tragic. Why not set them up for success rather than failure? Despite the many roadblocks given to these campuses they are providing a world-class education for students who would otherwise not have an opportunity to go to college. Closing these campuses that represent a mere 0.4% of the spending Penn State University does would be devastating to the students and the communities. Give us a chance to grow these campuses and continue to provide opportunities that University Park cannot. Please stand up and do what is right.

Joe Royer: Faculty, Alumni, Staff

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

The recommendation to close Penn State York, I fear, is deeply flawed. It's very concerning that campuses with lower enrollment, such as Greater Allegheny (353 students, 81.9% PA residency), larger annual operating deficits, such as Beaver (\$1.6 million), and lower growth potential, such as Greater Allegheny's -4.2% population decline, are not facing closure. Some, like Schuylkill, are also farther from major metropolitan areas like Baltimore and Northern Maryland.

The major concern listed in the report was a lack of housing. Housing is not an issue. As a baseball coach at York, I've recruited dozens of student-athletes from outside the area who found housing easily and have thrived here. Additionally, York is backed by a strong, engaged community, which is evident through the success of the Pullo Center and our OLLI program, both of which deserve to continue.

While I disagree with closing any Penn State campus, the rationale for targeting York demands closer examination. Shutting down this campus would erase decades of impact and squander its future potential. Closure is too final a solution for a campus that continues to serve its students and community so effectively.

Joe Baker: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

As an alumnus (1978, Anthropology) and Commonwealth citizen, I am writing in opposition to the proposed closing of branch campuses. My opposition is grounded in three considerations.

First, Penn State is a land grant institution per the Morrill Act and as such is legally required to focus on teaching, research, and service for the public good. Closing entire branch campuses clearly affects the institution's ability to discharge these requirements and exposes the institution to legal jeopardy. Second, the branch campuses for the most part serve small communities and economically challenged regions of the state. The economic effects of closures on these communities will be immediate and irreparable, and will accelerate outmigration, erosion of local tax bases and services, and business development in struggling regions of the state. Finally, the student population at many of the branch campuses is largely composed of less well-off and "non-traditional students" seeking a career change or better opportunities. Many of them work full- or part-time, come from very modest backgrounds, and are raising families in the local community. They cannot enroll at the main campus, and the loss of the branch campuses means their opportunities and aspirations will be denied.

The proposed closure plan strikes me as penny-wise and pound-foolish in the extreme. At a time when federal support for universities is rapidly shrinking, public universities will have to rely increasingly on state-level support. If a Commonwealth legislator loses a branch campus in his or her district, what motivation would that legislator possibly have to increase support to the university?

As the premier research and teaching institution in Pennsylvania, Penn State has produced generations of well-educated citizens that have made significant contributions in many aspects of public and private life. Penn State alums are the intellectual and economic engines of many Pennsylvania towns and cities. Turning away from Pennsylvania's communities and abrogating the responsibilities the institution has to all Commonwealth citizens, does not reflect the values I and many other alumni learned there as young people. I would respectfully ask the board to reject this plan, and to develop better alternatives to address shrinking enrollment and other fiscal and structural challenges. The focus should be on teaching, on research in the public interest, and on service to our communities. At its best, Penn State has always been an institution focused on leadership. It is time to lead.

Samantha Swetz: Staff, Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

Example of our purpose: I have watched a student get dropped off everyday by her single mom that works very hard. This student has an amazing GPA and works really hard. She's going for nursing. This student is breaking the chain of poverty over her family because Fayette exists. Without this campus, the rich get richer and the poor stay the same. The name Penn State means nothing to students like her. It's the higher education access that means everything.

<p>Daniel Bowers: Staff, Alumni Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/19/25</p> <p>Penn State Fayette, the Eberly Campus has been a huge part of my life ever since I was little. The campus hosted many outreach programs I got to be a part of, and hosted many events for cub scouts back in the day thanks to an amazing faculty member from the campus. It is also the place where I started working in my professional field through student internships all the way back as a sophomore in high-school. I wouldn't have the vast knowledge of my field without the amazing faculty and staff that work there at the campus. It is a huge shame to see such an impactful part of my life is being thrown away and discarded like yesterday's trash.</p>
<p>Zachary Allamon: Alumni Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/19/25</p> <p>The board of trustees has an important and serious responsibility to consider when taking this vote - the jobs and livelihoods of many people who work at the campuses at risk of closing. The commonwealth campuses are an important part of each of their respective communities, and in some cases are the only option (Fayette, for example) within its area. They give underprivileged students in many times poorer communities a chance to get a Penn State education, and furthermore spread the "Penn State" branding throughout PA (since the current administration seems so intent on running this non-profit school like a business). My dad, two uncles, brother, and myself all attended Fayette at some point, and most continued on to UP. If the administration decides that closing the commonwealth campuses is the right decision moving forward, I will never be able to support or recommend Penn State again. To hold the fate of so many people's jobs over a cliff for so long (most likely to pressure the state into more funding) is disgusting.</p> <p>As a recent graduate and former commonwealth campus student, I ask that you say NO to the proposal to shut down the campuses, and consider alternative routes like working on solutions to improve the sustainability of each. Furthermore, this should not be a blanket proposal - at the very least, vote on each campus separately. Thank you for your time.</p>
<p>Meagan Carter: Alumni Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/19/25</p> <p>I am writing as an alumna of Penn State New Kensington. I attended all four years at PSNK because it was close to home and affordable. I would not have been a part of the Penn State family if I hadn't been able to attend PSNK because I did not consider campuses outside of the local area. I benefited from the specialty programming that only PSNK offered and would not have made the professional achievements I have today were it not for PSNK. Please consider voting to keep these commonwealth campuses open.</p>
<p>Anthony Carter: Alumni Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/19/25</p> <p>I am an alumnus of Penn State New Kensington and I completed all four years of my degree there. I decided to go to PSNK because of the proximity to where I lived at the time and the rare opportunity for a more personalized learning experience. Had PSNK not been around, I would have never decided to go to Penn State main campus or any other branch campus - and therefore, never would join the Alumni Society - and I am sure that many people all across Pennsylvania with a local Penn State campus must share this sentiment. I would like to remind the board that the prestige of the Penn State name is much less important than a quality education for many would-be students. I very strongly urge the board to vote to keep Penn State New Kensington open, as it is a great institution and a large, very important part of the surrounding community.</p>
<p>Kathy Shaffer: Faculty Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/19/25</p> <p>The Shenango campus's lack of housing has limited its growth, yet as Penn State announces its possible closure, a local developer is moving forward with plans to build apartments adjacent to campus—something the university itself never pursued. All of my children have sought urban, amenity-rich campuses, and I know Shenango offers exactly that. Two of my children attend Shenango, live in Sharon, and love it. The city is experiencing a Renaissance, and with the return of athletics, Shenango now provides the full college experience: the Penn State name, affordable tuition, small class sizes, strong health-related majors, intercollegiate sports, and an urban setting. Soon, it will also have the housing students want—the final missing piece. Shutting down the campus now would not only waste millions in recent investments—including the \$8 million modernization of Forker Laboratory and the reinstatement of athletics—but also abandon a community and campus on the brink of renewal. I urge the Board of Trustees to reject this recommendation and give Shenango the chance it has worked so hard to earn.</p>
<p>Dennis Laubach: Former employee Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/19/25</p>

Please do not close any of the satellite campuses as they can always be used for meetings, training, community events, retreats, camps for all kinds of summer programs all through the academic year.

Amanda Rasmussen: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

As an alumnus (2011, Anthropology), I am writing in opposition to the proposed closing of branch campuses. My opposition is grounded in three considerations.

First, Penn State is a land grant institution per the Morrill Act and as such is legally required to focus on teaching, research, and service for the public good. Closing entire branch campuses clearly affects the institution's ability to discharge these requirements and exposes the institution to legal jeopardy.

Second, the branch campuses for the most part serve small communities and economically challenged regions of the state. The economic effects of closures on these communities will be immediate and irreparable, and will accelerate outmigration, erosion of local tax bases and services, and business development in struggling regions of the state.

Finally, the student population at many of the branch campuses is largely composed of less well-off and "non-traditional students" seeking a career change or better opportunities. Many of them work full- or part-time, come from very modest backgrounds, and are raising families in the local community. They cannot enroll at the main campus, and the loss of the branch campuses means their opportunities and aspirations will be denied.

The proposed closure plan strikes me as penny-wise and pound-foolish in the extreme. At a time when federal support for universities is rapidly shrinking, public universities will have to rely increasingly on state-level support. If a Commonwealth legislator loses a branch campus in his or her district, what motivation would that legislator possibly have to increase support to the university?

As the premier research and teaching institution in Pennsylvania, Penn State has produced generations of well-educated citizens that have made significant contributions in many aspects of public and private life. Penn State alums are the intellectual and economic engines of many Pennsylvania towns and cities. Turning away from Pennsylvania's communities and abrogating the responsibilities the institution has to all Commonwealth citizens, does not reflect the values I and many other alumni learned there as young people. I would respectfully ask the board to reject this plan, and to develop better alternatives to address shrinking enrollment and other fiscal and structural challenges. The focus should be on teaching, on research in the public interest, and on service to our communities. At its best, Penn State has always been an institution focused on leadership. It is time to lead.

Jacob Mariotti: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

I am a class of 2024 graduate from Penn State Fayette, the Eberly Campus. During my time as a student, I had the opportunity to work with the student government association, and become vice president during my senior year. Being in that role allowed me to fully understand the impact that the campus has on the community, especially outside of the classroom. The campus hosts several events throughout the year that are focused on helping the community including summer camps, launch box events, an on campus concert open to the public and local state representative meetings. This decision to close the campus would not only impact the community around Fayette County, but also the Eberly family who has consistently worked to make sure that Penn State follows the land grant mission in Fayette County as the only 4 year degree option. I hope that you can consider the impact that the community inside and outside the university will have with this closing before making any final decisions.

Robin Harmon: PS Mont Alto Advisory Board Chair

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

I am writing in support of the Penn State Mont Alto Campus and to express my disappointment and frustration with how this "process" has been handled. As noted in previous letters, Penn State Mont Alto has every asset needed to make it fiscally stable. Unfortunately, by all appearances the University decided several years ago that they no longer wanted the campus and has systematically been reducing resources to the campus to make it appear to be in worse shape than it really is. Admissions, marketing and other key staff have been removed with no one backfilling those roles making it impossible for the campus to pull in students as it has in the past. The so-called evaluation reads more as a justification of the decision made years ago than a true evaluation.

The document produced ignores all the numerous strengths of the campus. Forestry is not the only valuable program at our campus. This is demonstrated in part by the new \$13M Allied Health building funded in part by our community as well as continued interest in other areas of the campus. Why are open rooms in our dorms a detriment but for other campuses open dorm rooms is an asset? There is so much wrong with this situation, it can't be stated in 500 words. It's so disappointing that the University would use this as a basis for such a large and impactful decision.

To reiterate, I still firmly believe that Penn State Mont Alto has everything needed to be a successful and fiscally stable campus. We are only missing one thing and that is support from the University. The advisory board, alumni, business community and community at large stand ready to be strong partners in making Penn State Mont Alto better. We only need the University to do

their part.

I am asking that rather than closing the campus, that the University

Make a 10 year commitment to fully staffing key positions,

allow alumni to help with recruitment,

provide a chancellor/leader that is not stretched between multiple campuses and that cares about the campus,

work with the business and non-profit community to make innovative partnerships such as scholarships in exchange for a

commitment to stay in the community after graduation, and

work with the community to fix and rebuild the Penn State Mont Alto brand.

This campus is very important to our community, not just spiritually, but economically. As a rural area, there are few opportunities for an education like this for those who can't afford to travel or live on campus. Penn State Mont Alto is critical in meeting that need. Our community has given a lot to this University, and we deserve to have those contributions reciprocated.

Sincerely,

Robin Harmon, Chair of the Penn State Mont Alto Advisory Board

Alexandra Reilly: Student

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

Currently, I am in my 4th year at Penn State New Kensington. I am an honors student in the criminal justice program, have been a Dean's list awardee, and just recently returned from my second study abroad program. Additionally, I aspire to attend law school after I complete my bachelor's. All of this has only been possible because of the accessibility of Penn State New Kensington. With this campus, I have been able to be financially independent and secure, remain close to family, find employment, and do so while still obtaining a Penn State degree. Like many others, I would not have the opportunity to pursue secondary education without this commonwealth campus. It is simply unjust to consider closure without first attempting to address all other alternatives to aid the Penn State ecosystem. With the potential closure of these campuses, students that would otherwise be able to attend college are being told they are not worthwhile and denied the opportunity to pursue secondary education.

Melissa Romeo: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

I am writing to you today, to keep our Penn State Fayette Campus open. My father, was a 1975 graduate of Penn State Fayette. Both my brother and I, chose Penn State Fayette to start and begin our college journey. After a few years, when the time came to make a decision of where to transfer to finish our degrees, we both transferred to Main Campus and graduated from Penn State University. This campus is not only in my hometown, but it's also the foundation that gave me the confidence to come out of my shell and believe in myself! I made many new friendships and created wonderful memories here! It's not just a campus, it feels like a home and family. A place not only for people beginning a career, but offers extension programs. My love for learning continued. Years later, I returned and completed the Penn State Fayette Extension Master Gardener's Program. Now going on six years, I'm still an active member!

If this campus closes, many people that are trying to better educate themselves, will lose this opportunity. Professional staff and administrative jobs will be lost. Not only do I have family and friends that work here, but some of the professors that I had over 20 years ago still remain there. They were some of the best teachers I've ever had throughout my education. They're kind, personable, caring, and skilled. You can tell their position is more than just a job title. They truly want to help and make a difference!

This campus is a staple in our community! I don't understand how closing our campus is more important than looking at where unnecessary spending is occurring. One example is the football complex. When is spending ridiculous amounts of money on a football complex, more important than keeping our campus open and providing more people an education or keeping people employed in our community? I know for a fact that other campuses are more run down, unsafe, and in worse conditions than ours, and they haven't been in the running as ones to close. Keep in mind that if you shut down this campus, how many generations of graduates, past and present students, employees, and surrounding communities, will be disappointed, heartbroken, and despise Penn State University for making a bad decision to close our campus down. Remember all of the people that have supported this University, by attending this campus and the donations given over the years. Many things need to be considered before making that Yes or No decision on closing this campus. Many of us have so much pride, bleed blue and white, and love Penn State! Shutting down this campus will break our hearts. It's going to give Penn State a negative name. You will be losing more money and enrollments in the future if there's a closure to this campus. Currently, I work as an Assistant Director, and it's continuously drilled in our heads that we are here to run a business. I understand that, but without all of these people involved, you wouldn't have a business to run. Their feelings matter! There's more to life than money! We live in a different world today. It's important to keep making a positive impact on others.

I'm asking each of you as a Penn State Board Trustee, to please listen to us and look at the amount of people that have signed our Penn State Fayette – Save Our Fayette Campus Petition. When you vote, think of how you are impacting others. You have the opportunity to do the right thing and make a positive impact for our community and so many of us.

Our campus is a beautiful and wonderful place! Let's keep it there for many more years and allow others to continue to follow their dreams for their future. We need to keep this hidden gem in our community! Please make a positive impact, and save our Penn State Fayette Campus! Thank you for listening and for your support!

Respectfully,
Melissa Romeo

Tiffany Guittap: Fayette Advisory Board Chair

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

As the Fayette Advisory Board Chair, I ask that Fayette be THE SOLUTION, should consolidations need to take place in our area. We are devastated to be listed as one of the potential seven proposed for closure. I led the first Advocacy Taskforce across the commonwealth, and the support for our Fayette Campus is unprecedented. We feel so betrayed in response to the PS land-grant mission. We whole-heartedly ask that Fayette not only survive, but thrive, allow us to thrive, as you all decide how our Commonwealth campuses carry forward. We may be the second poorest County in the Commonwealth, but taking away our only solution of 4-year degree programs in the County would be economically crippling. The potential closures, the uncertainty, are deterring our abilities to attract and retain existing and new businesses in the area that need our campus and our students. Our land grant-mission, the core of who we are, is encompassed in our Fayette Campus. These students aren't portable, they're not just going to go to another campus. If these students didn't have the Fayette Campus, and the faculty and staff who support them, sometimes when they have no one else, they wouldn't have access to 4-year degree programs. Education wouldn't be possible. The generosity of the Eberly family, in support of our land grant mission in Fayette, and also their contributions across the commonwealth, proposed a promise of education for all. Incredible families such as the Eberly, Magerko, and Schwimmer families have enabled us to have a beautiful, safe, campus, an actual campus, with an amazing student center with auditorium and gymnasium, a library, and state of the art bio-med equipment that no one else has. We are a true community hub for all, and I can't imagine a Fayette County without the Fayette campus. Every board that I serve across the County, every group that I am a part of, is welcomed into campus to serve our surrounding communities as an incubator. Please, please, do not take away our social economic staple; I fear that we will wither and degrade as a region and a community, without access to local 4-year degree programs. Very importantly, our Fayette campus holds the Coal and Coke Heritage Museum, which also houses and archives coal and coke historical archives and artifacts, all of the mining maps and coal history. That museum showcases who we were as a Country in the coal heyday, with some the wealthiest and most successful families from right here in Fayette County. Our history, our present, and our Future, shine brightly at the Fayette Campus. Closing campuses may seem like the easiest solution, but the bigger picture is what happens in the Commonwealth when we don't support our land-grant mission. Neeli's short-sightedness is dangerous and appalling. We aren't asset and liability metrics, red pens and green markers. We are real people, real families, and real communities, who need education to continue to rise above and through generational poverty and churn the socio-economic wheels in our little corner of Western PA. Thank you for your consideration; please save us.

Tiffany Guittap

Fayette Advisory Board Chair

Calla Garland: Student

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

The Commonwealth Campuses you are going to close are needed in these small communities. Many of us cannot afford to go elsewhere, or do not have the means to obtain a car/apartment/funds to live close to a city-wide campus. City campuses are NOT easily accessible to anyone. There's dorm shortages, high tuition rates, traffic, crime, and more. Some of us want to finish our degrees close to the communities we know and love the most, rather than get lost in a sea of faces.

Sarah Nodecker: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

these campuses give access to education to secluded and lower income areas closing them is stripping regular people from a quality education

Vivian Reilly: Sibling of student

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

My sister has been able to achieve things at Penn State New Kensington campus that she wouldn't have had the opportunity elsewhere. This close-knit campus means so much more to students, faculty, and family than what meets the eye. She has been able to grow and find herself at this campus and has made life-long relationships here. This campus and its faculty has supported her so much over the past three years and would be such a shame if it were to be shut down.

Justin Tatar: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

Penn State Fayette saved my life in ways I never imagined possible. After losing my gram to suicide, my world collapsed. She was my anchor, my constant. The grief and shock left me paralyzed with anxiety, struggling to even leave my room. The darkness felt endless—until I found a light in the community at Penn State Fayette.

What makes this campus so special isn't just the academics—it's the people. I wouldn't be here without Dr. Jo and Nicole Hill. They saw me not as a student slipping through the cracks, but as a human being in pain who needed compassion and support. Dr. Jo gave me tools to manage my anxiety—real, practical strategies that empowered me to take control of my mental health. Nicole Hill helped me reconnect socially when I felt completely isolated. She created space for me to be seen, heard, and gently pushed me to reintegrate with kindness and care. Their support didn't just help me cope—they helped me grow.

Commonwealth campuses like Penn State Fayette are vital because they offer more than education—they offer community. In larger universities, students can get lost in the crowd. But here, I was never invisible. I was part of something—something small enough to feel safe, but strong enough to hold me up when I was at my lowest.

