

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
BUDGET HEARING

PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON COMMUNITY COLLEGES

STATE CAPITOL
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
ROOM 140, MAJORITY CAUCUS ROOM

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2016
3:30 P.M.

BEFORE:

HONORABLE WILLIAM ADOLPH, MAJORITY CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE JOSEPH MARKOSEK, MINORITY CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE KAREN BOBACK
HONORABLE JIM CHRISTIANA
HONORABLE GARY DAY
HONORABLE GEORGE DUNBAR
HONORABLE KEITH GREINER
HONORABLE SETH GROVE
HONORABLE SUE HELM
HONORABLE WARREN KAMPF
HONORABLE FRED KELLER
HONORABLE JIM MARSHALL
HONORABLE KURT MASSER
HONORABLE DAVE MILLARD
HONORABLE DUANE MILNE
HONORABLE MARK MUSTIO
HONORABLE JEFFREY PYLE
HONORABLE MARGUERITE QUINN
HONORABLE CURT SONNEY
HONORABLE MIKE VEREB
HONORABLE MATTHEW BRADFORD
HONORABLE LESLIE ACOSTA
HONORABLE TIM BRIGGS
HONORABLE DONNA BULLOCK
HONORABLE MARY JO DALEY
HONORABLE MADELEINE DEAN
HONORABLE MARIA DONATUCCI
HONORABLE PETER SCHWEYER

1 (CONTINUED)

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3 HONORABLE MARK ROZZI
4 HONORABLE STEPHEN KINSEY
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2 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you,
3 Ladies and Gentlemen. I'd like to reconvene the
4 House Appropriations Committee on the 2016-'17
5 Budget Hearings.

6 It's certainly my pleasure to welcome
7 Pennsylvania Community Colleges. With us this
8 afternoon is the CEO, Elizabeth Bolden. Also,
9 are two presidents of community colleges; and I
10 will let Elizabeth introduce them for opening
11 comments, and all three of you may have opening
12 comments.

13 MS. BOLDEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
14 And thank you, Mr. Markosek, and members of the
15 Committee. I would like to introduce the people
16 with me today. To my right, is Mr. Tom Leary.
17 He is the President of Luzerne County Community
18 College, and he is Chairman of the Board of the
19 Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges.

20 To my left is Dr. Stephanie Shanblatt.
21 She is the President of Bucks County Community
22 College and Vice Chairman of the Board of the
23 Pennsylvania Commission.

24 I know that the Committee has a complete
25 copy of our testimony. With your permission,

1 I'd like to make some brief remarks and then ask
2 Dr. Shanblatt and Mr. Leary to make some
3 comments, as well.

4 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: You certainly
5 may.

6 MS. BOLDEN: Thank you. The colleges
7 are very grateful for this opportunity and the
8 support of the Chairmen, the members of the
9 community, the Committee, the members of the
10 Community College Caucus, which is co-chaired by
11 Representative Jim Marshall, who is also here
12 today.

13 We appreciate your continued commitment
14 to Pennsylvania's community colleges and the
15 role they play in the Commonwealth's education
16 and workforce development system.

17 In '14-'15, the colleges enrolled nearly
18 314,000 students from all of Pennsylvania's 67
19 counties, making the colleges the largest
20 provider of postsecondary education and training
21 in the Commonwealth.

22 The colleges' status as the largest
23 provider of undergraduate education was
24 confirmed by the data in the Snyder Report
25 issued last month by the Joint State Government

1 Commission. The median age of the Pennsylvania
2 community college student is 23-years-old, with
3 an average family income of \$35,760.

4 Sixty-five percent of students are
5 enrolled part-time, many are first-generation
6 college students; and women and minorities make
7 up large portions of the student population.

8 Students choose to enroll in community
9 college for a number of reasons, including
10 accessibility, affordability, flexible
11 scheduling, small class sizes, etc.

12 One of last year's most promising
13 community college students, Aaron Rosengarten,
14 who some of you may remember from his comments
15 that he hoped to someday become a member of the
16 General Assembly, was recognized as one of the
17 nation's top community college students, as both
18 an All USA Scholar and a New Century Scholar.

