



Pennsylvania's Performance-based Funding Council Hearing
Penn State University
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Testimony by Greg Scott, President and CEO
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Testimony to the Pennsylvania Performance-Based Funding Council

Good morning, Chair Topper and members of the Council. My name is Greg Scott, and I am the President of the Chamber of Business and Industry of Centre County. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony today on the importance of aligning Pennsylvania's educational system with the workforce and economic development needs of our Commonwealth.

As the economic development organization serving Centre County, the CBICC works closely with businesses, policymakers, community stakeholders, and Penn State University to build a robust local economy. Central to this mission is ensuring that our workforce aligns with the needs of high-demand industries, both now and in the future.

My remarks today will focus on three key areas: the value of educational alignment with workforce needs, the role of Penn State in supporting economic growth, and the importance of maintaining a local educational institution.

Aligning Education with Economic Development and Workforce Needs

The linkage between education and workforce development is clear: Pennsylvania's economic future depends on producing a skilled labor force prepared for high-demand occupations. Performance-based funding offers a unique opportunity to align state investments in higher education with our economic priorities. It is essential that this funding incentivizes degree and credential attainment in fields critical to Pennsylvania's economic growth.

Industries such as energy, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing—highlighted in Pennsylvania's 10-year economic development strategy—require a pipeline of highly skilled workers. Educational institutions must align their programs with these high-priority sectors to ensure graduates are job-ready and able to meet employer needs. Metrics such as the number of credentials awarded in high-priority occupations, post-graduation employment rates, and alignment with regional workforce demands will help ensure this alignment.

The Role of Penn State University in Supporting Economic Growth

Penn State University plays a pivotal role in Centre County's economic and workforce development strategy. As a world-class research institution with a significant statewide presence, Penn State not only produces thousands of skilled graduates but also drives innovation and entrepreneurship. Its research programs in areas like robotics, energy, and life sciences generate economic activity while attracting companies that benefit from proximity to such cutting-edge expertise.

Moreover, Penn State's commitment to workforce development extends beyond its degree programs. Through initiatives like internships, experiential learning opportunities, and partnerships with local businesses, Penn State equips students with the practical skills needed to excel in the modern workplace. These programs are vital for retaining talent within the state, ensuring that our investment in education translates into economic returns for Pennsylvania.

The Importance of Maintaining a Local Educational Institution

Having a major educational institution like Penn State in our region is a cornerstone of our economic strategy. Beyond its role as an employer and innovation hub, Penn State is a magnet for talent and a driver of regional vitality. The university's commonwealth campuses, in particular, extend access to higher education across rural and underserved areas, helping to address equity gaps in degree attainment and workforce participation.

For Centre County, Penn State anchors a thriving innovation ecosystem that includes research parks, startup incubators, and partnerships with private industry. This ecosystem not only creates jobs but also attracts federal and private research dollars to our region, amplifying the economic impact far beyond the university's immediate footprint.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Chair Topper and members of the Council, Pennsylvania has an extraordinary opportunity to strengthen its workforce, grow its economy, and position itself as a leader in innovation and job creation. By aligning our educational investments with workforce demands and economic priorities, we can ensure that our institutions are equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.