Penn State Fayette became more than a school—it became my lifeline. It gave me hope, structure, and the relationships I needed to rebuild myself after trauma. I'm forever thankful.

Jessica Petko: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

I urge the Board to reconsider the closure of Penn State York. The data in this proposal is flawed and has not been updated even after repeated requests from faculty and administrators. Little to no information on campus assets were used in this report although faculty and staff were asked to spend a significant amount of time compiling this information last fall.

While its proximity to Harrisburg and lack of dorms are cited as reasons for closure, these factors overlook the vital role our campus plays in the Penn State system and the broader community. Harrisburg is not as accessible as it appears—commuting is costly and time-consuming, deterring many students from traveling to that campus from York's service area. The absence of dorms is a financial asset, not a liability, reducing overhead while maintaining enrollment numbers greater than some campuses with dorms.

Penn State York is rich with talent. Our faculty have the highest number of university level teaching awards. Its faculty involve students in research from conception to publication. I recently secured a major NSF grant (benefiting both York and UP) and have mentored dozens of students whose research has earned over \$57,000 in competitive funding and national recognition.

Competing universities in this area cannot provide that R1 experience where undergrads leave with the experience rivaling that of graduate students. Our bio students are admitted to medical schools on a full ride. They are admitted to PhD programs bypassing the formal admissions process and get NSF graduate fellowships to fund their way. Yes our students did this, and none of them would have attended Penn State if York were not an option.

In 14 hours, I was able to collect over 35 letters from students and alumni expressing how York made their Penn State education possible. These letters were sent to Trustee Paterno for your review. Penn State York had the second highest enrollment of campuses slated for closure yet lower enrolled campuses were selected to remain open. Closing this campus would cut off a critical pipeline of talent and opportunity. We were told that enrollment and growth demographics are what were important in this decision process. If that's true, we should be a forerunner for remaining open. Please vote no on this proposal or at least make the motion to vote on the campuses individually. These campuses and communities deserve a Fair assessment before such big life changing decisions can be made.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joanne Cochran: Employer of graduates

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/19/25

Dear President Bendapudi, Chancellor DelliCarpini, Interim Executive Vice President and Provost Langkilde, and Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff Wade Smith,

I am writing to express Keystone Health's strong support for the continued operation of the Penn State Mont Alto campus. As a leading healthcare provider in this region, our organization sees firsthand the positive impact the campus has on our community, particularly in the education and training of future healthcare professionals.

Penn State is more than numbers—it is about developing the future leaders of our community and our country. It is all about shaping lives and developing the minds and hearts of young people who want to give and to serve. At Penn State Mont Alto, teaching is personal. It is one student, one mentor, one future at a time. That is not just Mont Alto's approach—it is their purpose, and that purpose matters.

There is an urgent demand for healthcare professionals in Franklin County - nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and many other specialties. Our community is growing, and the aging population in the area is contributing to an ever-increasing need for healthcare services.

Hospitals, outpatient clinics, rehabilitation centers, and long-term care facilities are all facing critical shortages in these fields.

Penn State Mont Alto is a vital source of talent that helps meet this growing demand. The programs at Penn State Mont Alto provide a high-quality education that prepares students to fill critical roles within Keystone Health. They also ensure that local

students can pursue high demand careers in healthcare, thereby filling local job openings at Keystone Health. Closing Penn State Mont Alto would severely limit local access to education for future healthcare professionals and pose challenges for Keystone Health and other allied healthcare organizations. The demand for programs at Penn State Mont Alto is strong, and Keystone Health fully supports Penn State Mont Alto. The campus' role in preparing healthcare professionals is vital to the well-being of our community, and its continued operation is crucial to ensuring we meet the healthcare needs of our growing population.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Joanne Cochran,
President, Keystone Health

Tana Carter: Parent of alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I urge the trustees of Penn State to keep the Commonwealth campuses open. Our family would not have put multiple students through Penn State if there were not a local commuter option such as New Kensington for us. We would have chosen a different local option. With one daughter graduating Summa Cum Laude and the other Magna Cum Laude, they are the type of alumni that are a credit to their alma mater. Maintaining the breadth of community engagement and enrollment makes Penn State stronger.

Carranda Barkdoll: Faculty, Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I am a Penn State Grad x's 3. 96', 01', and 17'. I started my nursing education at Mont Alto and continued to connect to MA. It was very difficult to travel to UP to complete my education, having the ability to attend MA to obtain a terminal degree was a benefit as I am the Director of the Nursing Program and work in the community as a nurse practitioner, so this would be difficult to manage if I had to travel. Both of my sons attended MA to start their college career which was great to have a Big Ten University in our backyard. I was the alumni president for 6 years at MA, so this allowed for the alumni connection. One significant event I remember is the start of the nursing program in 1993 allowing student to stay close to home, healthcare is suffering all over the Nation and this would affect healthcare delivery in our surrounding communities. I am concerned about the "knee-jerk reaction" of the President of the University without having frank discussions about the impact in our service area. I have not seen feedback from local donors, healthcare facilities and healthcare providers and what their opinion is about the closures. Penn State Mont Alto invested 14 million dollars in a state of art healthcare building to provide education for nursing, PT and OT students. Who will take up the slack to provide healthcare for the individuals of south central Pa.

We Are Not the Penn State I know. My hope is the BoT votes no to all the suggested closure.

Dr. Carranda Barkdoll, DNP, RN, CRPN

Lauraine Hawkins: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

Dear Members of the Board of Trustees,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed closure of Penn State Commonwealth Campuses, particularly Penn State Mont Alto, based on the recent study's flawed conclusions.

The study fails to account for the unique contributions of each campus, such as the vital role of Penn State Mont Alto in providing skilled personnel to the regional workforce through its allied health and forest technology programs. These hands-on programs cannot be replaced via World Campus classes. The study overlooks the impact of past budget models that created incentives that drove campuses to prioritize individual growth, often with the impact of reducing enrollment at neighboring campuses. Penn State Mont Alto is in a growing area of the state. We have seen recent increases in enrollment as we recover from the COVID downturn. Our graduates are highly sought after by local employers, particularly in the healthcare and forestry sectors. We draw local students and those from neighboring states, and we seek to intensify these recruiting efforts.

Instead of closing campuses, I urge the Board to consider an inclusive, system-wide recruitment strategy that leverages the strengths of each campus. In particular, developing and implementing a data-driven AI tool to match students, based on their educational histories and personal interests, with campuses could optimize student success while distributing enrollment more evenly.

I respectfully urge the Board of Trustees to reconsider the proposed closures and to explore innovative solutions that uphold Penn State's land-grant mission. By working together, we can ensure that all campuses thrive and serve their communities effectively.

Thank you for your consideration,

Dr. Lauraine Hawkins

Biology faculty, Penn State Mont Alto

Jenna Celani: Alumni Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25
<p>To be able to attend a commonwealth made my experience better. It made it easier for me to ask for help from professors and able to have more hands on experience in learning. It's also easier to travel to and the expenses are not a lot compared to a bigger university. It gives people the chance to attend college who can't afford regular college expenses.</p>
Alexis Jones: Alumni Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25
<p>This campus needs to stay open to give young adults the chance at a quality, top university education without having to live on-campus.</p>
Ge Mu: Faculty Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25
<p>The Digital Foundry at Penn State New Kensington (PSNK) stands as a nationally recognized center for innovation, supported by major institutions like the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the Richard King Mellon Foundation. It plays a vital role in advancing technologies such as 3D printing, robotic automation, cybersecurity, and IoT, while aligning closely with national initiatives in clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and digital innovation. This hub not only represents technological leadership but also fuels regional economic development, workforce transformation, and academic excellence.</p> <p>A major endorsement of the Digital Foundry's impact came in 2023, when Governor Shapiro announced an \$81 million investment for a manufacturing center in Westmoreland County—an initiative directly linked to the Foundry's mission. This project is expected to generate 300 high-quality jobs, reinforcing PSNK's pivotal role in shaping the local and regional economic future.</p> <p>PSNK's academic programs are deeply integrated with regional industry needs, offering students pathways into hands-on internships, apprenticeships, and industry-recognized certifications. These opportunities provide students with real-world skills and experiences, ensuring they are job-ready in sectors like advanced manufacturing, clean energy, and high technology. The Foundry's collaboration with the DOE further enhances this offering through participation in federally funded programs such as the Lab-Embedded Entrepreneurship Program, where students engage directly with clean energy startups and smart grid technologies.</p> <p>Despite these accomplishments, the CWC workgroup's report overlooked the Foundry's contributions, merely labeling it as "a regional hub for digital technologies." This classification fails to recognize the national relevance and transformative power of the Foundry's work, both for students and the broader community.</p> <p>In terms of student enrollment, PSNK currently ranks second among the five Penn State campuses in the Pittsburgh area, with 432 enrolled students, surpassing campuses such as Greater Allegheny, Fayette, and Shenango. Contrary to the CWC report's claim that PSNK is "one of the lowest enrollment campuses," historical and current data demonstrate the campus's strong position and growth potential. PSNK once reached a peak enrollment of 990 students, significantly higher than Greater Allegheny's peak of 798, despite the latter's location in the more populous Allegheny County.</p> <p>The campus's strategic location—at the border of Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties, two of the most populated regions in western Pennsylvania—offers a unique opportunity to attract a larger student base. Programs such as the university's only accredited associate's degree in biomedical engineering technology and a fully subscribed radiological sciences program further enhance its appeal to both traditional and non-traditional students.</p> <p>Beyond higher education, PSNK plays an essential role in community engagement and K-12 outreach. Since 1985, it has hosted the PSNK Math League Contest, serving nine local school districts. Additionally, it is the only regional host for the American Mathematics Contest, reinforcing its dedication to promoting STEM education among middle and high school students, especially those from underserved and low-income communities.</p> <p>In sum, Penn State New Kensington—through the Digital Foundry, strategic programming, and regional collaboration—serves as a critical engine for education, workforce development, and technological innovation in the greater Pittsburgh region.</p>
Matt Carter: Resident and Parent Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25
<p>Commonwealth campuses often provide a superior education and lower cost (personal & financial) to students compared to University Park. Closing them now instead of investing in them like our predecessors did is short-sighted. It will be very hard for PSU to recover this damage to its goodwill if it closes these campuses.</p>
Cortney Kezmarsky: High School Counselor Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25
<p>I am writing you today to express my concern and frustration with possibly closing the Fayette Campus. As a High School Counselor and Uniontown Area, we have many students that choose Penn State Fayette as their college due to the proximity to</p>

home and the savings they accrue by commuting. These kids would never have the means to attend College Park. You are going to lose many prospective students in the southwest portion of the state. They are not going to drive to the suburbs of Pittsburgh to attend another branch. I am currently helping a unaccompanied youth whose mom left town 2 years ago become a student at Fayette. This young man has limited options and resources, and Penn State Fayette is a great option for him. I know closing this campus will be absolutely detrimental to our local region. Please reconsider closing Fayette. We need this campus in Fayette County!

Sarah Hough: High School Counselor, Fayette County

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

After being in a high school counseling role at Connellsville Area High School for 22 years, I have appreciated the individual student and district support Penn State Fayette has afforded us. Taking away the campus would not only hurt the students who decide to attend Penn State Fayette but our entire student body. The programs that they have provided have allowed our 9th - 12th graders to explore future careers, open their minds to cultural diversities and college life in general. The experiences have been invaluable to our students and their future. I personally feel supported by the staff and have a relationship that does not exist in other campuses. The closure would be a major negative impact on our district and community and hope you consider keeping Penn State Fayette open.

Colleen DeBerry: Local Guidance Counselor (UHS)

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

As a local Fayette County school guidance counselor, I feel that closing our local Fayette branch would be detrimental to our community. The Fayette campus provides affordable & convenient access to higher education. Our branch tailors programs that benefit our region. The smaller size branch also fosters a more supportive environment where students can stay local and learn to thrive. Many of our students are intimidated by the idea of college, especially at a larger campus and Penn State Fayette has always served as a great stepping stone to their futures. Please consider keeping the Fayette campus open. Their faculty is amazing & has been so helpful & beneficial to our area.

Xiang Ji: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

The recent campus recommendations released by the Campus Working Committee (CWC) and shared by President Bendapudi have caused significant concern due to evident bias and omission of key data. The report presents an imbalanced view that selectively highlights the strengths of some Penn State campuses while unfairly portraying others, such as Penn State New Kensington (PSNK), in a negative light. A closer examination reveals that the recommendations lack objectivity and overlook essential facts that demonstrate PSNK's true value and potential.

One of the most striking issues with the CWC's report is its misrepresentation of enrollment trends. For example, PSNK, while experiencing a 35% enrollment decline over the past decade, has fared better than Penn State Greater Allegheny (PSGA) which saw a 41.6% decline during the same period. Historical data further strengthens PSNK's position: it reached a peak enrollment of 990 students in 2010, compared to PSGA's peak of 798 students in 2004. Despite these figures, the report lists PSGA as the "most potential" campus while recommending PSNK for closure, illustrating a clear inconsistency and questionable judgment. Moreover, the report fails to account for external environmental factors that influence campus viability, such as community safety and surrounding demographics. McKeesport, has consistently reported higher-than-average crime rates when compared to both state and national averages. PSNK is situated on the border of Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties, two of the most populous and economically active counties in western Pennsylvania, offering a more safe and attractive environment for prospective students and families.

Beyond enrollment numbers, PSNK has demonstrated strong academic and social value, especially for underrepresented and low-income students. In 2025, U.S. News & World Report ranked Penn State New Kensington among the top performers of upper 50% in social mobility, highlighting its success in helping students from disadvantaged backgrounds improve their economic prospects through education. This recognition affirms PSNK's role in fulfilling the land-grant mission of Penn State—promoting accessibility, equity, and community impact.

The CWC report also overlooks PSNK's broader contributions to the Pittsburgh region and the nation. Through initiatives like the Digital Foundry, PSNK plays a pivotal role in workforce development, digital innovation, and economic revitalization in western Pennsylvania. These strategic partnerships and investments—such as the \$81 million manufacturing center initiative backed by the state—demonstrate the campus's relevance far beyond its student headcount.

It is important to emphasize that all Penn State campuses serve complementary roles, working together under the shared mission of "One Penn State." Rather than against each other, campuses should be evaluated holistically and fairly, recognizing both challenges and achievements. The CWC's selective presentation of data and apparent bias undermines this principle and fails to reflect the complete picture of what each campus contributes.

Penn State New Kensington deserves an accurate and objective evaluation that reflects its academic excellence, community

<p>impact, and growth potential. The current recommendations misrepresent the campus's reality and threaten to diminish a valuable educational institution that has served the region for decades.</p>
<p>Olivia Spotto: Faculty, Alumni Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25</p>
<p>Penn State Fayette has helped me become a successful young professional. It allowed me the chance to work while in school. It gave me the chance to work 1:1 with faculty members. These faculty helped me write grants, lead a research project, publish an academic paper, create a capstone project for the local community, and secure my first job after graduation. The faculty on the campus work tirelessly, and many have built their lives around this campus. Without a resource like this, I know many in Fayette county would suffer. The loss would be detrimental to everyone: faculty, staff, students, employees, and citizens alike. We have no other close schools. I know local human service organizations rely on our campus, and our caseworker, police force, corrections officers, and nurse work force will be reduced if this happens. I implore you to do keep the campus open.</p>
<p>Nicholas Truncale: Faculty, Rabid PSU football fan Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25</p>
<p>Please, please allow the board members to read each and every one of these public comments before voting. Please do not summarize them. Please let them read our words. If you say there are too many for them to read, shouldn't that tell you something? This is being rushed, and they don't have all of the information to make an informed vote.</p> <p>I request that a roll call vote be taken on the recommendation plan for the Commonwealth campuses.</p> <p>I would like to ask the board if any community studies/analyses have taken place in the communities where a closure of a commonwealth campus may occur. If there are no studies, I would like someone from the board or administration to comment on why they haven't taken place.</p> <p>I would ask the board to inquire as to whether or not any independent entity has verified (or even read) the information in the recommendation plan report. I would like to inform the board that not all of the information in the recommendation report plan is accurate and that there may be conflicts or perceived conflicts of interest that were not identified.</p> <p>I would request that someone not of the administration be able to address the board prior to the vote. Otherwise, administration will just be creating an echo chamber with no outside views on the plan.</p> <p>Closing any commonwealth campus will do irreparable harm to the students living in rural communities of PA. Investing in these campuses is what is needed. PSU should not be run like a business. PSU should keep all campuses open. A vote in favor of the recommendation report plan without an independent analysis goes against the oversight powers and responsibilities of the BoT. At minimum, please table the vote and have an independent study commissioned. If no campus is slated to close until May 2026, this does not need to be rushed. Please do not commit to this plan.</p> <p>I have faith in PSU to do the right thing. But if this plan is approved, I'm afraid PSU will lose the faith of the citizens of PA and will see a significant drop in enrollment as well as a significant decrease in donor activity. Take a moment and think about all of the students who thrive at the commonwealth campuses. Students with autism. Students who are neurodivergent. Students who don't have a vehicle or a ride to go to another campus. All of the first generation and students of color who thrive. They are your constituents and your number 1 priority, not the administration.</p> <p>WE ARE</p>
<p>Becky Karluk: School Counselor Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25</p>
<p>As a high school counselor in Greene County for the last 25 years, I have seen the negative effects that campus closures can create within rural communities. There was a time when WCCC had a campus within Greene County. Many of my students utilized the education offered through WCCC. Once WCCC left, so did the opportunities for my students. Students either left the County completely or they did not pursue any further education. When the opportunity for higher education is taken away, so is the opportunity for higher earning potential. And higher earning potential allows for success for local businesses. Because people who have the opportunity to spend money will often do so within their own community. So the closure of the Fayette campus goes beyond the educational opportunities for people of all ages; what it does is create an economic fall of the community as well. Is the cost that it takes to run the campus outweigh the cost that will come to the students, employees and the community as a whole if this campus is closed? Why are we decreasing educational and cultural opportunities for our community? Because when we do, our communities may not be able to survive.</p>
<p>Karen Cox: Community member/local high school teacher Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25</p>
<p>The Penn State satellite campuses bring a valuable opportunity to rural students in our state, along with providing adult education and community outreach such as the Master Gardener program. Our students and communities depend on this resource and it should be preserved.</p>

