

**STATEMENT BY  
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Good Afternoon Chairman Adolph, Chairman Markosek, and members of the House Appropriations Committee. This is the final time I will sit before you to discuss Penn State's appropriation request. I will retire by June 30<sup>th</sup> after 37 years at the University I love in a state that became my home.

Before we get into the topic before us, I'd like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the way you have conducted these hearings and for the courtesies you have extended to me during my tenure as president. I also wish to thank the many members of the Committee on Appropriations for your collegiality and support in what have been somewhat tumultuous times.

Over the years, the members of the General Assembly have expressed an appreciation of the value of higher education and of the particular importance of Penn State and the other state-related universities to the welfare of the Commonwealth. It's also clear that investing in higher education yields tremendous returns.

We understand that state policy makers have many demands for limited taxpayer funds; however, over the past 20 years, the state's commitment to higher education has not matched its commitment to other areas of the budget. This trend has created major challenges for our public institutions of higher education.

Despite these funding challenges, Penn State is having considerable success in nearly every metric. Total enrollment last fall was more than 98,000 students, and applications for admission this coming year are on track for an all-time high. Our faculty, staff, and students set a record last year with \$848 million in research activity, and garnered a growing number of prestigious awards as the University rose in most national and international rankings. Private donations were the second highest ever with the largest number of alumni donors on record. But these sorts of successes will be increasingly difficult to sustain without additional public and private support. The appropriation you provide serves primarily to reduce tuition for in-state residents, so as public support has stagnated, our students are graduating with a growing level of debt while they take on increasing responsibility for their own costs of education.

This the first time in several years that the state's economy is showing signs of growth. I understand that you will be allocating funds this year for many cost drivers – often out of your control – that will eat up most of your spending authority. Yet, you also will be making investments in the future. Let this be the first year that renews the trend of investing in higher education, so that, 20 years from now, we will be able to step back and see the positive impacts of that commitment to the future of the Commonwealth.