

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

May 22, 2025

Resolution to Endorse the Commonwealth Campus Recommendation

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania State University has, through its Commonwealth Campuses, extended the reach of its land-grant mission by providing a high-quality education throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth Campus system was created beginning in the 1930s, decades before the establishment of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) in 1983 and the formation of the Pennsylvania community colleges following the Community College Act of 1963—underscoring Penn State’s longstanding leadership in expanding access to public higher education across the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, significant challenges—including long-term demographic shifts, declining enrollment, flat public funding, and increasing operational costs—have placed growing pressure on the sustainability and effectiveness of the Commonwealth Campus ecosystem; and

WHEREAS, today’s higher education landscape in Pennsylvania includes not only Penn State and its Commonwealth Campuses, but also the state-owned PASSHE institutions, the community colleges, the other state-related universities (Temple, Pittsburgh, and Lincoln), and a large and diverse independent sector of colleges and universities. Collectively, these institutions now face declining demand and overlapping missions in many regions. Penn State, while serving more students across more locations than any of its peers, continues to receive significantly less public funding on a per-student basis than both the PASSHE system and the other state-related universities; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of these challenges, President Neeli Bendapudi convened a workgroup to evaluate twelve Commonwealth Campuses using a comprehensive, data-informed process grounded in principles of access, accountability, financial responsibility, long-term viability, and regional relevance; and

WHEREAS, the workgroup conducted a robust review that included analysis of enrollment and demographic trends, financial performance, facilities condition and utilization, regional collaboration potential, and academic program offerings, and received feedback from internal and external stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, campus leaders, and community members; and

WHEREAS, the University has provided public updates throughout the process, including a March 2025 communication outlining the factors informing the recommendation and a February 2025 message from President Bendapudi initiating the workgroup review; and

WHEREAS, the University has made significant financial progress in recent years, recovering from a nine-figure structural budget deficit and, with the Board’s support, adopting a revamped budget model and approving a balanced University operating budget beginning for fiscal year 2025-26; and

WHEREAS, the President’s recommendation regarding the Commonwealth Campuses represents an administrative action undertaken to ensure student success, strategic alignment, and continued financial stability, and has the support of the Board of Trustees; and

WHEREAS, the Board commends the administration for implementing a two-year wind-down period for campuses recommended for closure—ensuring that students, faculty, and staff have the time, resources, and support to plan for the future, and that no member of the University community experiences sudden or avoidable disruption; and

WHEREAS, the University has committed to providing robust support to all impacted individuals, including: individualized academic advising and transfer assistance for students, wellness resources, flexibility in completing degrees through continued campus enrollment, transfer to another Penn State location, or fully online pathways; and for faculty and staff, comprehensive transition planning that includes honoring faculty tenure and non-tenure line contracts, opportunities for transfer or reassignment, individualized HR consultations, wellness resources, and career counseling for impacted employees; and

WHEREAS, based on this thorough, data-informed process, the President has recommended the following actions:

- That seven campuses—DuBois, Fayette, Mont Alto, New Kensington, Shenango, Wilkes-Barre, and York—close following a two-year wind-down period;
- That five campuses—Beaver, Greater Allegheny, Hazleton, Schuylkill, and Scranton—continue to operate with focused investment and regionally integrated leadership; and
- That resources made available through these actions be used to support the long-term strength and strategic priorities of the Commonwealth Campus ecosystem.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees endorses the recommendation brought forward by the President and acknowledges the comprehensive process that led to it. The Board supports the implementation of this recommendation as a necessary and mission-aligned step to ensure the University’s continued ability to serve students, communities, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.