<p>Taran Samarth: Alumni Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25</p> <p>The Board should reject the plans to close campuses today and engage in a campus-by-campus tour this summer before making further decisions. "Change of this magnitude is deeply personal," as President Bendapudi observed. The university's decision-making process, its marked relative concern for a press leak over the actual substance of the decision, and its language in the various statements published since comically impersonal.</p> <p>If the Board agrees that this decision is "deeply personal," then it should engage widely with the people affected before voting. It hasn't yet, but you could start now.</p> <p>Students, families, faculty, staff, and local residents deserve actual interactions with the university officials—especially residents in communities that are losing their trust in higher education faster than ever—not just PR speak (and please find synonyms for "deeply" which is used over 7 times across the last barrage of statements).</p>
<p>Danielle Mihalko: Alumni, Bookstore employee Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25</p> <p>Fayette has been part of my whole life. I spent my early years there as the daughter of a staff member. Of course there was no debate where I was going to college. And then I spent 21 more years there as the Bookstore manager. I've seen how the campus allows students to grow and find themselves. I've seen faculty and staff become family supporting each other outside the campus through good and bad. I've seen middle schoolers visit campus for quiz team and say I want to come here for college. I've seen visitors from all over the country marvel at how nice and welcoming our campus is. I've seen alumni come back year after year to share their stories. I've seen community members who never thought college was an option realize they can do it here while still supporting their family. Fayette isn't just some buildings on a beautiful landscape. It is truly a campus that provides excellence to all who attend be it for a community function, a summer camp, a real estate class, or a BSN nursing degree. Fayette County will truly be losing an integral part of its makeup should the campus close.</p>
<p>Jenna Panepino: Alumni, High School Counselor Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25</p> <p>Dear University Board of Trustees,</p> <p>I am reaching out not only as a high school counselor in your community, but also as a proud alumna of Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus. I earned my bachelor's degree in Human Development and Family Studies from Penn State Fayette, and I look back on my time there with deep appreciation.</p> <p>As someone who comes from a small high school and close-knit community, Penn State Fayette provided the perfect environment for me to grow—academically, personally, and professionally—at my own pace. The campus offered all the benefits of a world-class Penn State education, with the added advantage of smaller class sizes and individualized support. My family has a strong tradition of Penn State pride, and I couldn't wait to become part of that legacy.</p> <p>Now, more than 18 years later, I serve as a high school counselor in Greene County, not far from where I grew up. I work with students who are eager to pursue higher education, many of whom come from backgrounds similar to mine. For these students, a top-tier university that offers degree programs on a smaller, more accessible campus can make a tremendous difference in their ability to succeed.</p> <p>Thank you for the continued impact you make in the lives of students—especially those from small, rural communities like ours. I look forward to continuing to support our students in discovering the opportunities that Penn State Fayette has to offer.</p> <p>Sincerely, Jenna Panepinto High School Counselor Carmichaels Area High School</p>
<p>Carol Hill: Concerned community member Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25</p> <p>As someone in their late 70s, who was unable to attend college, I hope each of you really thinks hard about the impact campus closures would have. In my church, many high school seniors want to stay close to home and are going to attend a local campus, to save money, to have a two year adjustment for when they attend main campus, and to stay connected with their church family for a little longer.</p> <p>It is my understanding that Penn State is a not for profit school, so why close campuses that are designed to help the poor, middle class? Surely, with more time, a better solution that would benefit the greater good could be more impactful. Scholars should be able to make wiser decisions.</p> <p>Please vote no to campus closures. How will the poor people be able to make life a bit easier for their kids if there is not a local college for them to attend while they can stay home and save money?</p>

<p>The quick closing of campuses affects current and future students, limits college access, and eliminates opportunity for public service.</p>
<p>Penelope Morrison: Faculty Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25</p>
<p>I hardly know what to say but here goes. I started my career with PSU 9 years ago at the New Kensington campus. I took the job happily expecting to retire from the campus. Having myself graduated with my undergrad degree from a smaller regional campus of a major state school, I was thrilled to be a part of providing the experience to students that I received... the experience that would help them grow, give them the tools towards upward mobility, provide them with all the opportunities they wouldn't have elsewhere. That's the mission I signed on for. That's the land grant mission. Access to education for all. I believe in that mission. It is worth fighting for. I wish you all would join us in that fight. Closing campuses is not it. It will only decrease access, strip generations of young people of opportunity, and leave struggling communities high and dry. There are better ways to right the ship. We are willing to change and innovate, for the future, towards a sustainable Commonwealth ecosystem. But PSU has not given us the chance. I'm asking you to double down on your commitment to our campuses. Not shrink away and abandon your mission.</p>
<p>Beth Nury: Former staff and parent of PS students Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25</p>
<p>I think other options need to be thoroughly explored. The impact of closing these branch campuses reaches far into the communities that have supported Penn State for many years. My father was a proud Penn Stater because of the opportunity he was afforded to be a first generation college graduate. He always spoke of their integrity to do the right thing and taught their students that was the way to live their lives. I don't feel PSU is standing up to their own "code of ethics" that was repeatedly told to me as an employee there. PSU has an obligation to support the very Land Grant designation that helped to make them a great University. By closing these campuses they are taking away a chance of a PSU degree from the people who can't afford State College or don't want to go there - who are working and living at home to afford their degree. They don't always have access to 45 minutes away or further to reach another campus or don't want online. I think this will be a huge blemish on the history of PSU and they may never know the damage they have done to a students' ability to attain a degree to change their lives and generations to come. PSU should stand by their promise for the benefits they have already received being a Land Grant Institution and bravely figure out another option. Let PSU be the leader to navigate the declining student population without taking away from the students and communities that need them the most. WE ARE- aren't we?</p>
<p>Dan Cella: Staff Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25</p>
<p>The current ecosystem is unsustainable, and I give the administration credit for its willingness to engage with this issue. However, this report is deeply flawed—it is poorly researched, poorly written, and its analysis lacks credibility. It's disappointing that a world-class institution like Penn State would publish such a document on a matter of this importance.</p> <p>Having supported four campuses over the past three years, I am acutely aware of how inaccurate the analysis is. The authors clearly lack familiarity with the unique strengths and challenges of these campuses. Their understanding of the broader context—both positive and negative—is insufficient.</p> <p>When the decision was made to cut the Commonwealth Campuses' budgets by \$49 million, there was supposed to be a plan to course-correct. Instead, we saw no meaningful action—just a disorganized VSIP effort and broad cost-cutting measures. Promised initiatives to align academic programs with regional workforce needs have not materialized. Critical issues like inter unit competition and the burden of Penn State's bureaucracy have gone unaddressed.</p> <p>In fact, when units do present thoughtful, strategic plans, they are often blocked by the very bureaucracy that was supposed to be reformed. When President Bendapudi took office, she pledged to tackle this organizational dysfunction. So far, there has been little progress—if anything, the situation has worsened.</p> <p>To move forward responsibly, we must focus on rebuilding our institutional culture, address tenured faculty that are not delivering for our students, realign academic programs, and develop new offerings that directly respond to community and workforce needs. Only then should we consider which campuses or units can effectively deliver on that vision—and which may ultimately need to close.</p> <p>If we continue down the current path, we risk shutting down seven campuses, without solving the fundamental problems we face.</p>
<p>Amy Robinson: Staff Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25</p>
<p>Greater Allegheny (GA) is one of the most diverse campuses in the Penn State community. We offer invaluable opportunities for students from all backgrounds, especially persons of color, first-generation students, and those from economically challenged backgrounds. The closure of our campus would be a devastating loss for these students, who rely on the resources and support</p>

we provide. We are one of two commonwealth campuses that have the TRIO program, which provides services to those with a disadvantaged background wanting to pursue higher education. Due to our mission, their lives are forever changed, and they are put on a life-changing trajectory that they may never experience without this campus and the experiences and support we provide.

GA is positioned to offer students a wealth of opportunities and services. We can house students on-campus in the residence hall, serving as a haven for many students with challenging home lives, giving them a sense of independence they have never experienced before. We offer a wide range of athletics with first-class facilities in our gymnasium and fitness center, and we can provide them with access to the greater Pittsburgh area, which offers experiences that many students have never had before, such as visiting world-class museums, attending cultural events, major league sporting events, festivals, multiple parks, and outdoor activities. We are close to Pittsburgh International Airport, which is especially important to out-of-state and international students. Being close to a large metropolitan area provides numerous job and internship opportunities. Our professors teach courses in a small classroom environment, allowing them to personally know each student. When a student begins their journey at Greater Allegheny, the support they receive enhances their likelihood of on-time graduation, especially if they transition to a larger campus.

Penn State has numerous opportunities to expand and invest in the Mon Valley, helping to rejuvenate the area and fulfill our land grant mission. I invite you to visit our beautiful campus and explore McKeesport to understand the potential impact of a campus closure. No other college or university in the Pittsburgh area is taking this initiative, and Penn State Greater Allegheny is uniquely positioned to lead the way. With our campus infrastructure, the surrounding Pittsburgh area, and recent and planned investments from tech companies, the possibilities for growth and evolution are limitless.

I urge you to consider the profound impact that closing Penn State Greater Allegheny would have on our students, staff, and the broader community. Our campus plays a vital role in providing educational opportunities and support to those who need it most, and we are uniquely positioned for growth and change while continuing to serve our students and community. GA is one of the oldest commonwealth campuses with a history of transitioning as the needs of the community arose and are still uniquely equipped to change and evolve to meet the ever-changing needs of Western Pennsylvania and the Pittsburgh region.

Keera Miller: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses, Fayette

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

The Eberly Campus is such an asset to our community. It allows students to receive a high quality education, while networking with local agencies to secure fast employment following graduation. As a high school counselor, I have connected several students with PSUFE. For some, the only shot they have at attending a University as prestigious as PSU is by attending a local campus. Financially, I personally wouldn't have had the same college opportunities had I not had access to the Eberly Campus. My mother, older sister, and myself are all alumni of Penn State Fayette and have led successful lives due to the education this campus has provided. As a 2017 graduate, I often reflect on the learnings during my time at the Eberly Campus. Professors like Dr. Jo, Dr. Barry, and Dr. Rapano left a lasting impact on my life and I feel our future generations will be robbed of the opportunity to be educated and molded by the PSUFE Family. I believe closing this campus would be a great disservice to the members of this community. There is a high need for an accessible, high quality education within Fayette County. I am extremely proud to be a graduate of this campus and it is my hope that we can continue to educate, love, and mold future generations.

Rich Wentling: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

Dear Board of Trustees,

I write in strong opposition of the report titled Future State Recommendation: Commonwealth Campus Ecosystem. There are many errors and omissions in the report which serve the intended outcome, while not sharing the associated context or glossing over key aspects that make many of these campuses an invaluable resource. The findings in the preliminary report commend campuses for the very things that are listed as limitations or justifications for closure, such as specialized programs or amassing local community and alumni support for continued operation. A residence hall should not be the most important determinant, yet the report argues otherwise.

Similarly, the working group charged with assessing the fidelity of the current Commonwealth Campus landscape reflects a bias in the chosen stakeholders with no local input or representation from the targeted campuses slated for potential closure. How different would this report look if there were representatives from across the campuses to provide input and help with problem solving? Instead, these campuses have been left in the dark with the only updates coming from leaked information to media outlets, not the University leadership. We have been told there are financial woes that are insurmountable, and this report helps to address these shortcomings. However, the minimal funding requirements for the Commonwealth Campuses identified for potential closure, in relation to the overall operating budget, fails to align with the initial arguments for closure (e.g. budgetary constraints) followed by the new messaging relating to what students want from a campus (e.g. student experience). Students choose these campuses for specific reasons and I find it troubling that administrators feel they can speak on behalf of the students at the "branch" campuses. There are many media reports available through outlets such as TribLive, WTAE, Altoona Mirror, Post-Gazette, Fox56.com, Pottsville Republican Herald, and many, many more. If the University would like to speak on

behalf of these students about their experience, perhaps a good starting point is to read the news coverage, much like these campus communities did when finding out their campus was possibly closing. Links to these reports are easily available through a simple internet search using those keywords.

There will be many comments related to this recommendation and most of those will be opposed to the closure of these seven campuses. Undoubtedly, there will be some that are in support of the preliminary recommendation as well. The decisions of this Board will carry with it lasting ramifications for generations to come. When thinking of Penn State's Future State and how families of prospective students, current students, and community members perceive Penn State, I ask does this decision rest solely on finances and increasing the bottom dollar or is there another reason for closing these economic drivers in underprivileged, underrepresented areas? Does increasing the net income at "Penn State" justify discarding 3,000+ current students and the thousands more that could have pursued a Penn State degree at one of these "branch" campuses? I certainly hope not.

Jill Dickun: Staff

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

Earning a degree at a Penn State Commonwealth Campus is a life-changing opportunity for many students, me included. As an adult learner who returned to complete my education, I can personally attest to the vital role these campuses play. They are more than academic institutions; they serve as critical access points for those who might not otherwise have the chance to pursue higher education.

The potential closure of these campuses would have a profound and lasting impact. I urge you to closely examine what these decisions would mean -not just for the students, but for the communities we serve and the future of the University as a whole. The current report guiding these recommendations contains significant flaws and does not fully reflect the value or potential of campuses like Penn State New Kensington.

Students at New Kensington are thriving. They are deeply engaged in their education and in their communities. Many are working, supporting families, and balancing complex responsibilities. For these students, relocation is not a viable option. Closing campuses would not merely reduce accessibility, it would remove opportunities altogether for those who rely on proximity, flexibility, and affordability.

Penn State New Kensington offers unique, high-demand programs that are not easily replicated elsewhere. The Electro-Mechanical Engineering Technology (EMET) program, for example, is a four-year degree currently offered at Fayette, New Kensington, and York—all of which are slated for closure. Students in these programs cannot simply transfer to Altoona or Berks without significant disruption. Similarly, New Kensington's Radiological Sciences program- one of only two in the entire Commonwealth Campus system- is growing. Programs like these are central to the campus identity and essential to regional workforce development, yet their promise is overlooked in the current assessment.

I believe these campuses, with the right investment and strategic support, can thrive. The western region has already made meaningful strides through regionalization. Many of us were excited about the vision for a collaborative, efficient Pittsburgh-region model, even within tight budget constraints. We saw a future in which we could innovate together and continue Penn State's legacy of excellence and access.

But this process feels rushed. The potential for thoughtful, sustainable solutions remains if we are given the opportunity to pursue them.

Please reconsider. Reaffirm your commitment to educational equity, to regional communities, and to the students whose lives are transformed by Penn State.

Julie Gallagher: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I am a full professor of History and American Studies at the Brandywine campus of Penn State University. I have dedicated my professional life, as have thousands of my Commonwealth Campus colleagues, to our teaching, research, and service at Penn State. Like my colleagues, I believe strongly in the mission of the University and love teaching our students. Year after year, I have witnessed the benefits of a Penn State education and the possibilities it opens for the young people of Pennsylvania who we teach.

I understand that no organization moves forward in time without making changes to stay relevant, and that includes Penn State. At the same time, because of my many years of proud professional association with Penn State and my deep commitment to and belief in the work we do, I write here to go on record to the Board of Trustees about the substance and method of changes that have already been imposed on as well as those that have been proposed for University College. The situation that the Commonwealth Campuses, including University College, face are the result of long-standing challenges that for well over a decade went largely unaddressed by the university leadership, including the Board of Trustees. These challenges are real and need real solutions. Nevertheless, I have profound concerns about how the current university leadership has moved to address these problems. The remarkably short timeline given for the Voluntary Separation (VSIP) and the haphazard way it was implemented resulted in frightened and demoralized employees and inconsistent capacities to provide a top-tier Penn State education to our deserving students. In the wake of that dramatic upheaval, and a new budgetary model that has disadvantaged the Commonwealth Campuses, the university president has moved at an accelerated pace through a shrouded process to

identify campuses and programs for closure, all without input from the faculty who actually serve the students who will be directly impacted.

Given the late hour and the increasingly vulnerable moment facing higher education writ large, I remind the Board of Trustees that the proposed plans to close programs and campuses will not only result in a significant loss of students, faculty, and staff, but they also compromise the commitment that the university made to the people of Pennsylvania and its own values. I urge you to revisit the process by which decisions have been made and examine more fully a set of solutions that preserve the commitment Penn State University, as the land grant institution of the Commonwealth, has made to its students and the people of the state.

Anonymous: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses, General Issues

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I have been with the University for nearly two decades, and have witnessed its decline firsthand. As with any governmental organization, which Penn State is or resembles, the amount of waste and bureaucracy are significant. Additionally, it would appear that poor decision-making runs rampant. Closures and sale of the Nittany Lion Inn, Penn Stater, and now some of its Commonwealth campuses are befuddling and nonsensical. This once prestigious university within the past 5 years has taken a clear and decided path for the worse. Other issues involving educational rigor have also declined, with many, if not most, students viewing the payment of tuition and receipt of a degree as a simple sales transaction. Some of these issues are not confined to Penn State, however, that this University would permit such things is disappointing. It is downright depressing to have borne witness to this decline, and my respect for this once great institution has suffered greatly. Those who believe they are more intelligent than others have seemingly wrought havoc. How the University has managed to attain its current state remains unknown to me and likely many others, but I am becoming more pessimistic with time about its ability to recover and regain its once cherished and renowned status. It is of little wonder that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has repeatedly reduced or merely maintained its appropriations. Apparently, the University has made an education, and its faculty, staff, and students, one of its lower priorities. The announcement of the closures of several Commonwealth campuses illustrates that perfectly. It is likely just another nail in the coffin.

Alan Hooks: Resident of New Kensington

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I have lived in the New Kensington area for almost three decades. Two of my best friends attended Penn State New Kensington for their first two years before moving to University Park. They would not have been able to afford to go to State College if they didn't have the opportunity to live at home and attend PSNK! So, enrollment will go down at University Park if PSNK and other branches are closed. I took summer classes there, which allowed me to catch up on credits I needed for graduation at my college.

My wife teaches biology at PSNK and has students work on research projects every year. They go on to University Park with research experience that they otherwise would not get. Many of her students also do volunteer work at her nonprofit cat clinic called Frankie's Friends in downtown New Kensington. The engineering program also has ties to a business in New Kensington. So these types of opportunities will be eliminated if PSNK is closed.

In conclusion, being that PSNK and other branches use up only less than 1% of the University's total budget, I believe that cuts could be made elsewhere. Do they really need to close these highly needed branches and deprive many of the opportunity to go to college, because the President didn't find other ways to make budgetary cuts to make up for a less than 1% deficit? Thank you for your attention on this matter.

Alan Hooks

Rachel Lally: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

Hello, my name is Rachael Lally, I graduated Penn State Fayette in 2018 with my BS in HDFS, here is my story: Starting my freshman year in fall 2014-spring 2015, I needed emergency surgery in my gallbladder that had ruptured unknowingly. I was able to continue to complete my freshman year with the help of my educators at PSU-Fayette. Continuing with my education with positive health throughout my sophomore and junior year, but at the start of my fall 2018 semester, I was required to have reconstructive jaw surgery that left me unable to speak for 6 weeks. Again with the help of my educators, I was able to complete assignments and participate in discussions until I was able to speak again. Along with this surgery, I also discovered that I was pregnant and would graduate with my B.S 7 months pregnant. Without the support from my educators, I would have given up on my dreams of graduating college. My educators saw me not as a number, but as a person, not many other college alumni can say that because other college campuses are so large that students become numbers.

I do not agree that the commonwealth campuses should be closed. These smaller campuses give more opportunities to a greater population. I would not have been able to attend a secondary education without PSU-Fayette due to the medical reasonings that are listed above. I was able to complete assignments, be close to family for recovery, and complete a 4 year degree program all while going to a credited university that is close to home. Students travel from all around to go to PSU-Fayette because it is a smaller campus and the atmosphere gives off a positive feeling to what can be a stressful transition period. PSU-Fayette is not

only for college students, but it serves a greater purpose to our community in Fayette County. High-school students travel to PSU-Fayette for their field trips, PSU-Fayette holds many major community events, as well as many sports tournaments are held here as well. Without PSU-Fayette none of these events would be possible to our community, which we take pride in knowing that we have a major college here in Fayette County.

Please take the time to reconsider closing the commonwealth campuses, and see that you are not only hurting many current students, but hurting the future generations to come.

We are Penn State Fayette and all Commonwealth Campuses.

Jenna St. Mars: Local HS Counselor, Student

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

As a local high school counselor, I strongly advocate for keeping the Penn State Fayette Branch Campus open. This campus provides our local students with invaluable access to a world-class Penn State education without the financial or logistical challenges of relocating to main campus. It serves as a vital resource for students who wish to stay close to home while pursuing quality higher education and future career success. Closing this campus would significantly limit opportunities for many of our Belle Vernon students and many other surrounding school districts.

Tara Jacobs-McCombie: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

As a 1998 Penn State alumnus, I owe much of my success to the foundation I built at Penn State Fayette. It was the starting point of my college journey, and without it, I'm not sure I would have had the academic preparation, confidence, or support to succeed at University Park. The idea of closing this campus is deeply troubling—not just because of what it means to me personally, but because of what it means for current and future students, families, and the surrounding community.

