

Chairperson Topper, council members, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Kellie Kane, and I have the privilege of serving as the Associate Vice Provost for Enrollment and Executive Director of Admissions at the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh campus. I completed my undergraduate and Master's degrees at Pitt. And I'm a first-generation student who grew up in northeast Pennsylvania.

At the University of Pittsburgh, we take a proactive approach to recruiting, enrolling, and guiding students not just toward their interests but also toward high-impact careers – many of which align with Pennsylvania's workforce needs. I'm particularly proud of the number of commonwealth students and families we serve. The Fall 2024 class included the largest number of new PA first-year students in Pitt's history – 2,934.

Through targeted admissions outreach, recruitment throughout PA with a focus on rural recruiting, and early advising, Pitt helps students explore fields with strong job placement rates and areas of need for Pennsylvania businesses such as healthcare, cybersecurity, engineering, education and business.

Many students enter these programs knowing exactly what they want to study – Pitt's programs are well-known and highly regarded. Our work is to identify those students and help them start a lifelong career of impact by bringing them to the University of Pittsburgh and helping them graduate. Our strong academic programs (nursing, teaching, dental medicine, health sciences, engineering, and many more), state-of-the-art facilities, and faculty with industry experience ensure that students receive a world-class education and hands-on learning. The opportunity to live, work, and engage with boundless outside the classroom opportunities in the great city of Pittsburgh provides students a dynamic ecosystem in which to achieve their goals and successfully launch their futures.

But many others discover their passion along the way. Pitt has numerous first-year exploratory programs designed to connect them with in-demand careers. We connect students to our degree finder tool as well as help them find their major by allowing them to explore their interest areas to help develop a path towards their major. Learning outside of the classroom plays an important role for students when it comes to building lifelong competencies and ensuring success at Pitt and beyond. With the Catalog of Opportunities, students can find, track, and share co-curricular activities and achievements in the Outside the Classroom Curriculum (OCC), Graduate Career Foundations, Pitt Global, Honors OCC, Pitt Business OCC, Pitt Pharmacy, and Pitt Law dashboards.

As I mentioned, Pennsylvania students are a focus for us. It's part of our mission as a state-related university and keeps talent here in the commonwealth. We have multiple recruiters who are dedicated to recruiting and enrolling Pennsylvania students to our campus particularly those students who live in rural areas. The University of Pittsburgh is one of 22 U.S. higher education institutions to receive a grant to improve rates of postsecondary education enrollment, persistence and completion among students in rural communities. The Rural Postsecondary and Economic Development (RPED) grant program (\$2.2M over four years) promotes the development of high-quality career pathways aligned to high-skill, high-wage and in-demand industry sectors and occupations in the region. I'm pleased to share that those efforts are already paying off, as the Fall 2024 first-year class included 18% more students from rural counties in PA than Fall 2023 – 476 compared to 402 – representing over 16% of PA first-year students enrolling.

Our retention rates rank among the state's best—partly because of our work in enrolling great fit students and helping our students find a successful academic path. Pitt's placement rates are very high – 98% of our students are working or in graduate school within six months of graduating. Our graduates secure jobs quickly in competitive industries, often through partnerships we've built with major employers. Whether through internships, apprenticeships, or industry partnerships, we ensure students are educated and career-ready from day one.