

**Senate Republican Policy Committee Panel Discussion Remarks
Higher Education and Workforce Development
Tuesday, September 2, 10:00 a.m., Lycoming College**

Background: "The Chairman is interested in how the correlation between higher education and workforce development can work for the betterment of the community and how those two key components play off one another."

Intro: Thank you for the invitation to participate in this panel discussion.

From our distinctive approach to educating students to our decades-long commitment to strong workforce programming, Penn College offers a comprehensive portfolio of learning opportunities that serve the needs of both students and industry. By listening and working closely with our 4,000 industry partners during the last academic year, Penn College impacted over 12,000 students in degree-seeking, dual enrollment scenarios, and workforce development upskilling. As a Commonwealth asset, we are proud that approximately 90% of our degree-seeking students are from PA, and 80% of our alumni build and retain their careers in our Commonwealth.

Higher Education

Penn College's approach to education positions our graduates for successful careers.

- Our goal is to place students in the most competitive position for long-term success. We do this by working directly with industry leaders and offering what industry needs.
- We deliver nearly 100 programs—ranging from certificates and credentials—to associate and bachelor's degrees, along with a couple of master's level, health science programs.
- Our education model requires every program to have an industry advisory committee to ensure students are obtaining the skills that are needed to succeed today and tomorrow.

Penn College is agile and adaptable to industry needs, and is experiencing tremendous growth.

- Penn College is laser-focused and adaptable. We work closely with industry leaders to inform our curriculum and approach to education. This approach has served students well throughout our 112-year history, and we are just getting started.

- Penn College is growing at a record pace. On campus housing is full again this fall, and approximately 500 more students are completing programs on our campus than only 3 years ago, from 4,200 to 4,700 students. I'm pleased to share with our industry partners that additional essential help is on the way!
- It's worth repeating. Our educational reach is significant – we are impacting over 12,000 students annually. In addition to our 4,700 students thriving on campus, we also offer relevant dual enrollment classes to 2,100 high school students each year. We also reskill approximately 5,400 incumbent workers in non-credit programs through our workforce development offerings, to continually adapt to industry needs.

Penn College's industry partnership model and industry support are essential to our success.

- Penn College's successful industry partnership model allows us to gather critical industry and workforce information through our advisory committees, which helps to inform the programming that the College offers to both students and industry. Industry partnership opportunities are a great way for companies to not only collaborate with Penn College but also network with fellow industry partners.
- Penn College couldn't do what we do without the extraordinary support and input from our 4,000+ industry partners. Our 150 labs across campus are well-equipped and distinctive, thanks to our industry partners. These labs are critical to our mission because for every hour of lecture, students spend three hours in a lab to apply learning.
- We prepare students through intensive, hands-on work that builds conceptual understanding, confidence, and skill. Our graduates are "billable" for companies from day one. They are making an immediate impact and applying their problem-solving skills on behalf of the companies they work for. Georgetown routinely ranks Penn College Top 5 in 10 and 15 year ROI, when comparing to all 4-year public institutions.

Penn College offers a variety of opportunities for students to connect with industry.

- Penn College offers numerous opportunities for industry to connect with students. With our hands-on approach to learning, we are always looking for companies to host internships for current students. Additionally, the College hosts career fairs, on-campus recruiting events, and more. Visiting campus also provides a chance to visit labs, talk with faculty and deans, and make additional connections with the College.

A significant number of our students are from Pennsylvania and choose to stay in PA.

- Nearly 90% of our students are from Pennsylvania and 50% are first generation. 70% of our Pennsylvanians join us from rural areas, from corner to corner of our state.
- 80% of our graduates choose to stay in PA AND do extremely well for themselves. We know this from what they report back to us, AND it is also nice to be affirmed by outside agencies. Georgetown ranks Penn College top 5 in 10-year ROI, and US News & World Report has ranked us the most innovative college for the past two years—along with ranking us the #1 college for veterans, and #3 public institution in All Colleges North.

Workforce Development

Penn College's Workforce Development team offers customized training and programming to meet industry needs.

- Complementing our academic programs, Penn College Workforce Development provides non-degree programming that supports workforce recruitment, upskilling, and certification across sectors like manufacturing, plastics, health sciences, energy-efficient building trades, and transportation. Our custom training, apprenticeships, and pre-apprenticeships are directly tied to Pennsylvania's evolving labor and industry needs.

Penn College's Workforce Development team is experienced in providing specialized onboarding and training programs, which can support emerging industries and high-demand occupations.

- As an example, Penn College's ability to respond swiftly and effectively to the Marcellus Shale Boom and to stand up the ShaleTEC training center was rooted in a long-standing culture of collaboration and adaptability. Our deep, established partnerships with industry, workforce development boards, government agencies, and educational consortia created a strong foundation for rapid mobilization.
- Also, our Workforce Development team is experienced at building and deploying flexible short-term programs that include a combination of online learning and immersive hands-on training designed to quickly build essential skills while reducing travel and time away from the jobsite.

- Penn College's most effective Workforce Development initiatives are built on strong partnerships with employers, economic and workforce organizations, and community stakeholders—working together to create comprehensive solutions that strengthen the local labor market.