When I began my college career at Penn State Fayette at age 18, I was unsure of myself and uncertain about how to navigate college life. Fayette provided the perfect environment to grow. It was small enough that I didn't feel lost, but large enough to offer excellent academic programs and student resources. I was more than just a number—professors knew me by name, were accessible, and took a genuine interest in my success. The relationships I built there, with faculty and fellow students, were long-lasting and transformative.

The support I received at Fayette was critical when I transitioned to the main campus at University Park. The courses I completed there allowed me to stay on track academically and even helped me meet credit goals through summer classes. That continuity made a huge difference in ensuring I graduated on time. Fayette wasn't just a stepping stone; it was a launchpad.

My connection to Penn State Fayette goes beyond my own experience. My father graduated from the same campus in the 1970s with a degree in mining engineering. For our family, Fayette represents a legacy of opportunity, hard work, and academic achievement. It has served multiple generations and continues to be a critical option for students in our region.

Penn State Fayette also serves a vital role in supporting non-traditional students—those returning to school later in life, balancing work and family responsibilities, or seeking to improve their circumstances through education. The campus offers the kind of flexible, personalized education that many students need to succeed. Closing this campus would cut off a critical lifeline for people who may not have the resources or ability to travel to a larger campus.

Furthermore, the Fayette campus is more than just an academic institution; it is a cornerstone of the local community. It provides jobs, attracts students and families to the area, and offers cultural, educational, and civic engagement opportunities that enrich the entire region. Its closure would not only affect students, but would also deliver a serious economic and social blow to the surrounding community.

Penn State has long prided itself on its commitment to access, excellence, and service across the Commonwealth. Closing Fayette would contradict that mission and diminish the university's ability to serve all Pennsylvanians.

For all these reasons—personal, educational, and community-driven—I strongly urge that Penn State Fayette remain open and continue its proud legacy of empowering students and strengthening the region.

Sincerely,

Tara L. Jacobs- McCombie, M.A. Ed.

1998- HDFS

Kelly Loomis: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I am writing to express my deep appreciation for the vital role that Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus, has played in shaping both my personal and professional journey—and to emphasize the continued importance of this campus to our local community.

Attending Penn State Fayette was a transformative opportunity that made higher education financially attainable for me. While I was accepted to the main campus, by staying close to home, I was able to reduce living expenses and receive scholarships to make college more affordable for two years. More importantly, it was during my time at the Fayette campus that I discovered my passion for nutrition, a field in which I have since built a rewarding and meaningful career.

The supportive environment, outstanding faculty, and small class sizes at Penn State Fayette allowed me to thrive academically and personally during my first two years of college. This strong foundation enabled me to go on to earn a Master of Science in Nutrition Science from Penn State. Ultimately, I became a dietitian in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. I am now proud to serve some of the most vulnerable members of our community—premature and critically ill infants—in a role that combines science, compassion, and service.

Beyond my own story, the impact of the Fayette campus reaches deep into our community. The nursing program is helping to staff the newly reopened obstetrics unit at our local hospital, a critical service for families in our region. In fact, the Fayette campus continues to be the primary source of nursing professionals in our area, making it essential to the survival and functioning of our community hospital. I have had the pleasure to interact with the nursing students over the past ten years during their clinical rotations and they have each been motivated, hard working and compassionate. It is obvious that even years after I attended the campus, the faculty is invested in building an exceptional healthcare workforce.

In a time when access to healthcare and education is more critical than ever, campuses like Penn State Fayette serve as pillars of strength and opportunity for rural and underserved communities. I respectfully urge you to continue supporting and investing in this campus, which changes lives for students and for the families and communities they go on to serve.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to the mission of Penn State.

Sincerely,

Kelly Loomis, MS, RD, LD

Nutrition 99, 07

Kevin Snider: Former Chancellor

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

◆ Penn State must evolve to survive. New Kensington already has. ◆

As Penn State considers closing seven campuses, it risks eliminating one of the few that's already aligned with the University's—and Pennsylvania's—future.

📍 Penn State New Kensington (PSNK) is more than a small campus. It's a strategic foothold in Pittsburgh's emerging economy, uniquely positioned at the intersection of robotics, advanced manufacturing, health sciences, and digital innovation.

🔑 Programs in Electro-Mechanical Engineering Tech, Radiological Sciences, Biobehavioral Health, and IT

🏢 Facilities like the nationally recognized Digital Foundry

🤝 Partnerships with global companies like Siemens, Rockwell, and FANUC

🌐 Grants from the Build Back Better initiative to lead future-ready education

📅 Leadership in creating a K–16 pipeline through ABC/Create, impacting 12,000+ students

This is not a nostalgic defense. It's a warning—and a roadmap.

✅ Enrollment in key programs was growing

✅ PSNK raised 300% of its campaign goal

✅ It attracted \$120M+ in public-private investment

✅ It helped bring 140+ new businesses to New Kensington

What's at stake is not just one campus—it's Penn State's ability to lead in the Digital Age.

In my public comment, I urge the Board to delay the vote. Come see what's working. Understand what's at risk. PSNK isn't just relevant—it's ahead of the curve.

Please see the following post for a full description of what is at stake for Penn State:

(https://www.linkedin.com/posts/kevinsnider100_setting-the-record-straight-what-is-really-activity-7330634192847859712-g-ZO?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAAAtp13kBUJktdp8rsJF36lRz0xUnHCQRuyQ)

Michelle Rodino-Colocino: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

As Penn State faculty at UP for the past 18 years, I've seen first-hand the power of our Commonwealth Campuses right here at University Park. DuBois, Fayette, Mont Alto, New Kensington, Shenango, Wiles-Barre, and York have given some of my best students a strong start for an excellent Penn State experience and graduation. I teach students on the "2+2 plan." Ten days ago I had the honor of congratulating our Student Marshals representing my Bellisario College of Communications. Two of our four departmental marshals, representing "Journalism" and "Telecommunications and Media Industries" got their 2-year "start" at campuses slated for closure. One Marshal told me about how her time at New Kensington made it financially possible for her to attend Penn State and pursue her career interests here at UP. Another Marshal told me that attending Wiles-Barre helped them "fall in love" with school again and inspired them to excel in four wonderful Penn State years. These two students are at the top of our programs. They wouldn't have attended UP or Penn State if their home campuses were shut down or they were told to "log in" for online classes.

This closure plan would abandon these excellent students, it would degrade the quality of education for those around them, and it would compromise both the futures of Pennsylvanians like them and the world that they will undoubtedly improve.

The 143-page report in defense of closing New Kensington, Wilkes-Barre, and the five other campuses cuts out the stories of our Student Marshals and would cut them off from Penn State. It denies access to them and to you, the Board of Trustees. What other stories do the report's numbers abandon? Erase? Distort? The closure report tells of low enrollment, but what about high achievement? What about high graduation rates? What about supporting opportunity and access? What about enabling economic growth, not further abandoning communities across Pennsylvania? What about our mission, our proud mission as a land grant institution of higher education to "catalyze transformative change" –in a positive direction? As we proudly promise on our website, as Pennsylvania's only land grant university, "Penn State will provide accessible and affordable pathways to higher education for all Pennsylvanians and empower our students to become leaders in their fields, contributing to the growth and vitality of our state for generations to come."

Closing these seven campuses or any of our Commonwealth campuses would flush our centuries-old mission and our investment in it down the drain. As our own financial audited statements show, "Penn State's net assets increased by \$1.0 billion during the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024 (FY2024), a result of strong operating results at both the University and at Penn State Health alongside positive non-operating activities, particularly in the form of unrealized investment gains" (p. 2). Now is not the time to abandon our excellent students and the excellent faculty, staff, and communities who support them across Pennsylvania. Now is the time give them a mighty WE ARE

Tom Palisin: York Advisory Board and Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

On behalf of the membership of the Manufacturers' Association, which includes nearly 500 manufacturers and businesses, we would like to express our support for the Penn State York's Advisory Board proposal and letter to allow the campus to remain open. The letter from the Advisory Board outlines a common sense, business-minded strategy for the York Campus to remain open and take on the obvious opportunities for growth, sustainability and regional impact that the campus offers. York County is the 8th largest County by population and is in growth mode – both by total population and economic growth – significantly more than most counties in the commonwealth. And as the state sees the youth population decline York County will still have one of the largest youth populations in the commonwealth, which can continue to be a pipeline to the York Campus. Of all the commonwealth campuses being considered for closure York has the largest by far of enrolled veterans which can be leverage through the many defense contract manufacturers in the County – 3 of the top 5 defense contractors in the US have a large presence in the County. From a financial perspective the campus also has one of the best financial positions compared to the other 12 campuses listed for potential closure and receives generous philanthropic support - \$12 million since 2015. The facilities remain in excellent condition. The manufacturing community in York is significant, much larger than the service focused economy of the Harrisburg Campus. The County has 268% more manufacturing establishments, 130% more manufacturing employees and is double the size of the manufacturing GDP than Dauphin County. A local campus located within the manufacturing community will help sustain and grow the industrial base of the County. We hope the Trustees provide the opportunity to take advantage of this asset of the PSU commonwealth campuses and consider the recommendations provided by the Penn State York Advisor Board Members.

Bevanny Stearman: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I would like to present my reasoning for arguing against the closure of Commonwealth Campuses. As an alumna of Penn State New Kensington, I cannot overstate how grateful I am to have received high-quality education at an affordable, accessible campus, and I come from a family of Penn State alumni that would agree. My time at the New Kensington campus wasn't just an education; it was a transformative experience that unlocked opportunities I genuinely believe I wouldn't have found elsewhere. The connections and relationships I formed as a result are truly priceless, and I have seen firsthand the profound, positive ripple effect that Penn State New Kensington and other Commonwealth Campuses have on students, as well as communities. I do not believe that any future student should be robbed of such valuable yet accessible opportunity.

David Hurtubise: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I encourage you to vote against the president's plan to close campuses. You should require her to provide you with more than one option. Otherwise, the board is just rubber stamping whatever the president suggests.

Collette Ridgeway: Staff

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

During a time of increasing division in our society and an eroding belief in the importance of higher education, the idea of removing these land-granted institutions (an important oasis of life-changing education, varying perspectives, and cultural experiences in each of the rural communities they serve) is a failure of our nonprofit, tax-exempt status. Nonprofit organizations are rare gems, with a different set of incentives, that exist for the public benefit rather than to generate

profits. Their goal is to use money to make a better world. The closure proposals, as the only answer, focus on money in a very for-profit way...forever ending things that could be built on the foundations of people and infrastructure that are already in place. Land-grant institutions are priceless investments into people and places. Futures and lives will be darkened as yet another opportunity is taken from us. It breaks my heart that future generations will not be able to have the opportunities that I had going to college here at Fayette and then being able to come back years later when I could contribute my skills and experience to the futures of others. You will carry that weight forever if you make these decisions without more careful and open public consideration, detailed rebuttals of the information contained in the leaked report, or without any real attempt to radically transform the campuses instead of outright closure.

It is unrealistic to think campuses closer to Pittsburgh will serve the broader rural southwestern region as you think it will. Plus, the campus closures will forever reflect negatively on the Penn State brand. The former campuses, landmarks that people will drive by every day, will be a constant reminder of how little Penn State cared about the people here.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit comments.

Sabrina Herman: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to you as a proud graduate of the Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) program at Penn State Mont Alto, a place that not only shaped my academic journey, but fundamentally changed the trajectory of my life.

Mont Alto was more than a campus. It was a stepping stone, a sanctuary, and a springboard to greater things. Coming from a rural background, I likely wouldn't have pursued higher education had it not been for the accessibility and close-knit support Mont Alto provided. The faculty knew me by name, encouraged me when I doubted myself, and challenged me to see my potential beyond the boundaries of what I thought was possible.

After graduating, I went on to earn my teaching certification and eventually obtained an Educational Specialist degree. I now serve my community in the field of education, directly because Mont Alto opened that first door. And I know I'm not alone. Mont Alto has long served as a vital bridge for first-generation students, working adults, and those from underserved communities who need a smaller, more personal entry point into higher education.

The campus is also a cornerstone of the region. Its students and graduates give back through internships, community service, and careers in human services, healthcare, and forestry. To lose Mont Alto would not just mean the closure of a campus, it would mean the dismantling of opportunity for countless students and the weakening of community infrastructure.

I urge you to consider what Mont Alto represents beyond enrollment numbers. It is access. It is equity. It is Penn State, living out its land-grant mission in a tangible and deeply human way.

Please keep Penn State Mont Alto open. The futures it helps shape are worth it.

Elaine Kopich: HS Counselor

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I want to express my deep concern regarding the potential closing of Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus. As a high school counselor, I have witnessed firsthand the positive impact this institution has on our students. Many have pursued their education at Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus benefiting from the strong communication we maintain with the admission representatives who visit our school frequently.

The loss of Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus would be significant, not only for our students but also for our community. The opportunities for a world-renowned education that Penn State provides are limited, and having this option close to home is invaluable.

I sincerely hope that the decision-makers will reconsider the substantial negative impact this closure would have on our young adults and our community. It is crucial that we continue to support Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Elaine C Kopich

Gary Butler: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

On behalf of the membership of the Manufacturers' Association, which includes nearly 500 manufacturers and businesses, we would like to express our support for the Penn State York's Advisory Board proposal and letter to allow the campus to remain open. The letter from the Advisory Board outlines a common sense, business-minded strategy for the York Campus to remain open and take on the obvious opportunities for growth, sustainability and regional impact that the campus offers. York County is the 8th largest County by population and is in growth mode – both by total population and economic growth – significantly more than most counties in the commonwealth. And as the state sees the youth population decline York County will still have one of the largest youth populations in the commonwealth, which can continue to be a pipeline to the York Campus. Of all the commonwealth campuses being considered for closure York has the largest by far of enrolled veterans which can be leverage

through the many defense contract manufacturers in the County – 3 of the top 5 defense contractors in the US have a large presence in the County. From a financial perspective the campus also has one of the best financial positions compared to the other 12 campuses listed for potential closure and receives generous philanthropic support - \$12 million since 2015. The facilities remain in excellent condition. The manufacturing community in York is significant, much larger than the service focused economy of the Harrisburg Campus. The County has 268% more manufacturing establishments, 130% more manufacturing employees and is double the size of the manufacturing GDP than Dauphin County. A local campus located within the manufacturing community will help sustain and grow the industrial base of the County. We hope the Trustees provide the opportunity to take advantage of this asset of the PSU commonwealth campuses and consider the recommendations provided by the Penn State York Advisor Board Members.

Our company struggles to find PSU engineers. When York Campus was most successful, it was a technical based campus which ideally supported the community. A combination of Harrisburg administration and University Park biases have driven York Campus away from its core competency and support of the growing technical demand in the region.

President & CEO

Precision Component Group (270 employees in York)

Cindy Schrinel: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I came from Virginia with my infant son and husband to be close to family so I could go to nursing school. PSU Fayette was close for me and my family. I was only minutes away from my son if I was needed in an emergency. I graduated 26 years ago from the associates degree in nursing program. These smaller campuses are necessary for adults who have families and cannot go to the main campus. Please continue to keep the commonwealth campuses open, they are necessary.

Angela Lynch: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

Please take time to study the "big picture" before you close any campuses. The report is flawed and has tremendous inaccuracies, particularly as it relates to Mont Alto. I believe this decision has been in the works for a few years, with vacancies in admissions and strategic communications left unfilled as well as University Park denying our local alumni chapter members the ability to assist with outreach and recruitment for over a decade. Please allow Mont Alto what it needs to be successful before you determine that the campus cannot be. Additionally, please create a program similar to Wilson College and Shippensburg University to make the campus competitive with regard to dual enrollment. We are MISSING OUT with all the local dual enrollment students attending the other two schools. It costs 3 times as much for 1 course at Mont Alto than it does at Wilson and almost twice as much as at Mont Alto for 1 course as it does at Ship. There is SO much that could be done with support from University Park and the right leadership moving forward. Please do not make a decision in haste that will impact the community for generations. We are a land-grant institution. We should be providing access. No student in south-central PA will be able to reasonably commute to Harrisburg or University Park, so Penn State will lose all of those students to other institutions. Please please recognize that there is so much more at stake than what is shared in that flawed report. We held meeting after meeting last year to provide information on Mont Alto and that information was never even used. The report is poor, at best. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Lori Gray: Staff, Alumni, Parent of past and future student

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

As a 1985 graduate in the College of Nursing, I spent 3 years at University Park with 1 year as required at Hershey. I was always a "main campus or nothing" vote.

My oldest son, who just graduated from Schreyer Honors College and the Eberly College of Science got a B.S. in Chemistry with a minor in physics. He applied and was accepted to University Park but came to the ultimate decision to spend 2 years in Dubois in the 2+2 Program.

My youngest son will be a senior in high school in the fall. We expected he would start at Dubois. Both of them have taken or are taking PSU dual enrollment courses in high school.

I have heard that Penn West Clarion is closing and that Lock Haven at Clearfield already has closed. I don't know what students from rural areas and small high school systems are to do when they aren't ready to come straight to University Park. It's bigger than even when I attended. It's intimidating to small town students and families. Those students will be forced to go to smaller schools to grow slowly.

I understand there are programs that can be completed entirely at Dubois. And a degree that can't be obtained anywhere else within the Penn State system. Those students will be lost to other majors and schools.

I was amazed at the amount of donor money that is obtained for so many students at Dubois, not just in their Honors Program. Those are local donors that have given to the community for years and even generations. I fear that money will dry up and be allocated elsewhere in the community, not to the Penn State system.

Is there waste and room for financial savings at Dubois? Absolutely! As a parent of a recent student and one with several friends who are employees, I know money can be saved there!

I just hope that the system that won me over to a Dubois campus vote will continue to win over others and support rural western PA students who aren't ready for the "big pond" or the big city.

Thank you for your work that I'm sure is difficult and unappreciated. I've been in healthcare administration. I know!

Erin Brennan: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

On Thursday, February 20, 2025, President Bendapudi testified at a state house appropriations committee hearing offering that "all options are on the table" relative to potential campus closures. She failed to provide any clarity or direct answers and instead maintained that no decisions had been made.

By the morning of Tuesday, February 25, 2025, Bendapudi addressed the Penn State Community in unscheduled remarks immediately preceding a scheduled University Faculty Senate Meeting in which a vote of no confidence in her leadership was anticipated. In those remarks, Bendapudi announced that 7 Commonwealth Campuses were "safe" and recognized the appointment of Margo DelliCarpini, Tracy Langkilde, and Michael Wade Smith to co-lead a group that would provide a final recommendation as to the future of the remaining Commonwealth Campuses. She also asserted that the decision to close campuses was "an administrative one" that she alone could render.

DelliCarpini and Langkilde were entrusted to make a recommendation as to which campuses should close. Both lack an understanding and appreciation of the Commonwealth Campuses. On March 12, 2024, DelliCarpini was scheduled to visit Penn State Wilkes-Barre. She arrived over an hour late to a meeting with faculty, explaining that she had simply driven past Wilkes-Barre and skipped it as she traveled from Penn State Hazleton to Penn State Scranton. Langkilde visited Penn State Wilkes-Barre on December 13, 2024. In an open campus forum, she addressed a concern about the demoralized campus culture that evidenced empty offices and failing student engagement. She queried why offices were empty and was shocked upon hearing the percentage of staff who had taken the VSIP, none of whom were replaced with a dedicated physical presence on campus. Seeking to understand our campus students, she asked if they just hung out in their dorms. Penn State Wilkes-Barre does not have student housing. She clearly did not know this. There is no recording of these meetings, but I attended each. These are the individuals entrusted to make informed decisions about the future of Penn State Wilkes-Barre and other campuses.