19 Aaron was accepted to NYU and Temple,
20 among other highly-regarded colleges and
21 universities; but ultimately declined those
22 opportunities to instead enroll at Northampton
23 Community College, a decision he calls one of
24 the greatest decisions he ever made.

25 After completing at Northampton, Aaron

1 opted to continue his pursuit of a degree at the
2 state system. Aaron is just one of the
3 thousands of Pennsylvania students who make the
4 choice for a quality, affordable education at a
5 Pennsylvania community college.

6 For the '14-'15 academic year, average
7 tuition and fees at Pennsylvania's community
8 colleges was just under \$3700. That amount is
9 61 percent less than the average tuition and
10 fees at the state system, as the second most
11 affordable post-secondary option in
12 Pennsylvania.

13 Continued state support for the colleges
14 is essential if community college tuition is to
15 remain an affordable option for students to
16 complete their first two years of academic study
17 or acquire valuable workforce skills.

18 The programs offered at the colleges
19 give students a wide range of options, including
20 diploma, certificate, two-year degree, and
21 workforce training programs. The colleges
22 currently offer 1,381 credit programs, 62
23 percent of which are in STEM fields, and 48
24 percent of which are in high-priority
25 occupations as identified by the State

1 Department of Labor and Industry.

2 In '14-'15, the colleges conferred
3 16,071 awards statewide, and 34,500 students
4 transferred to an institution of higher
5 learning, with most remaining in Pennsylvania.

6 The colleges participate in more than
7 2800 transfer and articulation agreements within
8 TAOC, and several colleges have partnerships
9 with bachelor's degree granting institutions,
10 but enable students to complete their four-year
11 degree on their local community college campus.

12 The colleges regularly evaluate program
13 offerings, both internally and in conjunction
14 with workforce partners to ensure they overlap
15 with workforce needs. In 2015, the colleges
16 provided 11.3 million in customized training for
17 employers and trained more than 21,000 workers
18 through WEDNetPA, more than half of the total
19 workers trained through WEDNet across the state.
20 These totals demonstrate the expertise of the
21 colleges in delivering high-quality workforce
22 training.

23 After receiving their credential,
24 Pennsylvania's community college completers tend
25 to stay in the Commonwealth and even in their

1 local communities, providing a positive return
2 on the public investment in their education.
3 During the past year, the colleges were pleased
4 to participate in the work of the House Select
5 Subcommittee on Technical Education and Career
6 Readiness, chaired by Representatives Grove and
7 Harkins.

8 The colleges highlighted several
9 successful career pathway and stackable
10 credentialed programs for the Committee. These
11 programs require significant investments in
12 industry-standard materials and equipment, as
13 well as funds to support instructional staff,
14 investments that can be supported with an
15 increase in the community college appropriation.

16 This year, the colleges have continued
17 to serve students, their communities and the
18 Commonwealth, despite challenging fiscal
19 environments. State funding is an important
20 component of the public support of the colleges.

21 As funding from the State has been
22 unpredictable and failed to keep pace with
23 inflation, and as some local sponsors reduced
24 support in response to their own financial
25 difficulties, the colleges have implemented

1 cost-savings initiatives which are outlined in
2 our written submission in which Presidents Leary
3 and Shanblatt can discuss. Governor Wolf's
4 proposed supplemental '15-'16 budget combined
5 with the proposed '16-'17 budget, will provide a
6 much-needed \$22.1-million increase in the
7 community college operating appropriation.

8 This funding level is an important step
9 to restore appropriate funding to the colleges
10 and recognizing their key position as a driver
11 of economic activity in the State. They will
12 allow the colleges to make needed investments to
13 ensure program quality and alignment with
14 workforce needs, as well as minimize tuition
15 increases.

16 At this time, I'd like to ask President
17 Leary to make some remarks.

18 MR. LEARY: Thank you, Elizabeth. And
19 thank you to the Chairman and members of the
20 Committee. I'm the President of Luzerne County
21 Community College, one of Pennsylvania's 14
22 community colleges.

23 Luzerne is the largest college in
24 northeastern Pennsylvania, having served
25 approximately 6,000 students last year through

1 our main campus in Nanticoke and five dedicated
2 centers throughout the region in a wide variety
3 of programs ranging from nursing to
4 truck-driving to business.

