



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

February 23, 2022

Dr. Dale Pehrsson
President, Clarion University of Pennsylvania
Interim President, California University of Pennsylvania
Interim President, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania

Dr. Bashar Hanna
President, Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania
Interim President, Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania
Interim President, Mansfield University of Pennsylvania

Dear President Pehrsson and President Hanna:

I write to express my commitment to the successful integration of California University, Clarion University, and Edinboro University in western Pennsylvania and Bloomsburg University, Lock Haven University, and Mansfield University in the northeast. As these universities come together to form newly integrated entities, I wish to also stress my commitment to the students, faculty, staff, and alumni of these institutions as the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) nears a decision regarding accreditation.

Over the last decade, our rural universities within the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) have faced difficult circumstances in terms of declining enrollments, financial instability, and maintaining the breadth of academic programs that their students and regional employers need to meet workforce demands. The integrating universities are addressing these challenges and are critical to the System's ability to deliver affordable, high-quality, and accessible education to students in Pennsylvania.

Under your leadership, the trustees, university leaders, faculty, staff, students, and local communities are working together—supported by the System office and other System universities—to shape the future of these institutions. You are making vitally important decisions to enhance the financial sustainability of the universities, align programs to meet student and employer needs, prioritize student success, and identify strategic roles for each of the integrating universities—the west launching a global online initiative and the northeast providing leadership in workforce development.

I understand that the integration process is challenging work, and that organizational change is difficult. Despite this, I appreciate that you have established a timeline that aligns with industry best practice and provides stakeholders with greater certainty about the future institutions, including future and current students, faculty, and staff. Moving forward with these integrations now ensures the integrated universities are best positioned for long-term financial success.

As Governor of the great Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and as a member of the PASSHE Board of Governors, I am committed to ensuring that the integrated universities and the whole System are the best that they can be. My staff and I are working closely with PASSHE leadership to ensure accountability and transparency standards are rigidly enforced systemwide, and that the System has the immediate and

sustained resources it needs to succeed. The 2022-23 budget that I presented to the General Assembly on February 8 proposes an unprecedented investment in public higher education, including a 15 percent increase for PASSHE, an additional \$150 million in one-time funding, and a \$200 million scholarship fund for PASSHE and community college students pursuing degrees along high-demand career pathways. I look forward to working with the Chancellor, the Board of Governors, and the General Assembly to advocate for this funding and to identify long-term solutions to reduce debt systemwide.

As the MSCHE accreditation process continues, my staff and I are available to provide any necessary support to you and MSCHE. My hope is that the commission will join me in supporting the accreditation of the integrated universities so that they, along with the State System, can continue transforming the lives of Pennsylvania students and their families.

Sincerely,



TOM WOLF
Governor