The cost of the Commonwealth Campuses "amounts to a 0.4% investment [of total budget] in the commonwealth." The current administration plans to abandon the University's land-grant mission, faculty, staff, and students for that cost. The message has been received and embodied by the students that Penn State serves. They understand that they are an annoyance and unwanted. The Penn State ecosystem needs work and revisioning. Closure of the 7 identified campuses is not the answer. It is a conclusion based on self-serving analyses rendered by individuals who lack a clear understanding of the University's mission and the relevant data. Bendapudi does not make the decision. YOU make the decision. Do not let the administration direct your voice and do not sell your souls. You can do better by Pennsylvanians, students, faculty, and staff. You can see through the subterfuge and act.

Erin Brennan

Relevant Links

<https://www.centredaily.com/news/local/education/penn-state/article300743039.html>

<https://www.psu.edu/news/administration/story/message-president-bendapudi-commonwealth-campuses>

<https://fox56.com/news/local/penn-state-wilkes-barre-students-question-campus-future-amid-closure-recommendations>

https://www.statecollege.com/articles/opinion/abandoning-our-soul-should-not-be-an-option-closing-campuses-isnt-the-only-answer-to-meeting-penn-states-challenges/?fbclid=IwY2xjawKZh6dleHRuA2FlbQlMQBicmlkETFTM0prWG1uM2lSVnMxWHVvYAR7k_4rwu4zGotXbYklk8e--Lta590deCMbsSw6HqJlvD-FnnK8FWEDk2xX8lg_aem_6rA2N_By2LVS_VygdQV1Kw

Fiona Carter: Community member

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I would urge the Board to strongly consider the impact that the Commonwealth Campuses have on their communities. Indeed, I have several siblings who received their education from Commonwealth Campuses and can vouch for the quality of their education and the value that those specific campuses had to them. However, I work in Scottdale, PA and interact with many in the Fayette County community. The impact that the Penn State Fayette campus has had on those in that community, especially those who might not have otherwise been able to attend university or even know anyone who had attended, has been immense. The Commonwealth Campuses allow those in rural or perhaps underserved communities to receive quality educations. This impact should not be understated.

Respectfully, Fiona Carter

Laura Shoaf: Legacy, alumni, parent of current student

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I am writing to express my support of keeping the Fayette campus open. Penn State Fayette has been a means to a college degree to Fayette County and surrounding residents for 60 years. Many of these alumni would not otherwise have access to that level of education. This local campus gives the people of Southwestern Pennsylvania the ability to afford an education by being able to remain living at home and maintain a job while working toward their degree. The Fayette campus has also been a benefit to Penn State as a whole. Penn State has received millions of dollars from the philanthropic efforts of the Eberly family through their desire to support and improve their community, Fayette County. Additionally, the Fayette Campus has been a top contributor to THON for years. Also, the programs available to youth at the Fayette campus are a stepping stone for youth from the area to decide to pursue an education from Penn State. Another point to consider is the infrastructure at the Fayette Campus to be able to accept students from other campuses. The buildings on campus are able to accommodate taking on students and faculty from other campuses and with over 100 acres, there is room to add additional structures that could be used for instruction or living accommodations for students from out of the area.

Brandy Burke: Staff

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

Good afternoon, members of the Board,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my voice. I come to you today with both deep concern and deep love—for this campus, for our students, and for the future we're all working so hard to build.

Penn State Fayette is more than a campus. It's a lifeline.

We serve over 400 students, and:

- More than 80% receive scholarships
- 92% rely on financial aid
- Many are first-generation college students, juggling jobs, families, and school—yet they show up every day because they believe in something better.

In 2025, 91 students graduated from this campus. That's 91 lives changed. 91 families lifted.

Our Nursing Program is a point of pride:

- 96% NCLEX pass rate (2024)
- 100% job placement

But our impact goes beyond academics. Our students grow into themselves here. They arrive unsure, sometimes struggling—and they leave confident, capable, and ready to lead.

We are also a pillar of this region:

- Our THON team has raised more than any other Commonwealth campus 17 times, including over \$100,000 in 2023
- We host national athletic events, STEM programs, summer camps, and workforce training

This campus is a home. A community. A future.

Right now, our students are scared. They chose this campus because they need to be here—in person, in a classroom, with real human connection. Many have told me they're not just afraid of losing a building—they're afraid of losing their dream. Online classes don't work for everyone. And for some, relocating simply isn't possible. If this campus closes, many won't be able to continue their education at all.

We're not asking for everything—we're asking for a chance. With thoughtful investment—like dorms and expanded programs—we can grow and welcome even more students who want a close-knit, high-quality education.

Please hold off on closing campuses. Let's work together to find a better, more sustainable solution—one that protects access, honors success, and puts students first.

Penn State was founded to serve all citizens of the Commonwealth—especially those in rural and underserved areas. That mission lives here.

I know these students. I know their names. I've seen them cry, laugh, and walk across the stage with tears in their eyes because they made it. This campus is their safe place. Their family. Their future.

Please—don't take that away.

Thank you.

Brandy Burke

Bobby Salitrik: Alumni, Retired Instructional Designer, Fayette Campus

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

If I would start to list all the reasons that Fayette Campus should not close. . .the list would break Facebook, so I will try to be brief. I have been associated with Penn State and Penn State Fayette, in one way or another, since I started as a Freshman Fall of '66, when the campus was in downtown Uniontown and was affectionately known as Basement U. I've known Fayette Campus as a student, an alum, an employee (of 37 years), and a parent of two sons that attended both Fayette and University Park.

To close this campus would be a profound loss to the immediate community and surrounding areas. This campus provides programs and continuing education to local businesses, community outreach and research opportunities. It provides many cultural and entertainment events free to the community. It houses a collection (open to the public) of local coal mining photo,

documents, and artifacts and voice recordings that holds a part of Western Pennsylvania's heritage. This Campus employs many people: top quality Instructors and Professors and an equally qualified support staff.

But first and foremost, it is the impact on the student that is most important. The closure of Penn State Fayette would deny area students of an education from a top university without the cost of having to relocate. Many of Fayette's students don't have the ability or the desire of moving away for four years.

Note: Penn State Fayette offers 9 baccalaureate degrees (all 4 years here), 5 associate degrees and students can enroll in almost all of Penn State's degree programs as part of the 2+2 plan. There are eight sports teams in the PSUAC and USCAA and over 15 clubs and student groups. Penn State Fayette STUDENTS have continually led the Commonwealth Campuses in raising money for pediatric cancer during THON. Their total over the years is nearly \$2,000,000.

Please, we can't afford to lose Fayette!!

David Carter: Parent

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I have a brother, son, and three grandchildren who are Penn State graduates. The opportunity to commute made it possible to attend the New Kensington campus. That campus is a direct example of Penn State being a land grant university. Please provide the financial information to the campus leadership so they can make adjustments and changes. Give them a voice in their future so my other grandchildren can benefit too

Michael DiPietro, Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I am reading up on what the university/York is going against it.

I'm at a lost of words.

How can I adequately describe my time there any justice without the campus?

Crap.

I'm trying to process the news and my mind is blank.

I know the decision isn't final, but that doesn't mean jack.

My biggest concern is York college getting the campus.

How I loathe that thought.

Anyway...

Michael Di Pietro

Mary Carter, Former student

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I am a retired nurse who was enabled to complete my BSN by taking several classes at the local New Kensington campus. Having a campus close to home gave me the ability to work while I pursued my education. This campus alone has fostered many people in their growth and allowed us to succeed when we otherwise would have been stagnant. I ask that you will reconsider your intent to close this campus as it truly is a great benefit to us in southwest PA.

Danielle Bayletts: Staff

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I grew up in Uniontown, Pa, and began my Penn State career at Penn State Fayette, the Eberly Campus. I attended this campus at its peak enrollment period and am aware that the 2-4 year programs are facing a great decline in enrollment. I also work at University Park and in the Eberly College of Science- another of Eberly's namesakes. I'm writing to advocate for the Continuing Education department at Fayette Campus, and what a resource my home community would lose with the closure of Penn State Fayette. The Continuing Education office at Fayette is thriving. The CE office runs the only local paramedic program in the tri-county area. This is an accredited program. Under PSUFE CE office, several ambulance services and CTC/Tech schools can offer their EMR and EMT classes. If Fayette closes, the EMS services in the tri-county area will suffer. Penn State offers an affordable option for EMS training and oversight in our region. Nursing (not a part of the Continuing Ed Office) will also take a hit in our region, where we are in desperate need of nurses to care for our aging population. These programs also offer an accessible and affordable non-traditional education that helps them to provide for their families in an economically depressed area. This information was not presented in the 143-page recommendation document and I felt the need to bring it to your attention. I feel a vote to close Fayette at this time without exploring the options to serve our community would be premature. To close a program that is serving such a great need in our community feels irresponsible. I hope you will take this all into consideration. Thank you for your time.

<p>Ben Carter: Alumni Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25</p> <p>I find it shameful that as large a university we are, we don't see the value in these smaller satellites around our great state. I was fortunate enough to use new Kensington campus for 2 years, be financially responsible, and mature as a person, before finishing my degree at University Park. To be honest, I don't know if I would have graduated had I not been able to attend smaller classes and focus on my general studies. I know I struggled with this my whole time.</p> <p>Also the friendship and relationships I was able to create and maintain through the smaller campus in new Kensington became crucial to me as I went on.</p> <p>Let's think more than just dollars. Look at the local impact and seek real insight from those of us who attended these campuses.</p>
<p>Aimee Cesarino: Alumni Topic: Commonwealth Campuses, Fayette Submitted written comment 5/20/25</p> <p>I was an adult student at Penn State Fayette, which was my local campus. Growing up I only wanted to go to Penn State. There are other colleges in nearby counties and I also had applied out of state when I was younger. I did not want to leave my area and I did not want to go to anywhere but Penn State. Due to my family obligations, I would not have been able to travel out of the area to attend college. I would've given up on a college education altogether had that been the option. Have you considered making tuition more affordable so that enrollment could go up? I also am concerned deeply about the Coal and Coke Museum, where my mother and other family members made donations, thinking that they would always be available to the local public. Local history should be preserved locally.</p>
<p>Kathleen McGlynn: Tech Service Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25</p> <p>Was there any discussion about the possibility for a retirement incentive for all employees including tech service who are at retirement age so their jobs could be open and filled by the employees who are affected by the closure?</p>
<p>Alice Conner Malyszek: Alumni, Faculty Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25</p> <p>Please keep the York Campus open. As a former Executive Director of a large manufacturing firm, I have had experience with rationalization decisions aimed at increasing efficiency and improving operations. I understand they need to be done and the thought processes behind them. However, it must also be considered that directives were previously given to campuses when enrollments began to decline, which limited marketing programs that could attract students away from University Park (UP), restricted the expansion of these programs, and ensured that UP remained the focal point for steady enrollment. Now, we are facing the consequences of these decisions.</p> <p>In regions where enrollment is declining, it is challenging to justify maintaining campuses. However, the situation in York is different; the region is not experiencing decline. The primary issues can be resolved by forming alliances for local housing (similar to Harrisburg), and the development of a growth strategy aligned with needed programs and the population including underrepresented students and the non-traditional student. These issues are solvable and York warrants the opportunity.</p> <p>I have attended both Wilkes Barre and Harrisburg campuses, earning degrees in Engineering. My children have attended York Campus, Harrisburg, and University Park. My father served as the Operations Manager for Wilkes Barre in the 1980s, and my five brothers graduated from University Park, Penn Tech, Wilkes Barre, and Harrisburg campuses. I provide this background to emphasize my familiarity with all aspects of the PSU brand and experience. I recently retired as Executive Director of Operations Management of a large, global, manufacturing and engineering firm that has a core facility in the York area. We were working with the Chamber of Commerce and South-Central PA Manufacturers Association for much needed skills and talents that PSU should be providing with some forethought and strategy.</p> <p>York Campus can achieve its deserved growth.</p>
<p>Angela Jaillet-Wentling: Alumni Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25</p> <p>As an alumnus (2008, Anthropology) of Penn State University with three children I had hoped would also someday be proud Penn State alumni and a citizen of the Pennsylvania Commonwealth, I am writing in strong opposition to the proposed closure of Commonwealth campuses. I attended both the Behrend College and University Park and am exceedingly grateful for the education I received at the mid- and large-scale campuses. Having seen the impact the smaller campuses have on communities like my own, it guts me to know that Penn State would conceive of a future where Commonwealth campuses would play an even smaller role. What is Penn State without the communities supporting it in all the local ways?</p> <p>At a time where Americans are looking to institutes of higher education to forge a path aligned with ideals of equitable access to education for all citizens, it is exceedingly alarming to me that Penn State would chart a course so short-sighted as to eliminate or</p>

reduce in number its most accessible assets, the Commonwealth campuses.

Many of these campuses were acquired or absorbed into the Penn State system with great community debate for and against their inclusion into the University. Less than a century later, the current administration would seek to dissolve these campuses and their ties to the communities that support them. These campuses were started as a long-term and multi-faceted solution to answer the Commonwealth's call for its land-grant institution to foster education centered on teaching, research, and public service. The solution to long-term issues is not short-sighted reactionary responses, or is it?

The recommendation to close the seven Commonwealth Campuses precludes an honest and transparent assessment of the university's budgetary spending at large. Large-scale expenditures and development show the heavy weight that University Park places on the budget. On the other end of the budgetary spectrum, Penn State's Commonwealth Campuses and their students' tuition and other university-related expenses help support that University Park-focused investment. Why has equitable investment in Penn State's Commonwealth campuses not been a priority to the current Board of Trustees?

By almost every metric, Penn State's Commonwealth Campuses are where first-generation college attendees, economically under-represented, and racially diverse students go to obtain their Penn State degree. Their reasons for this range from accessibility, affordability, class size, flexible class times and locations, work study opportunities, faculty engagement and mentorship, and proximity to family/support systems. If University Park has not been able to provide all of these things the way that Commonwealth Campuses have in the past, what assurances and accommodations could it feasibly provide for these students in the future?

To the Board of Trustees, is it on your watch that Penn State falls from its ideals and high historic reputation? While the issues are by no means your doing, this decision lies at your feet and your mettle is being tested. "History has its eyes on you (Hamilton, Lin-Manuel Miranda)."

Do you take the easy out or strive to find the solution that best meets the mission?

John VanKirk: Friend and PSU supporter

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

A Case for Continued Investment in Penn State New Kensington

The following is based on a more detailed document shared with several Trustees. It was prepared by the PSNK Advisory Board and friends of the campus.

Recent programs and activities initiated by PSNK have been successful in slowing enrollment decline. We are confident that if these initiatives are allowed to continue, Penn State New Kensington's enrollment will increase to as many as 700 students within five years.

1) The Westmoreland County-wide demographic information used by Penn State is NOT indicative of PSNK future:

PSNK is centrally positioned at the junction of four counties (Westmoreland, Allegheny, Butler, Armstrong) with proximity to major highways. This enables PSNK to draw from a diverse population base spanning rural, suburban, and urban communities.

New Kensington's recent revitalization has attracted major businesses like Re:Build Manufacturing and TECfusions. Re:Build cited PSNK as key to its \$64 million investment in 2023, bringing 300+ jobs. Recently, TECfusions purchased the 1,395-acre former Alcoa R&D site for a data center expected to create thousands of jobs in six years. Both companies are within six miles of PSNK. Revitalization offers strong potential for enrollment growth and opportunities for alignment with high-demand industries.

2) PSNK has programs aligned with the needs of Southwestern Pennsylvania, particularly in high growth, high demand sectors like health care through the recently expanded and fully enrolled Radiological Science program, Biomedical Engineering Technology program, and Biobehavioral Health program, and technology through the Electromechanical Engineering Technology program.

3) We are confident that the following enablers of growth will increase enrollment with minimal investment. Some will require PSU and chancellor support to implement:

a) An updated N1 bus line has been approved, and is pending funding, to connect the city of New Kensington to Pittsburgh, with connector transportation specifically to PSNK. More than 30,000 people live within a quarter mile of this bus line.

b) Targeted advertising for PSNK health and technology programs, which have capacity to grow, fulfill important needs, and are not widely known. Biomedical Engineering Tech students learn to repair hospital equipment. Each year there are more jobs (7300 openings) than graduates (400), and this is the only such program at Penn State.

c) Reinforced outreach to guidance counselors, coaches, and students, particularly along the bus line.

d) Targeted recruitment of local students denied direct admission to University Park, with outreach about the many opportunities at PSNK, including athletics, internships, and undergraduate research spanning subjects from clinical biology to marketing.

e) Private partner housing nearby is at capacity. Additional privately owned student housing was moving forward before the potential closure was announced. Completion of this housing will allow PSNK to enroll more students.

f) Establish a College in High School program with local high schools.

g) While the PSNK Digital Foundry is expected to remain, the strong ties to PSNK will be broken and very difficult to reestablish with other Penn State campuses which do not currently offer Electromechanical Engineering Technology.

Phil Cordell: Staff

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

Hello Board of Trustees. I would like to point out inaccurate information included in Mont Alto campus recommendation. It states that our 40% occupancy in housing raises the percentage per student cost for the university. This is not correct. Housing and Food Services is self sustaining and occupancy numbers only affect HFS \$\$ not university \$. Lets compare MA to Greater Allegheny who is listed at a 60% occupancy. GA only has 1 res hall and can only house 210 students. MA has 2 res halls and can house 305 students. So while the % looks higher at GA, MA actually has more residents even with the lower % which is actually bringing in more revenue to our department and creating a stronger on campus experience for our students. With the second res hall, MA also has a greater opportunity for on campus growth. I implore you to please postpone a vote or vote no to at least offer more time to look at correct and accurate information. As I read the recommendations, Mont Alto checked positive boxes for continued investment but some information was spun in an inaccurate negative manner. Mont Alto is a campus rich with PSU history. Please don't mistakenly erase that. Thank you for listening
Phil

JoAnn Jankowski: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I hope this message finds each one of you doing well.

I write to you today with deep concern and urgency. I respectfully and strongly urge each of you to hit pause on the recommendation from President Bendapudi regarding the proposed closure of select Commonwealth Campuses. As a long-standing faculty member, I fully recognize that higher education is evolving and that Penn State must adapt, but closing campuses is not the answer.

Two years ago, Vice President DelliCarpini charged us with an intensive and collaborative process known as Future State, with a clear focus on regionalization. We were asked to build upon the strengths of our campuses, creating shared programs while working with our community partners to identify workforce needs. We devoted significant time, energy, and care to this effort. Yet now, without consultation or collaboration, the University has taken a drastic and unilateral pivot announcing to the media a plan to close campuses, blindsiding those of us who live and work in these communities, more importantly our students!

This move not only dismisses the foundational work we have already done, but also undermines our mission as a land-grant institution. Each campus, no matter its size or location, plays a vital role in workforce development, educational access, and regional economic health. Investing in these campuses, not closing them is the path forward if we are truly committed to equity, service, and the public good.

I urge the Board to table this decision. Engage with the people who know these campuses best our chancellors, faculty, staff, students, and local community members. Much of the 143-page document submitted to the Board includes misleading or incomplete information. Those who authored it have never even stepped foot on our Fayette campus or spent any time in our community.

Please hear our voices! Don't rely solely on data and decisions made from a distance. We are here, ready to collaborate in finding thoughtful, long-term solutions that reflect Penn State's core values and enduring promise to serve all of Pennsylvania. We are more than just numbers, we are more than a head count. WE ARE ESSENTIAL!!