5 The majority of our students are
6 first-generation college students. We are
7 affordable, nimble, and adaptable to meet local
8 needs and public and private partnerships. For
9 example, Luzerne is a partner in the WEDNetPA
10 program.

11 During the '15-'16 fiscal year, the
12 college is serving 46 companies, including 32
13 manufacturers and 14 companies that are
14 considered advanced-technology employers.

15 This program supports incumbent worker
16 training to help increase the skill level of
17 employees in our region, and the total number to
18 be trained at Luzerne this year is 2,450.

19 We are proud to partner with the public
20 workforce system, including the local Workforce
21 Investment Board and Career Link to develop and
22 deliver training for high-demand occupations
23 that will provide family-sustaining wages.

24 These programs range from short-term
25 training programs that may take several weeks to

1 a full Associate's degree. Luzerne is also
2 enhancing our prior learning assessment to
3 assist students who have demonstrated skills and
4 competencies that will convert into achievement
5 and credits.

6 Awarding of credits for prior learning
7 helps students take only those courses that
8 might provide the opportunity for new learning,
9 which saves time and money. Prior learning
10 assessment also helps accelerate the student's
11 progression towards the completion of their
12 goal.

13 We have also been steadily expanding our
14 collaboration with K-to-12 education in our
15 service area, particularly through our early
16 college program, which provides college credits
17 to students who are still enrolled in high
18 school.

19 In 2015-'16, our college serves 1,040
20 students through this early college
21 collaboration. We are particularly gratified by
22 the success of our math-ready program, which
23 began with serving academically at-risk high
24 school students in the Wilkes-Barre area and now
25 has expanded to two additional school districts.

1 Our faculty and staff are committed to
2 student success in all aspects. For example,
3 the college has established a food bank on our
4 main campus, as a result of concern expressed by
5 the faculty for their students who are attending
6 classes all day without eating because of
7 financial difficulties.

8 The food bank has now expanded to
9 provide basic staples since many of our students
10 include single mothers or students working
11 several jobs who just need a little help along
12 the way to sustain their families. This effort
13 is funded solely through the donations received
14 from the college family and donors in the
15 community.

16 In 2017, LCCC will be celebrating our
17 50th anniversary. The late Governor William W.
18 Scranton who signed the community college
19 legislation in 1963 into law, was a native of
20 northeastern Pennsylvania.

21 In a visit to our campus, he expressed
22 his satisfaction with how community colleges
23 had grown and met the needs of so many students
24 who would not otherwise have had access to
25 higher education. He was very pleased with the

1 outcome of his commitment and the Commonwealth's
2 investment in community colleges. I am proud of
3 the way that the entire college community has
4 worked to ensure that we continue to offer these
5 opportunities for students despite a very
6 challenging financial environment.

7 Over the past year, Luzerne has
8 implemented a number of cost-saving measures,
9 efficiencies that have resulted in significant
10 reductions in our operating costs that have
11 enabled us to operate more effectively and
12 efficiently.

13 These include, for the past three years,
14 an across-the-board 15-percent budget reduction
15 in several areas such as office and supplies, a
16 freeze on management salaries, including the
17 president, and undertaking a college-wide energy
18 audit to create energy savings for the long
19 term. However, I know that challenges remain.

20 Even with the cost-saving measures we've
21 implemented, it would be difficult to move
22 forward without an increase in the operating
23 appropriation from the Commonwealth.

24 We will be unable to develop new
25 programs which require an investment in

1 technology, equipment, and support, which will
2 inhibit our ability to grow and meet the needs
3 of our constituents. An example of this is our
4 plan for collaborative efforts to develop
5 programs with career technical centers in our
6 region.

7 For fiscal year '15-'16, the community
8 colleges were collectively slated to receive a
9 \$10.7-million increase in the operating
10 appropriation, which would have provided
11 approximately \$562,000 for Luzerne.

12 For fiscal year '16-'17, the Governor
13 has recommended an additional \$11.3 million over
14 that level, which would provide an additional
15 \$236,000 for our college. These funds are much
16 needed, and we'd ask for your support in
17 approving them.