Benjamin Szish: Student

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

As a student, I view Penn State New Kensington and the other branch campuses as very important to giving students an incentive to choose Penn State over another university due to the quality education and accessibility. There are most likely a large number of potential students who would not be able to pursue an education if they could not attend classes at these branch campuses, as traveling long distances may be too discouraging economically and for personal reasons. The removal of these branch campuses, despite some number of students being filtered to the larger campuses, will undeniably result in a reasonably high number of students choosing other universities that are closer than the distant Penn State campuses or being unable to attend higher-education classes altogether. Many students rely on these branch campuses to give them an affordable start to their Penn State endeavors, as the branch campuses have proven to be a crucial stepping stone for students who may not be able to afford living away from home for their entire educational program. By keeping the branch campuses in operation, Penn State is allowing for students to have the option of exploring different majors based on each campuses' respective course selection with minimal commuting, giving them the opportunity to select a career path from the comfort of their general home location.

Ginett Pineda: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

Please do not close the Fayette campus, the youth that lives here truly needs it. Many of the students that get out of highschool in this area have not even dream about getting into college. Fayette is the chance these youth have to break the circle of poverty.

Please don't take that away from them. They won't be driving to other colleges far away, many of them already struggle with money for gas. Fayette needs this campus!
Melissa Miner: Faculty, Alumni, Parent of 3 graduates Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25
<p>Dear Members of the Board of Trustees,</p> <p>I am writing to express my full and unwavering support for the nursing program at Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus, and to urge you to sustain this essential program for our region.</p> <p>As someone who has seen firsthand the transformative power of this program, whether through the lives of graduates, the strength it brings to our local healthcare system, or the opportunities it provides for students who would otherwise be unable to pursue a nursing degree, its presence is not only beneficial but necessary.</p> <p>Since 1993, this program (Associate of Science until 2015 and currently Bachelor of Science) has educated nearly 1,000 nursing professionals who now serve across a wide spectrum of healthcare settings, from emergency departments and operating rooms to hospice care and advanced practice roles. These graduates are not just numbers, they are vital caregivers in our community, and they often remain in the region, providing high-quality care where it is desperately needed (100% job placement every year). Penn State Fayette stands out as the only four-year BSN program in Fayette County, offering a vital pipeline of trained nurses during a time of national nursing shortages. The closest Penn State Campus alternatives—Altoona and Behrend—are hours (2.5 and 4) away and impractical for many local students and nursing faculty, especially those with financial or caregiving obligations. To remove this program would be to close the door to countless aspiring nurses who rely on access, affordability, and proximity. Moreover, the campus has built strong partnerships with five major healthcare systems and ten hospitals, making it a robust clinical training ground. Its potential to serve as a clinical hub for other Penn State campuses is significant and forward-thinking. Eliminating this program would not only diminish the academic strength of Penn State Fayette but also deal a severe blow to healthcare access and quality in our region. I strongly urge you to continue your support of the nursing program and recognize the vital role it plays in serving both students and the broader community.</p> <p>Thank you for your time, attention, and dedication to the future of nursing education.</p> <p>Sincerely, Dr. Melissa Miner, DNP, RN, CNE Director for Undergraduate Nursing Education at Penn State Fayette & Teaching Professor</p>
Tracy Blunt: Alumni, Former employee, parent of graduate Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25
<p>PSU has a responsibility to the citizens of PA, especially those in rural areas for whom access to higher education is regionally restricted. The commonwealth campuses are critical to ensuring that PSU continues its goodwill, outreach, and exceptional reputation throughout the state. In many cases, these campuses are central to the economic and cultural centers of these rural regions. Many students cannot afford to attend main campus for 4 years or more because of the additional costs of housing and food. Rather than expecting each campus to show a profit, consider the cost of operating these campuses as an investment in PA and ensuring students and families continue to say “We are Penn State” with pride. Be kind, do the right thing, invest in PA and students across the state through the continued funding of all Campuses.</p>
Rebekah Harris: Family of alumni Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25
<p>The PSNK campus has been instrumental in 2 nieces and 1 nephew of mine. The ability to live at home and commute to campus—where they ALL received excellent education—is so crucial to their success. The cost of an education is so high. Campuses like New Ken make it affordable for students. All have graduated and secured full-time work or grad school. The fortune to graduate college with little to no debt is another huge benefit. I hope you will reconsider your plans to close this campus. My family is just 1 of many examples of families that have benefitted greatly from Penn State's branch campuses.</p>
Gail Matus: Concerned resident of Pennsylvania Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25
Please keep this campus open.
Annette DeNardo: Community member Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25
<p>I write this with urgency and great concern. I am a lifelong resident of Fayette County and realize the important cornerstone role the Fayette (Eberly) Campus plays in the existence of this county. Although I didn't attend the campus (there was no teaching degree program at the time), I served as a part-time instructor in the 80s. Without the Fayette campus, many Fayette County residents would not hold the academic degrees they do hold. The poverty level in the county would have further deteriorated due</p>

to that. By closing the campus, you are denying future generations the advantages of an academic degree--a sad state of affairs for a rural county. Please hear my voice; I speak for many who will not contact you. There MUST be options other than closing these campuses. The citizens of rural counties are counting on you to protect their educational futures.

Mary Ritchey, Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

To the Board of Trustees for Penn State University

Please consider the following in response to the proposed closure of the York campus.

I am advocating for all campuses and I am sure many individuals have explained all the tremendous benefits of branch campuses. However, I would like to address the report for the York campus as I believe it is not honest in its assessment, particularly of the closeness of Harrisburg and the “no room for growth”.

1. Harrisburg is NOT close for most of our students. The report indicates it is 15 miles straight line, but I can assure you, if you have every traveled it, it is not a straight line. There are major highways with lots of traffic. Many of our students come from the southern end of the county and northern Maryland. Harrisburg is not commutable for these students. The programs at Harrisburg were deemed more diverse, but a lot of the opportunities are not. Just a couple examples - students doing research with their professors at York would not have the same research opportunities at a larger campus and the York baseball player would not make the team at Harrisburg – these things matter to the students!
2. The report states there is no room for growth. There are numerous apartments in the area that routinely house our students who opt not to commute. But more importantly, the large decline in enrollment is mentioned as a rationale for closure. But doesn't that indicate that we do actually have a large potential for growth. We were at one time much larger so why do we now not “have room” for that same growth?
3. World campus does not offer the same programs as York.
4. York is bigger than 4 out of the 5 campuses that are staying open and the largest one slated for closure.
5. York is in a growing area with the best 6-year graduation rate of all 12 campuses evaluated, and it is considerably less expensive to operate, even less than those that are staying open.
6. The closing of campuses in general is billed to increase the sustainability of Penn State University, but we are setting ourselves up for the opposite to occur. Demographics indicate a declining population of graduating high school students. The institutions that thrive in this new era will be universities that adjust their enrollment strategies beyond this age group. It appears Penn State's strategy is to target the 18-year-old students who want to live in a dorm. This is not a sustainable strategy. The commuter campuses open the doors to attract other students, the students that Penn State will ultimately need for continued growth. The decision to close branch campuses is devastating to many communities. But the proposed closure of the York branch specifically appears not based on facts; the report does not accurately address the realities of the York campus and its location.

Jason Apel: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

Dear Board of Trustees,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the President's recommendation to close the Penn State Fayette campus. As a proud graduate of the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program at Penn State Fayette, I want to share my personal experience and highlight the critical role this campus plays in our community.

Due to my financial situation, I needed to be able to earn an education while working a job to support myself and my wife. The Fayette campus provided me with the opportunity to pursue higher education without the burden of on-campus living or relocation costs. This accessibility was crucial for me and many other students in similar situations.

The Fayette campus offered a well-rounded experience with quality student activities and services. The support I received from the faculty and staff was exceptional. I was always taught by experienced professors, not teaching assistants, which ensured that I received a high-quality education. The personalized attention and mentorship from my professors were invaluable in shaping my career.

Most importantly, I am now employed as a physical therapist assistant in Westmoreland County. I provide essential services to patients of all ages. The presence of the PTA and nursing programs at Fayette is vital for addressing the healthcare needs of our rural community. If these programs were to close or relocate, it would exacerbate the healthcare provider shortage crisis we are currently facing.

The President's Future State report suggests that the programmatic offerings at Fayette are replicable at nearby campuses or online through Penn State World Campus. However, this statement overlooks the unique challenges and needs of our community. The nursing and PTA programs at Fayette require collaborations with local healthcare providers, which cannot be easily replicated elsewhere. Pittsburgh area hospitals and clinics are already saturated with students from other programs, making it impractical to relocate our students.

Graduates of Penn State Fayette fill critical gaps in the local and state workforce, enhancing both local industries and the economy. Notably, thirty percent more Fayette graduates, compared to University Park, remain working in Pennsylvania after graduation.

In summary, the closure of the Penn State Fayette campus would have devastating effects on our community. It would limit access to quality education for students with financial constraints, reduce the availability of healthcare providers, and undermine the mission of Penn State to serve all Pennsylvanians, including those in rural areas. I urge you to reconsider the recommendation and explore alternative solutions that support the continued operation and growth of the Fayette campus.

Sincerely,

Jason A. Apel

Physical Therapist Assistant

Penn State Fayette Graduate

Andrea Adolph: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

Along with many Penn State students, faculty, and staff, I have been submitting comments to the Board of Trustees for over a year in order to champion the value of the Commonwealth campuses to the University. Since February of 2024, we have shared with you much more accurate data than what you will find in the proposal that you will come together on May 22 to vote on, data that shows much more robust activity at smaller campuses than do the numbers that have been cherry-picked in order to sell you an incredibly unpopular plan. We have shared with you stories of students who have flourished in a small-campus environment, the type of student for whom campus closures will mean that a Penn State education is out of reach. And we have shared with you the highlights of what our campuses contribute to our local communities.

Rather than find ways to expand, extend, and include, however, President Bendapudi's administration has from the beginning had their eyes set on contracting and eliminating, on shutting the door firmly in the faces of those students who may be place-bound or may be from low-income families, but who nonetheless deserve an opportunity to attend Pennsylvania's land-grant institution. These actions on the whole create a more elitist University that, instead of making lives better for those who can most benefit, will only continue to reify the status quo.

One argument to close campuses is rooted in the notion that we cannot continue with "business as usual," but what apparently is meant by that sentiment is that the administration wish to do away with operating in ways that would continue to benefit the disenfranchised. They instead are attempting to shift the benefits of a Penn State degree increasingly to those who ARE the sociopolitical status quo. That is a gross misuse of power in the face of true public need, and it is an abuse that is within your own power, as Trustees, to put a stop to.

Will you see this? Read it? Have our hundreds of previous comments been read, internalized, understood? This is the only way that the public can weigh in on Board matters, and I can only hope that our comments are heard and validated. On even the smallest campuses, we continue to strive to meet the needs of our students, even as our livelihoods are threatened and our students' futures disrupted. We do this work because of the students and communities whom we serve. We hope that you see that these students across the Commonwealth are also yours to serve and to uplift. We hope that you, as a body, can see these students as part of your mandate.

We ask that you reject the proposal and that you instead vote to invest time and true collaboration in a path forward that embraces the Penn State values of respect, responsibility, integrity, and community in order to open welcoming doors to those seeking discovery and excellence.

Arlene Hall, Retired DAA/Interim Chancellor

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I am writing to share my thoughts regarding the pending closure of Commonwealth Campuses, particularly New Kensington and Fayette. Please consider the impact of these closures on three important factors, which are less tangible than data points but clearly a path to future growth and vitality of the most vulnerable regions of the Commonwealth. First and foremost is the opportunity for students to get an accessible and affordable Penn State education fulfilling one of the fundamental tenants of a land grant University. Closing the doors to opportunity has never been and never will be a solution that fosters potential growth and development for people and/or geographic regions. Rebuilding the demographics of the Commonwealth will take a lot of work and resources.....students who want to stay in their home area to work and raise families are an important resource of the future. Secondly, the economic and cultural contributions of the CC to their communities are helping to revitalize regions that have been hardest hit by factors such as closure of major industries, migration of skilled workers, and the so-called brain drain of youthful generations. PSNK is at the forefront of efforts to work in collaborative ways with community and business leaders to address the needs and help mitigate these factors i.e. "Digital Foundry and The Corner" are having a positive impact on the revitalization of the city of New Kensington. PSNK also has unique academic programs that can maintain a skilled workforce e.g. EMET, Radiological Science, Biomedical Engineering Technology. The campuses in each region can be leveraged to provide growth and sustainability with the appropriate academic programs. Last, although more difficult to measure requires us to think of the campuses as lights or illuminating places that shine to mark a path forward and a way out of difficult times. Extinguishing a light that is providing hope and contributing to perhaps small but incremental steps to a brighter future seems to be a good investment. The alternative leaves a void and offers little chance of turning the light back on. The University is a wealthy institution that has millions of alumni and supporters who may have had their start at a CC finding ways to keep the lights on may

include efforts to reach out and seek information and resources from this valuable asset. Surely the resources of this great University can find solutions that will help build the declining regions of our Commonwealth rather than contribute to the decline. I also have some concern regarding the enrollment data and how the viability of the southwestern campuses was determined. Upfront transparency and stakeholder participation is also of a concern. Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts.

Elaine Barry: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

Restructuring of the campuses began over a year ago and talks of closure have occurred for less than 4 months. There has not been enough time to determine whether restructuring would help before jumping to the "solution" of closures. Given the millions the campuses contribute to Pennsylvania's economy, especially in counties with a campus, and given that the "losses" the campuses incur is less than half of a percent of the University's expenditures, a pause must be put on the closure timeline in order to sincerely explore the campus restructuring plans. What cost savings will there be when empty campuses will still have maintenance and other costs? These costs must be made public to know what the "savings" truly is for campus closures. If not for savings, why else would it make sense to cut off millions in benefit to Pennsylvania from the campuses?

Karen Herrmann: Parent of Alumni/Faculty-donor

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

Closing Mont Alto Campus would be a tremendous loss to the community for more reasons than loss to the local students. The community would miss out on the in person and virtual public lectures, night sky viewing at remarkably dark location, daytime solar viewing, concerts including an annual festival involving local schools, in person and virtual planetarium shows for the public and participation in community celebrations offered by Penn State Mont Alto. The Woodsmen team demonstrations (ax throwing, poll climbing, and various sawing and chopping competitions etc.) are outstanding. A request for sign language interpretation for a recent virtual planetarium show was arranged and shared with viewers in Idaho. The recording continues to serve an underserved audience. A library of recorded lectures and planetarium shows remains available. None of this addresses the irreplaceable arboretum containing the 4 tallest trees of their species in Pennsylvania as well as the history of the campus. Please retain Mont Alto.

Michael Romeo: Staff, Alumni, Community member

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I am writing as an alumnus, a staff member, and a lifelong supporter of Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus. My journey with Penn State began at Fayette through the 2+2 plan, continued with a B.A. at University Park, and culminated in an M.B.A. from Penn State Behrend. I've experienced the breadth of this institution, and I remain deeply grateful for the access and opportunity it provided, beginning with the Fayette campus.

It is disheartening that we have reached a point where the future of Fayette and other campuses is in jeopardy. The very place that launched my Penn State journey is now under threat, and I cannot express how deeply that affects me, not only personally but on behalf of the students, faculty, and community I now serve as a staff member.

As a former student, I benefited from dedicated faculty who provided not just an outstanding education but mentorship that shaped my life. I can name multiple individuals from Fayette who had a profound impact on me. I cannot say the same of my experience at a larger campus. My success at Penn State would not have been possible without first starting at Fayette.

Now, as a staff member, I see daily how Fayette changes lives. We offer students a local, affordable pathway to one of the world's leading universities, without sacrificing quality. Every student who walks through our doors is a worthy investment. Closing our campus will create ripple effects not only for students but also for families, businesses, and an entire region striving for progress.

Fayette is the only four-year institution in the county. We offer the only four-year Nursing program in the southwest region, a program with a 100% job placement rate. We also have one of the largest endowments among the Commonwealth Campuses. Our campus is an anchor in the region, providing education, economic development, and inspiration for generations. Its value cannot be measured by numbers alone.

Fayette County is working hard to overcome economic challenges, and Penn State Fayette is central to that progress. Local businesses depend on our graduates. Our students depend on the opportunity. This campus represents hope and transformation for future generations.

I do not envy the difficult position you are in, but your vote carries tremendous weight. Please do not let short-term assessments outweigh nearly 60 years of proven impact. I urge you to invest in the communities that have supported you since 1965.

Penn State Fayette is worth saving.

Dr. Christopher Meyer: Parent of accepted student 2025

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

As a medical provider having a university in our backyard producing top notch nursing student is critical. Penn State Fayette produces this and its absence would leave lasting voids to our Healthcare system. Penn State nurses are second to none. My daughter is so excited to attend Fayette and be close to home and hopefully gain employment in the hospitals in our county. We

are holding out hope that Fayette will remain open to obtain her BSN degree as well as a plan for years to come. I would hope that every effort to keep Fayette open has been explored before closing a vital institution that has been here since the 1960's.
Ashley Stoots: Faculty Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25
<p>Penn State Fayette is such a great asset to our community. Please consider keeping it open because it's the only campus in the county that offers Bachelor's degrees. I am so grateful I had the chance to earn a quality degree while maintaining a family and working.</p> <p>I hope the next generation has the same opportunity.</p>
Courtney Cole: Faculty Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25
<p>Lack of input from Penn State faculty at affected commonwealth campuses on campus closures has been frustrating for my colleagues and I. Our first-year students will be feeling the worst effects of this two-year rollout plan, as they will not be able to finish their 4-year degree at their campus where they were promised a 4-year program. The New Kensington campus in particular will no longer be able to share a partnership with the Digital Foundry if it is closed. Many of the initiatives to improve the New Kensington campus were rather new and still needed more time to flourish, which is why this announcement is so devastating. There has been nothing on how programs will be moved to other campuses, if they even will be at all.</p>
Stacy Sekely: Faculty Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25
<p>Dear Board of Trustees,</p> <p>I strongly urge you to vote against the President's recommendation to close seven Commonwealth campuses. It is imperative that all other viable options are thoroughly explored and decisions are made based on transparent and comprehensive data. Furthermore, I have significant concerns regarding the Future State Recommendation Commonwealth Campus Ecosystem report and will provide examples related to the Fayette campus, as I am most familiar with it. However, I believe similar issues may exist with other campuses. The report cites a Fayette County degree attainment rate of just 31.1% and regional economic distress as primary factors for recommending closure. In my view, these are reasons to maintain and expand our presence in Fayette County, fulfilling Penn State's land grant mission of providing access to quality education and serving the people of the state, rather than abandoning rural Pennsylvania.</p> <p>The report states: "Even with focused marketing and programmatic changes, Penn State Fayette has not been able to reverse or stabilize this trend." Since my tenure at Penn State, campuses have received minimal resources for marketing. The Penn State webpages and admissions procedures have predominantly favored University Park. Although the University has implemented some positive changes to promote the smaller campuses, we have not yet completed a single recruitment cycle with the new regional model or more regionalized marketing efforts. Additionally, we have been operating with insufficient budgets, faculty, and staff, including a 50% reduction in enrollment management staff.</p> <p>The report claims that "Penn State Fayette's programmatic offerings are largely replicable at nearby campuses or online through Penn State World Campus." This statement is inaccurate. The report fails to mention our largest degree program, the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), which is the only BSN program in Fayette County. BSN programs require collaborations with local hospitals, and healthcare facilities closer to the Pittsburgh area are already saturated with students from other nursing programs. Graduates of Penn State Fayette fill critical gaps in the local and state workforce, enhancing both local industries (healthcare, social services, technology) and the economy. Notably, thirty percent more Fayette graduates, compared to University Park, remain working in Pennsylvania after graduation. By 2027, it is estimated that up to 900,000 nurses will leave the workforce. Pennsylvania is expected to be among the most impacted states, with a projected shortage of 20,000 nurses and 278,000 nursing support professionals by 2026. Likewise the shortage of physical therapists and assistants is causing longer hospital stays due to preventable complications and depriving people of a non-pharmaceutical way to manage pain – especially critical in our area which faces an addiction crisis. Closure of the nursing and PTA programs will exacerbate the current crisis in rural healthcare</p> <p>In summary, the report's recommendations do not prioritize the people of PA that we serve.</p>
Sara Romeo: Community member Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/20/25
<p>I am writing not only as a concerned resident of Fayette County, but also as a concerned wife and sister of staff members of Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus. I have been a high school mathematics teacher in the Fayette service area for fifteen years, and I see firsthand the positive effects this campus and its devoted employees have on my community and students. I fear that closing this campus would bring devastating and lasting effects to our community.</p> <p>Penn State Fayette has been a staple of our community for decades. Each year, I have students who are excited to begin their journey at Penn State Fayette. This campus provides an opportunity and education for these students that they wouldn't have</p>

otherwise, and is a perfect fit for many in our area. As a result, these students become well-trained and can fill essential jobs in our community. I am always confident that my students will be successful at Penn State Fayette because I know how caring and passionate the faculty and staff are. Penn State Fayette provides individualized attention that is conducive to helping the students adapt from high school to college. As an educator, I am well aware of the trends in higher education and how it is changing. I urge you to invest in campuses like Penn State Fayette, so that they are a viable option for my students and others like them.

I strongly believe the opportunities of this campus outweigh any potential reasons for it to close. Given the chance and the support, this campus could flourish. I hope that you vote no to campus closures and vote yes to supporting Penn State Fayette and my community.

Sr. Barbara Jean Mihalchick: Former student

Topic: BOT Vote

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

Please avoid voting to close seven campuses in one group vote. I only know the Fayette Campus and it shows me the value of small campuses which reach the people who really need and benefit from them. It was the first place I took college classes! Fayette Campus programs have formed many of the professionals in our area. We continue to need this kind of development for the future. Is this not why Penn State exists in multiple places? I pray that you will find another creative solution to the financial pressures that you claim as the reason for such a vote. Please do not fail the students and faculty who have trusted you. Thank you for reconsidering this. Make Penn State great again for all the students and for those they will influence!

Kevin Maxwell: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

As someone who has proudly taught at one of Penn State's commonwealth campuses for 26 years, I am deeply opposed to the proposal before the Board of Trustees to close seven of these vital institutions.

While I could speak at length about the incredible faculty and staff whose lives and careers are anchored here, my greatest concern is for our students and the communities we serve. Our students are not the kind who can simply uproot their lives and move to another campus. Many are balancing academics with jobs, families, and deep local commitments. When they chose to attend our campus, we made them a promise—a promise of access, support, and a path to a Penn State degree within reach. Closing our campus breaks that promise.

This decision would not just displace current students; it would also cut off future students from opportunities that may never come again. For many in our region, this campus is the only accessible doorway to higher education. To close it is to close that door on their dreams.

I urge the Board to reconsider and to stand by the communities and students that make Penn State strong.

Kevin Maxwell

Penn State Fayette

Associate Teaching Professor of Mathematics

Cheri Grubbs: Former Student Aid Coordinator – Fayette

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

To the Board of Trustees,

I am a resident of Fayette County, a Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus graduate, and the former Student Aid Coordinator at Penn State Fayette.

I am the embodiment of what Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus means to the residents of Fayette county. I grew up with the view of the Eberly Building from our farm and I knew I wanted to graduate from that campus. You see, this campus inspired me to strive further as it does to our students. It gave a first generation, non-traditional student a chance for a college education. And when I was given the opportunity to give back as an employee of that campus, I could not have been more grateful.

As the former Student Aid Coordinator, I saw the difference that a college education means to Fayette County. I was entrusted as the steward of those generous donor endowments for that specific campus and was able to make a difference in so many students' lives in this area. Fayette County is heavily populated with Pell Eligible students, many of whom qualified for those endowments. Due to the affordability of the Commonwealth Campus, we are able to provide the same Penn State University education with a smaller faculty to student ratio.

It is extremely disturbing to see the articles written about how our campus is "underutilized" and "limited demand for in-person education at this location." These statements are telling me that you have not spent any time at the Fayette campus. Our faculty and staff go above and beyond to encourage students to make a difference in the world. Fayette is known as the "campus that feeds their students out of their backpacks." Our students are location bound, economically challenged, and food insecure. This campus offers a safe haven for many issues that University Park chooses to ignore. Our faculty and staff treat each student with respect, compassion, and empathy. Aren't these part of the the Penn State Values?

Fayette County fought hard to secure this campus. We are the hub for culture, diversity, and HOPE in Fayette county. The intangibles that the Fayette Campus gives to our students cannot be measured by President Bendapudi's mission to offer a "more

robust" experience at University Park. Not every student thrives in that atmosphere. Fayette, The Eberly Campus offers change. Change for our students' futures and the world. If you close this campus, what message are you sending to the citizens of the Commonwealth? To Fayette County? Is this the mission of a Land Grant university?

It is my hope that you reconsider closing Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus. Not everything is about the bottom line financially. Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus changes the world one student at a time.

WE ARE Fayette, The Eberly Campus.

Karen Prettyman: Staff

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I implore the Board to halt this hasty and drastic decision that will affect thousands of Penn Staters and their communities. In particular, the Board needs to protect the students involved. They enrolled at Penn State with trust and faith and the university must fully consider how to honor its responsibilities toward these students. As someone who works directly with students, scheduling classes and advising, I can assure you that no such careful consideration has yet occurred.

To give just one example, the university must give first-year students the opportunity to complete their degrees at their home campus. The current plan does not consider students in the first year of a 4-year campus degree program (such as Fayette's Bachelor of Nursing degree) who are not in 2+2 programs and cannot go to another campus.

Indeed, the report fails to mention that Fayette campus offers highly successful and accredited 4-year Nursing and Electro-Mechanical Engineering Technology programs, with well-equipped facilities in the Bio Medical building and Engineering Suite to deliver these programs. Graduates of these programs are sought after for high-paying jobs in the county.

More generally, no realistic plans have been made for students pursuing campus degrees (non 2+2 students). Most of the students at Fayette have to work to pay for their education, and often to help support their families. Many of them are parents and/or caretakers of their own parents or grandparents. They don't have extra time or financial resources to travel to another campus which may look close on the map as the crow flies but is not feasible in terms of actual commute time and costs.

The students at Fayette are largely first generation and Pell-eligible. These are students who desperately need access to education to break the cycle of poverty. These students need personal assistance with completing applications, filling out FAFSA, and accessing resources for academic success. The faculty and staff at our campus readily provide this individual level of support every day.

I truly wish you could have attended Fayette's Commencement last week. More than 100 students earned degrees at Fayette this academic year. The pride of their families and our community was evident by the more than 1,000 people in attendance at commencement. We are a small campus but our students are determined and motivated, and our community is supportive and appreciative of this wonderful educational opportunity.

Please consider that Fayette County is the third poorest county in PA. Penn State Fayette, the Eberly Campus, is the only 4-year educational institution in the county. We should be supporting Fayette County students and providing them the opportunity to get an education that will improve their earning potential for the rest of their lives. Penn State needs to offer opportunities to Pennsylvania students in rural and less affluent areas, who need and deserve access to education but have fewer options than their wealthier peers.

Joie Marhefka: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I was disheartened to learn that the "Future State Recommendation" cites program overlap with nearby campuses and the Penn State World Campus as justification for potentially closing Penn State New Kensington (PSNK). This reasoning overlooks the fact, in reality, many of these overlapping programs are shared programs, and that PSNK is also home to distinctive programs not available elsewhere in the region - most notably Radiological Sciences and Biomedical Engineering Technology (BET).

PSNK's BET associate degree program is a rare and vital asset to both the local community and the healthcare industry. It is one of only four ABET-accredited BET programs in the entire country and the only one in the greater Pittsburgh area. It is one of only four programs in Pennsylvania offering a degree in this field (including those that are not accredited), and it is the only such program in the greater Pittsburgh area. Most BET graduates remain in the region after graduation, with nearly every hospital in the Pittsburgh area employing PSNK alumni in their clinical engineering departments. The value of this program to local hospitals is undeniable. In fact, demand from local employers is so high that we have more employers seeking our graduates than we have students to place. BET graduates are responsible for maintaining, troubleshooting, and repairing critical medical equipment such as IV pumps, ventilators, and x-ray machines - devices that healthcare providers rely on daily to deliver safe and effective patient care.

Nationwide, the need for biomedical equipment technicians continues to grow, with 7,300 new positions opening each year and a total of 67,000 jobs across the country (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). PSNK is helping meet this demand, maintaining a 100% job placement rate for BET graduates over the past decade. These outcomes demonstrate the program's quality and its direct alignment with real-world workforce needs.

Beyond technical training, the program advances educational access by serving a diverse student population, including first-generation college students, adults returning to school, and veterans. Closing PSNK would eliminate a critical pathway to stable,

well-paying careers for these students, while also straining the regional healthcare system's ability to find qualified professionals. Keeping PSNK open means preserving a unique, high-impact program that supports local industry, strengthens the healthcare system, and expands educational opportunity. Therefore, I urge the Board of Trustees to reject this "Future State Recommendation" and allow time for a thorough exploration of alternatives to campus closures.

Staci Grimes '99a, '18: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

I achieved two degrees and a minor at Penn State Mont Alto. I was an employee of the campus for nearly two decades. The place feels like home to me, and I have friends among the current students and employees there. Currently, I'm the President of the Mont Alto Alumni Society Board of Directors.

The recommendation to close campuses raises several concerns for me around data collection and reporting, and it appears that Mont Alto has been misrepresented in the subsequent analysis.

When evaluating other academic institutions within straight-line distances, how many of those provide similar programming? In a higher ed landscape where graduating high schoolers are increasingly skeptical about the ROI on a 4-year degree, institutions with established vocational degrees may be able to capture market preference for some demographics. Through this lens, Mont Alto's strengths are much more obvious in comparison to local and regional peers.

Within the past decade at Mont Alto, both the Admissions Office and Strategic Communications have suffered from diminished staffing levels and funding. Without adequate teams to contribute in these spaces, how could the campus possibly hope to attract and recruit enough students to move the needle around net tuition revenue? I have been present for campus Advisory Board meetings when concerns about these problems arose – and were made to sound inconsequential. Enrollment data for the campus have been biased by this problem.

Why have alumni not played a greater role in this process? Some of the degrees Mont Alto offers closely align with local and regional sectors, opening both experiential learning opportunities for students and pathways to careers following graduation.

Alumni bring a wealth of knowledge like this to the table, in addition to the heartwarming stories they could tell about how the University changed their lives through the campus.

To that end, this quote from the recommendations "The forestry program, a distinctive offering at Penn State Mont Alto, can and must persist by relocating to another campus." is problematic. The forestry program is distinctive BECAUSE it's offered at Penn State Mont Alto. The program and its graduates would never be able to claim the same prestige or pedigree at a different location. This is one of my own degrees.

Since March, we've gathered more than 2,700 signatures from individuals who wish to see Mont Alto endorsed by Penn State for continued business. We have had no access to official channels or listservs to promote this link -- what support we've collected has been an organic, grassroots effort. It is notable to me (I work in marketing and focus on engagement) that the comments are overwhelmingly supportive, positive, and hopeful.

Many Pennsylvanian's Penn State identities are linked tightly to the campus where they studied. I would invite you to hear from Mont Alto Penn Staters by visiting the petition: <https://chnng.it/bYJ7HdLwbp> There, you can read comments, view video comments, and see on a map where the primary petition signers are located.

Please take enough time to consider this decision carefully.

Anne Vardo-Zalik: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

Dear Board of Trustees- The submitted proposal has been hastily put together to sell the narrative that it would be 'easy' and 'efficient' to close campuses across the commonwealth; more importantly, that this is the only feasible solution for a sustainable Penn State. Considering the gravity of the topic, the proposal is short, flawed, and vague. You are being asked to CLOSE campuses because this will save the university money. Where is the evidence of this (aside from a single budget line item)? In order to objectively vote on this proposal, there should be a defined PLAN in place that addresses all of the following: (1) How much money will the university save each year by closing these campuses (taking into account the cost of doing so)? (2) How will that money be used (specifically)? (3) Where will students complete their degree? (4) How many students will the university lose by closing 7 campuses? (5) How will faculty/staff relocation occur, considering rank and ability/inability to relocate? NONE of these have been addressed in detail. Don't assume that students can move from one campus to another (even campuses 'close' to each other). Don't assume faculty and staff can relocate after spending decades in the area, serving our community and establishing roots. Don't assume that closing campuses will save money in the long run. How can you vote on a proposal without having a clear picture as to how the plan will be implemented? Shouldn't this be a vital part of the discussions regarding whether or not closures are feasible?

Closing campuses is not the only solution here. The regionalization project is less than a year old- why not wait to see if this helps reduce budgetary costs? The APPR is entering its final stage. Why not use this information to restructure ALL campuses so that degree offerings at each location are not redundant but instead, beneficial for the location they serve? While losing some programs at the campuses will surely result in the need to move some faculty, it is a far better alternative than what we are

currently facing.

The amount of money these campuses cost the university is SMALL compared to the operating budget. Why not keep them open as an investment in the students that need to stay local and may require the extra support our campuses offer. Our campuses have had our budgets cuts repeatedly over the past 5-7 years (if not more). Imagine what our campus ecosystem would be like if we were ALL invested in! To paraphrase a current student: we offer a Penn State education to Pennsylvanians who never thought they'd be able to attend their "dream school". Closing campuses is not the way to move Penn State forward. Too little information has been gathered to make this drastic of a move. Please do what's right for Penn State- ALL of Penn State. Show our students, faculty, and staff that we are respected. Please vote NO on this proposal. Thank you.

Peggy Coppola: Past student

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

This an update of the precious comment. I was told today that one of the reasons you are considering closing the campus is that there is not enough student housing for students.
That is not true. Some students travel from home because they want to or they have jobs to go home to after their classes. There is a lot of housing around the college. Some are having trouble finding students to rent to. Then I believe across from the college is housing for students. My two sons stayed there while they attended college.
So I think more time should be spent finding out the facts and maybe talk to staff and students and ask what they want instead of just making a decision on half facts. After this is their college and should have a say in closing it. DuBois is a nice rural community and is a safe place to live. A lot of graduates are better suited for a smaller college and don't have to get overwhelmed trying to adjust to larger city living. And I would guess that student housing is more expensive than here. Penn State DuBois has been a part if the history of DuBois for many decades. It still is. They benefit each other.
If you close the college, you still have the expense of maintaining the property. Penn State DuBois affords many student the opportunity of going to college that they would not otherwise get to do.
I ask that you keep the college open so it can continue to offer an affordable, high quality education for area students and employment for local residents.

Anne Devney: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

If the Mont Alto campus is closed, students will lose their ability to complete education in healthcare fields - Nursing, Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA), & Occupational Therapist Assistant (OTA) at a local university campus. The only other options are to attend one of 2 regional nursing programs (1 BSN & 1 ADN) & I am not sure that the PTA & OTA programs are regionally available. The Nursing program that offers a BSN is a private college with costs much higher than PSU. Graduates of the community college ADN program will need to find access to a baccalaureate degree that they or their employer will need to pay for. Hospitals are expecting nurses to enter with a bachelor's degree in nursing (BSN) & are now requiring new hires to acquire that BSN within 5 years. I wonder if the data review process ever considered the employers in addition to the students. Employers rely on our programs for their future employees and nurses in particular are in short supply. In addition, loss of these future employees, will affect a large number of hospitals & other healthcare institutions in all of south-central PA. Closure of York & Fayette will do the same i.e., limit students to achieve higher education within the local area. Students deserve the high-class education that is available to this area and will lower their cost to achieve that education. Please take a more inclusive view of the consequences of these closures, Mont Alto in particular. Campus employees have researched several ways to increase student enrollment. I encourage you to review them. Thank you!

Angela Pettitt: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

The impact and import of public sentiment across the country and within Penn State has been waning for years. Nationally, Congress does not care that three-quarters of Americans oppose Medicaid and tax cuts. They plow ahead with political agendas to the contrary. In my home state of Ohio, the legislature passed a wildly unpopular bill targeting higher education that drew mass protests and oppositional testimony from more than 1,500 people. The representatives didn't care. And here in Pennsylvania, pleas by the Commonwealth Campus community to be consulted, heard, and informed have been summarily dismissed as the administration insists that closing our campuses is the only viable solution to the challenges we face. Please don't ignore our collective plea to the contrary.
From the initial announcement in February 2023 of the new budget model, we have heard a steady progression of pronouncements escalating from early assurances that campuses would not close, to disclosing that "everything was on table," to admitting a need to rethink the campus structure, to ultimately announcing that closures were inevitable. However, it was immediately clear that smaller campuses would not be able to continue operating under the new budget. The UFS requested greater input in the process on multiple occasions and offered suggestions on how the budget might be reconsidered to create greater equity and investment in the campuses – all to no avail.
Further, the way information has been disseminated to those most affected by these decisions often felt careless, or even crass.

In February 2024, the university announced via email it was suspending all multiyear contracts for campus faculty. In May 2024, certain employees were given only a few weeks to decide whether to take a voluntary separation – and then the campuses had to scramble to accommodate unexpected vacancies. In January 2025, myself and 23 other professors were called into meetings with chancellors and HR and told we would not receive new contracts due to budget cuts – regardless of performance, promotion, or years of service. A month later, we received a mid-day email announcing an undetermined number of campuses would close. Some faculty heard via students or news media, who were informed simultaneously. Each decision was a blow to our work, morale, and identity as Penn State faculty.

In one semester, I was let go from a job I had for fifteen years, rehired at another campus 100 miles away, promoted to full teaching professor, and informed that both my former and new campuses will likely be closing. That's a lot of instability at an institution that is holistically growing and thriving, which is why we—employees, legislators, community members, business leaders, students, and news media—are begging the Board of Trustees to reconsider these closures. Give us time to conduct open and transparent reviews of the plan, consult with experts, and arrive at a more public and comprehensive decision so that such a consequential proposal can meet the same standard as the research routinely conducted by the university's own faculty. Thank you.

Robin Yaure: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

Please do what's right for the university and have it step back and come up with creative solutions which we are capable of rather than the highly flawed process that has been done in a rushed manner which did not work with stakeholders of the state.

Sydney Kaschalk: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/21/25

The potential closure of the Penn State DuBois campus is a deeply troubling prospect, not only for the current students but for the broader young adult community, alumni, and local residents who have long depended on the institution as a cornerstone of education and personal development. For generations, Penn State DuBois has stood as a beacon of opportunity in northwestern Pennsylvania—a place where young adults could receive a world-class education close to home, build lifelong friendships, and grow into leaders in their communities. Shuttering this campus would be more than a loss of infrastructure; it would be an erasure of legacy, ambition, and shared memory.

For the young adult community, especially those in rural and economically challenged areas, the closure of Penn State DuBois would cut off access to affordable, accessible higher education. Many students who attend the campus do so because it is close to home, allows them to work part-time while pursuing a degree, and provides a more intimate and supportive environment than larger universities. The loss of this campus would force many to choose between uprooting their lives or abandoning their educational goals altogether. It is a direct blow to educational equity and upward mobility—values that Penn State claims to uphold.

Beyond academics, Penn State DuBois has been a hub of connection and growth. Lifelong friendships have been forged in its classrooms, athletic programs, and student centers. These friendships often extend far beyond graduation, forming a network of support and collaboration across the region. To close the campus is to fracture these networks and to send a message that the relationships and experiences formed there are no longer valued. The memories of studying late into the night, cheering on classmates at athletic events, or finding one's voice in student organizations become tinged with grief, as though they've been discarded in the name of efficiency or budgetary convenience.