18 Thank you very much. At this time, I
19 would like to ask my colleague, Dr. Shanblatt,
20 to offer some remarks.

21 MS. SHANBLATT: Thank you, President
22 Leary. And good afternoon, Chairman Adolph,
23 Chairman Markosek, and members of the House
24 Appropriations Committee.

25 I'm Stephanie Shanblatt, the President

1 at Bucks County Community College. Last year,
2 Bucks enrolled approximately 14,000 credit
3 students and over 33,000 noncredit students in
4 academic and workforce programs. We are proud
5 to be the first community college awarded a
6 \$650,000 National Science Foundation Cyber
7 Infrastructure Grant to support undergraduate
8 science and technology research.

9 This grant was possible only because we
10 are building a much-needed science center on our
11 Newtown campus, half of which was funded from
12 the State's capital appropriation to the
13 colleges; and we are very grateful.

14 The colleges ask for your support in
15 continuing the capital appropriation at its
16 current level. In our efforts to maximize
17 federal and state dollars and to leverage those
18 dollars to help meet the needs of regional
19 employers and our citizens, we continue to work
20 collaboratively with private business and with
21 our county on workforce development.

22 I sit on the local Workforce Development
23 Board and chair the Career Pathways Committee.
24 That committee is working to create seamless
25 pathways for both high school students and

1 adults, focusing on high-demand areas of health,
2 STEM, and advanced manufacturing.

3 One example of a successful workforce
4 program is our employer-driven metal-working
5 program. Over a period of 18 months, we trained
6 43 Pennsylvania citizens with a 93-percent
7 placement rate, placement into a full-time job.

8 Another example of our workforce program
9 is customized training. Last year, we provided
10 customized training for our county businesses to
11 upscale approximately 3,000 incumbent workers in
12 everything from leadership skills to computer
13 application, making sure that the employees that
14 they currently have are able to do today's and
15 tomorrow's jobs.

16 Bucks also leads the way with public
17 safety training. The college provides emergency
18 services training for fire, rescue, HAZMAT, and
19 incident management for local emergency
20 services, for companies such as McNeil, Dow and
21 Merck, and to the Department of Defense.

22 We train approximately 30,000 people a
23 year in public service throughout the county,
24 the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world.
25 Our ability to embark upon more training

1 opportunities and expanded partnerships is
2 currently limited by our funding.

3 As an example, at the request of our
4 local hospitals, we are launching a new medical
5 laboratory technician program this May.
6 Start-up costs for infrastructure and equipment
7 were about \$400,000 just to get this one program
8 off the ground.

9 We did use -- we did apply for and
10 receive some private foundation grants. We look
11 everywhere for money. We leverage our
12 partnerships. But these highly-technical
13 programs are expensive to get off the ground and
14 to maintain.

15 An increase in our State appropriation
16 would allow us to deploy additional programs
17 that we're ready to go with that can help make
18 our community a better place to live, work, and
19 learn.

20 We pride ourselves on being good
21 stewards of public funds. We understand these
22 are challenging fiscal times and have
23 implemented many cost-saving measures,
24 particularly in regard to our full-time staffing
25 complement and reductions in utility costs.

1 I thank you for this opportunity and for
2 your support of Pennsylvania's community
3 colleges. I appreciate the opportunity. Thank
4 you so much.

5 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you,
6 Doctor. Thank you, Ms. Bolden, and Mr. Leary.

7 I'm from Delaware County. We have a
8 little mom and pop community college down there.
9 I don't know what the enrollment is exactly, but
10 it's well over 20,000 and it happens to be in
11 the 165th District, which happens to be where I
12 live.

13 We're very proud of our community
14 college. The faculty -- over the years, I've
15 had the privilege of working with Dr. Jerry
16 Parker; and he's just doing an outstanding job.
17 Recently, they partnered with Drexel University;
18 and that partnership is really working very
19 good. And they partnered with the Navy yard,
20 you know, and businesses down there and so forth
21 and so on.

22 Ms. Bolden, if you would for the viewing
23 audience, could you go through the three main
24 funding areas that the community colleges
25 receive and how it has changed over the years?