The impact on athletics is another affront to the community. Penn State DuBois has a proud history of competitive sports and has produced athletes who have not only excelled on the field but have also demonstrated leadership and integrity off of it. Sports at DuBois were about more than just games—they were about community pride, perseverance, and the unifying spirit of school identity. Closing the campus invalidates these achievements, sending the message that the effort and spirit invested in these programs were not worth preserving.

Finally, to close this institution is to disgrace the legacy of all those who built it, taught within its walls, and trusted it with their futures. Alumni who proudly carried the name of Penn State DuBois into the workforce are left to wonder whether the institution they supported was ever truly committed to their region. It is an insult to the educators, donors, and families who believed in the mission of the campus.

In short, the closure of Penn State DuBois is not just a practical decision—it is a symbolic one. It speaks volumes about what is valued and who is considered expendable. And in doing so, it risks not only harming the future but dishonoring the past.

Kristen Pueschel: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/21/25

I write to bring your attention to the "Positional Report Opposing the Closure of Small Penn State Campuses", passed by the University Faculty Senate on April 29th 2025, with 97 for and 62 opposed. This report can be found at <https://pennstateoffice365.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/SenateCommunications/EijQ6y-USRJAjBkDMA8xlggBe0nfsJAwY6nxSfDenaoWug?e=5pORBo>

The report included the following recommendations:

Recommendations

- 1) Pause closure plans until a full and transparent impact assessment can be conducted, including community input, student data, and financial analysis.
- 2) Reinvest in small campuses by restoring budgetary support and exploring innovative models for academic delivery, including hybrid programs, workforce partnerships, and dual-enrollment initiatives.
- 3) Engage in authentic shared governance by involving Faculty Senate, local campus leadership, and community stakeholders in all strategic planning decisions.
- 4) Reaffirm Penn State's land-grant mission by committing to maintain a physical and academic presence in underserved and rural regions.
- 5) Audit the decision-making process that led to the current closure proposals to ensure compliance with ethical, legal, and procedural standards.

I also wanted to make several comments, speaking for myself alone, about this upcoming decision:

The Commonwealth Campus Ecosystem report (CWCE) claims to be the recommendations of Margo DelliCarpini, Tracy Langkilde, and Michael Wade Smith to Neeli Bendapudi. In contrast, faculty have been told that Dr. Bendapudi instead received recommendations of campuses to close, to keep open, and campuses lacking consensus, and that she made the decisions. The CWCE report is consequently shaped around the decisions that were made. It is not a recommendation, but rather a justification. For example, we see that collaboratively offered programs, in which students have the same opportunities at each campus, received praise at the campuses staying open, and those same programs were ignored or downplayed at campuses set to close. New Kensington is described as "one of the lowest enrollment campuses". Enrollment is indeed problematic, but of the 12 campuses under consideration, half of the campuses had higher enrollment. Among other issues, the CWCE report ignores the challenges of moving programs - it is not as simple as just moving equipment and people. Closing campuses will result in closing programs - even successful, valued programs.

I urge the Board of Trustees to take more time with this decision. It is a legacy decision and once made, it cannot be undone. This process has been undertaken with dizzying speed and secrecy. Consider that communities are only aware of the campuses recommended to close because of leaks of that information, and there has been no planned opportunity for chancellors, directors of academic affairs, or faculty, staff, and community members to view or correct the narratives in the CWCE report. Finally, plans for faculty, staff, and students remain extremely vague. Last spring, the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program was undertaken without a plan for how to continue, and the campuses suffered from chaos and churn that has not yet subsided. Please do not undertake such extreme changes with only the promise that a plan will be forthcoming once a decision is made.

Zachary Langford: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/21/25

After thoroughly reviewing the workgroup's recommendations, much thought appears to be put into these suggestions. Although I understand that Penn State requires some degree of business-minded financial responsibility, I must emphasize that what campuses currently provide for the regional population should absolutely be treated as priceless for those individuals because that is exactly how they would describe its value in their own lives. The workgroup explains that they sought to ensure 'the traditional college experience' is given to students. Yet, small campuses provide a unique college experience where positive relationships with faculty and staff have much more feasibility compared to a larger campus. This means that students can receive higher-quality letters of recommendation and more individualized support because the community is tightly-knit. Penn State's focus on community-building fails to be portrayed as a priority if campus closures are executed. The workgroup mentions a human-focused and compassionate approach, but in no manner are those qualities evident in this plan, (especially to public perception). I have seen first hand how campuses change (and, arguably, save) the lives of the students they serve. Taking that away from the local area reflects ignorance of this reality.

Penn State's mission claims one of their goals as disseminating knowledge across the Commonwealth in order to advance human and economic development. Yet, closing campuses undermines commitment to this part of the mission by creating additional barriers for the people who will lose access to Penn State education. To demonstrate consistency with this mission, providing education to regions which indicate a need for access to education and services is crucial for developing those areas of the state regarding talent and knowledge acquisition as well as the opportunity for the local economy to flourish. Does abandoning these areas achieve that goal, or does it look like they are effectively being treated as lost causes?

In the long term, sacrificing commonwealth campuses will reflect poorly on Penn State's reputation. Despite the intentions and rationale given, the public will view Penn State as a selfish business rather than an institution which provides Pennsylvania with equitable access to education. It will be apparent to prospective students and their families that Penn State treats individuals with high barriers of access to education as expendable and quantifiable. To the public, campus closures would be interpreted as abandoning people in need, directly conflicting Penn State's mission statement of providing equitable access to education. Public reputation is more powerful than what is implied in this document, as there is little to no discussion present to confirm that this factor was accounted for in projecting the future of enrollment. A more rapid than anticipated decline in enrollment as a response to these methods of addressing financial challenges is a highly probable reality. While other universities have taken

<p>similar measures to alleviate monetary issues, keeping our campuses open would reinforce commitment to the mission and distinguish Penn State from other universities as conveying unwavering dedication to that aim.</p>
<p>Alina Bodez: Faculty Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/21/25</p>
<p>Dear BOT members, I am posing a simple question: is it more likely that smaller communities in the U.S. thrive with local access to solid higher education or without it? Please do not pull away PSU College Campuses from the fundamental role that they fulfill: providing fair acces to higher education to all individuals and communities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania! Pennsylvania cannot be strong and flourishing without PSU staying truthful to its mission. Please vote responsibly in an order higher than the fiscal one!</p>
<p>Taylor Davis: Alumni Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/21/25</p>
<p>I attended Fayette from 2013 to 2017 and it's honestly hard to put into words how much my time on this campus impacted my growth. Academically. Professionally. Personally. I learned how to speak up for myself and others. I learned about my morals. I learned I can actually do something impactful with my life. I learned how to make friends and navigate working as a team. I learned about community and compassion and ethical standards in addition to the information taught to me in my classes. I was given guidance and encouragement I had never received before. Dr. Prettyman showed me I could excel in my passion for writing. He's the first to tell me I was good at it. Dr Jo taught me about the importance of community involvement and acceptance. Stephen Oberly taught me about the importance of listening to your body and taking care of your health. Rick Van Buren helped me figured out how I could continue attending when I faced hardships and thought I might not be able to stick around to accomplish my goals. If it were not for Fayette campus and the amazing faculty that work there, I would have never accomplished anything that I have, in both the academic and professional sense but also in the sense of simply being able to meet my basic needs. I would have never been able to live on my own, wouldn't have been able to access or even learn about resources in the community to get on my feet. I come from poverty and very limited resources. Because of my time at Penn State Fayette, I have been able to become stable enough to support and provide for my family, to support myself independently. Branch campuses are so incredibly important to those of us; who come from nothing, who work hard in school for scholarships because our family isn't able to assist us with getting an education to hold our futures, who still have to support families, who aren't able to move hours away, or even be driven hours to even tour a campus. In general they're incredibly important and I am so thankful I had the opportunity to attend a branch campuses but I am more thankful than anything that I was able to attend this campus, learn my own community to help others and even my own family, and be able to build a life and career while also learning and growing as a person.</p>
<p>Daniel Filer: Family member is staff Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/21/25</p>
<p>To the Penn State University Board of Trustees:</p> <p>I am deeply disappointed by the decision to consider closing the Fayette, Eberly campus. This move not only disrupts the lives of students and staff but also diminishes access to affordable higher education in a region that truly depends on it. The Fayette campus has long served as a vital educational and economic resource for southwestern Pennsylvania, and its closure represents a step backward in the University's mission to serve all communities across the Commonwealth and the mission of Penn State as the land-grant institution for the State of Pennsylvania.</p> <p>I urge you to reconsider this decision and engage meaningfully with local stakeholders to find a path forward that preserves opportunity and honors the legacy of this important campus. Please, do not close this campus. The damage to the regional economy and to the students you serve will be irreparable.</p>
<p>Amy Nagy: Alumni, Faculty Topic: Commonwealth Campuses Submitted written comment 5/21/25</p>
<p>Dear Members of the Board,</p> <p>I am writing today not only as the Director of the Undergraduate Nursing Program at Penn State Shenango, but as a proud graduate of the very program I now lead. My journey began in 1991, as a young woman living in downtown Sharon with no car, no financial safety net, and no clear path—only a sense that I wanted something more for my future. I walked to Shenango's campus because it was close, accessible, and welcoming. That short walk became the start of a life-changing journey.</p> <p>I enrolled in prerequisite courses at Shenango before attending St. Elizabeth's School of Nursing in Youngstown, Ohio. After graduating with my diploma in 1994, I began my nursing career and then moved into Labor & Delivery and the Level II Nursery. While working and raising my son, I returned to Shenango and earned my BSN in 1999. That degree elevated my career and deepened my commitment to nursing education. In 2016, I completed my MSN, and later, my Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP). Every step of my growth was grounded in the foundation Shenango provided.</p> <p>Today, I lead a program that continues to educate and empower the next generation of nurses—many of whom come from</p>

circumstances similar to my own. The students we serve are often local, first-generation, working adults, or caregivers. For them, Shenango is more than a campus; it is a lifeline.

Despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic, Shenango's nursing and athletics programs are growing. We are seeing a rebound, driven by the dedication of our students and faculty and the strength of community partnerships. But this growth is now cut short—halted not by lack of effort or vision, but by a recommendation made by a committee focused on numbers rather than the lives behind them.

This decision, while perhaps logical on paper, overlooks what is lost when access is taken away. Closing Shenango closes the door for students who depend on proximity, affordability, and support to succeed. It cuts off a vital pipeline of local healthcare workers—nurses educated in their own communities, who stay to serve those communities. It erases the very opportunities that once allowed me to walk from my home to a classroom and into a profession where I could make a difference.

I respectfully appeal to the Board to fully consider the human cost of this closure. Not just to those of us who work here, but to those who have yet to walk through our doors. I was once young, hopeful, on foot, and ready to work hard for a better future. Shenango gave me that future. Please do not take that chance away from those still waiting for theirs.

Michael Herr: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/20/25

It's very disappointing to see Penn State taking action on closing some of the Commonwealth Campuses. These Campuses play a vital role within their respected communities. I'm a graduate of Penn State York and seeing this campus in particular on the closing list is disgusting to be frank. This campus is not only vital to the young students but also to the continuing education for older adults like myself. I could not have gotten my engineering degree as an older adult without Penn State York. I implore the Board to not close these Campuses.

Linda Rooker: Alumni, Advisory Board member – Fayette

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/21/25

As a Penn State graduate and a member of the Advisory Board at Penn State Fayette The Eberly Campus, I urge you to vote down the closure of the Commonwealth Campuses or at the very least postpone your decision. Unfortunately, the "leaks" are already making a negative impact on the campuses and on Penn State in general. I don't think closing Fayette Campus will drive those students to University Park. Penn State will just lose them. I have been a 4-H Leader for many years and also serve on the Fayette County Fair Board. I see 4-H members who attend Fayette Campus as a way to afford a college education. If they are pursuing a 4 year degree that is not offered at Fayette, they are able to stay home and work on the family farm or complete their last year in 4-H. for at least 2 years. The campuses cater to non-traditional students and Penn State will lose those students as well.

As you make your decision, I urge you to consider all factors, not just economics, and remember Penn State's mission as a Land Grant University.

Kim Herrmann: Faculty, Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/21/25

Please vote No for closing Commonwealth Campuses. This bad publicity has almost surely increased the awareness of many of our campuses, which alone may help increase enrollment IF we are given a chance. I know Penn State Mont Alto is a very special place, too often referred to as a "hidden gem", and we have started to try to increase awareness and increase enrollment, but we need more time to reap the benefits, especially since we have targeted local 10th graders for the past two years. They will only be 12th graders this year and next year, so we don't yet know how many enrollments our attempts will yield.

In addition to all the comments you have received recently, please also peruse:

The petition letter to Support Penn State Mont Alto:

<https://www.change.org/p/support-penn-state-mont-alto>

The comments attached to the above petition:

<https://www.change.org/p/support-penn-state-mont-alto/feed>

A Centre Daily Times article on the closures, featuring quotes from students, faculty, and elected officials:

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/penn-state-proposed-closures-draw-173851127.html>

WE ARE Penn State and WE ARE deserving of more time to try to increase our enrollment.

Melissa Cuppett: Alumni

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/21/25

PSU FE has been a part of my life for longer than I can remember. In elementary school, I knew I wanted to go to PSU. When the time came to choose a college, I knew PSU was it but I didn't know if I could handle the class size or the distance away from home or UP. Fayette provided me with the perfect opportunity to go to PSU but without having 300 ppl in a class or being hours away from home. For 2 years I went to Fayette campus. The classes were small, the professors were amazing, and I made friends that I still have 20 plus years later. The next 2 years of college I did go to UP well I excelled and I know that it was bc of the help of

PSU FE. Future college students need the same opportunity I did. Closing PSU FE will hurt so many students in this area. Please reconsider closing this campus, for some, Fayette campus is the only opportunity they may have to receive a college education.

Matthew Cuppett: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/21/25

Penn State Fayette is an integral part of the local economy. As an R&D manager for Hitachi, we are always pursuing local talent and PSU Fayette is one of our main sources. The same is true for many other local firms that have set up facilities near Fayette for collaboration and recruitment. While Fayette is less than 0.5% of PSU's budget, the impact to this region will be detrimental and felt by residents and companies over a much larger radius.

Abby Tancin: Faculty

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/21/25

I am at a loss for words for why Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus is on the list for potential closure. Many of the reasons given for our closure were reasons other campuses should remain open. But beyond that, we have so much more to offer, particularly the Coal and Coke Heritage Center (CCHC). The CCHC is a beacon of light for southwestern Pennsylvania. It tells the story of a marginalized people who struggled, fought, and died for their community, their state, and their country. The families of those original miners remain in Uniontown, "but the original culture of the old miners' towns – the patches – often exist only in memory." The CCHC helps to preserve that memory and ensure the stories are not forgotten or lost to time. To close the Fayette campus, where the center is located and should remain, would mean Penn State is turning its back on a community that helped to build this state and the people that Penn State claims to care for.

The Coal and Coke Heritage Center brings in visitors from across the country wishing to do research and learn about coal mining and its people. The center brings in groups from around the world who still dedicate their lives to mining and are a part of the history we preserve. We are a meeting place for academics and enthusiasts, a learning space for our campus and community, a repository for researchers working on academic papers and books, a resource for local and national genealogists looking for ancestral information, and a partner for other local museums and libraries. We are more than a building.

To close the Coal and Coke Heritage Center and the Fayette Campus would mean shutting the door in the face of a people who have fought for their homes, who have struggled to raise their families, and who have continued to rise even in the face of adversity. If the Board of Trustees vote in favor of closing the Fayette Campus, they will be turning their backs on the community. If the Board of Trustees vote in favor of shutting down the Fayette Campus, they will be telling the people of Fayette County that they are unimportant and not worth access to an education that could transform their lives, the lives of their families, and the future.

I plead with the Board to vote no to the closures and to stand with the marginalized communities of Pennsylvania.

Gina Watts: Alumni, PS Fayette Advisory Board member

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/21/25

****Public Comment to the Penn State Board of Trustees regarding the Potential Closure of Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus**
To the Esteemed Members of the Penn State Board of Trustees:

My name is Gina Watts, and I am writing as a proud alumna, former staff and faculty member, and current Advisory Board member of Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus. I urge you to reconsider any plans to close this campus. Its value cannot be measured simply in enrollment numbers or operating costs—it must be measured by the lives it has transformed and the community it sustains.

Penn State Fayette *formed me*. I arrived on campus at 18 years old—a recent high school graduate and a new mother, terrified of what the future might hold for my infant son and me. I didn't know if it was possible to pursue a college degree while raising a child. What I found at Penn State Fayette wasn't just an education—I found a lifeline, a community, and a purpose.

The faculty, staff, and students became my village. They not only taught me, they *walked with me*. I will never forget the moment a faculty member picked up my son, Christian, and gently walked him around the classroom so I could finish a final exam. Christian attended every event on campus and became a beloved fixture in our Fayette family. This campus didn't just help me raise my child—it helped me raise my hopes.

I graduated from Fayette and completed my graduate degrees nearby. Just eight months later, I returned to campus—not as a student, but as a faculty member with an administrative appointment. Over the next 10 years, I had the privilege to teach, lead, and serve alongside students, staff, and faculty in ways that shaped me both professionally and personally. I later moved away, but my bond to the campus remains unbreakable. I continue to serve on the Advisory Board because I believe in the enduring power of this place.

Penn State Fayette is not just a campus—it is a cornerstone of Fayette County. It offers opportunities for students who might not otherwise have access to higher education. It brings vital programs to the community—from STEAM Camps that spark the imagination of young learners, to special events that unite the region, to degree programs that empower first-generation students and working parents. There is no other institution in this area that matches the caliber of education and service offered here.

If you close Penn State Fayette, you don't just close buildings—you shut down a vital bridge to opportunity for the people of this region. You sever relationships that have taken generations to build. You silence the voices of students like me who dared to hope for more because someone at Penn State Fayette said, "You can do this. We're with you."

Please, stand with us now. Invest in us. Believe in us. Keep Penn State Fayette open.

With deepest sincerity and commitment,

Gina Watts

Penn State Fayette Alumna, Former Staff & Faculty Member, Current Advisory Board Member

Janet Toth: County resident and school counselor

Topic: Commonwealth Campuses

Submitted written comment 5/21/25

As a resident of Fayette County and as a high school counselor for more than 25 years, I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the potential closure of the Penn State Fayette campus. I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider this decision and fully evaluate the critical role this campus plays in our region.

As you are aware, Fayette County is a rural area with significant economic challenges. Many of our students are from low-income families and simply cannot afford the cost of relocating or paying for room and board at a distant campus. For these students, Penn State Fayette provides a path to a prestigious education that is both accessible and affordable. It serves as a bridge to opportunity—one that would not be as readily available without the nearby Penn State presence.

Beyond traditional students, the Fayette campus is an essential asset for local employers and adult learners. Businesses depend on it for workforce development, continuing education, and employee training. These partnerships directly strengthen the local economy and align with Penn State's land-grant mission to serve all communities across the Commonwealth.

Rather than closing the campus, I encourage the Board to explore strategies to better utilize its facilities and continue its important role in our area. These could include:

Offering technical and certification programs that align with local workforce needs.

Expanding hybrid and online course options supported by on-campus resources.

Continue to utilize the facilities and expand the opportunities for community education, business development, and lifelong learning programs.

Penn State Fayette is more than a campus—it's a vital educational and economic engine in a region that depends on it. I truly believe closing it would send a message that rural and economically disadvantaged students are less deserving of opportunity. I believe Penn State is better than that.

Please consider the long-term cost to students, families, and the community before making this decision. There are many opportunities on this campus and there is a need to ensure it continues to fulfill Penn State's mission where it is needed most.