1 MS. BOLDEN: Sure. Thank you, Mr.
2 Chairman. So when the community colleges were
3 originally envisioned in the Commonwealth in the
4 late 1960s, it was envisioned that the cost of
5 the colleges would be borne one-third by the
6 Commonwealth, one-third by local sponsors, which
7 are school districts or local municipalities,
8 and one-third by the students.

9 Over time, that one-third, one-third,
10 one-third share has not really materialized.
11 For the last fiscal year for which we have data,
12 which is '14-'15, the State, on average, only
13 provided 21 percent of the operating cost of the
14 community colleges.

15 The local sponsors provided anywhere
16 from 3 to 18 percent. And, unfortunately,
17 students are making up the difference, paying
18 anywhere from 42 to 66 percent of the operating
19 costs, depending on the college.

20 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Okay. And in
21 dollar amounts, I know -- I'm sure the price
22 changes from community college to community
23 college. But on an average, what is the student
24 paying?

25 MS. BOLDEN: On average, last year the

1 community college tuition was just under \$3700.

2 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Very good.
3 That's certainly a real bargain, that's for
4 sure, for the outstanding job that you're doing.

5 Just on the budget, on the budget, since
6 this is a Budget Hearing, okay, for the members
7 and for the viewing audience, I believe -- and I
8 think Mr. Leary stated it, that you were going
9 to get about a 5-percent increase over the year
10 before, a little over -- almost \$11 million
11 actually.

12 MR. LEARY: Yes.

13 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: And I think
14 in December the bill that was put on the
15 Governor's desk had that 5-percent increase; and
16 the Governor chose to level fund it, blue-line
17 the 5 percent.

18 How has that affected the operations of,
19 say, Luzerne County Community College?

20 MR. LEARY: Well, it makes it much more
21 challenging, obviously, in terms of how we
22 respond to students. And when we look at
23 planning for the next budget, that particular
24 situation creates a very difficult time for us
25 to plan.

1 So as I alluded to earlier, if we're
2 going to expand our services to our students, if
3 we're going to look at even enhancing a program
4 that we have currently in place that's going to
5 require some investment, it's really critical to
6 have that kind of support.

7 So it did affect us in the sense of not
8 only for this budget year but, as you know,
9 planning for the next future year, as well. And
10 I think that really is -- that's part of the
11 situation that we're in right now.

12 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: I understand.
13 And, Doctor, how about Bucks County?

14 MS. SHANBLATT: I think in a very
15 similar way to what happened at Luzerne, we
16 certainly are challenged in terms of, you know,
17 putting our budget together. We're in the midst
18 of putting together the budget for the coming
19 fiscal year, which we have to pass before July
20 1st.

21 And with the uncertainly, it's difficult
22 to plan. We have lots of things we'd like to
23 do, but we won't -- we're not comfortable moving
24 forward at this point with many of those new
25 programs. So it's a challenge in terms of

1 planning; because these things, although we're
2 nimble, they don't happen overnight. They do
3 require some planning. So that's been, I think,
4 the real challenge. We've just, you know -- and
5 without any increase, it is -- that means that
6 we're cutting every year, essentially, just to
7 stay level; because we can't control certain
8 costs. And so, as a result, we have to cut just
9 to maintain even a level budget.

10 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Okay. Thank
11 you. Ms. Bolden, how about the \$48 million
12 that's appropriated on the capital line item,
13 how is that appropriated to the various
14 community colleges?

15 MS. BOLDEN: So the \$48-million
16 appropriation is distributed by the Pennsylvania
17 Department of Education according to the capital
18 framework. Each college receives money for
19 specific projects. That money is very
20 important. It provides for half of the cost of
21 approved projects, whether they be leases or new
22 construction at the college campuses.

23 This year, it was difficult for the
24 colleges; because that money was not released in
25 a timely fashion because it was held up in the

1 budget negotiations.

2 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Yeah. I
3 think that was as a result of the veto in June.
4 Chairman Markosek.

5 MINORITY CHAIRMAN MARKOSEK: Thank you,
6 Chairman Adolph. Several years ago, earlier in
7 my legislative career, I had the opportunity to
8 serve on a different committee, that we held a
9 hearing at the Delaware Community College. And
10 I didn't realize I was in Chairman Adolph's back
11 yard, and I didn't cause any trouble or anything
12 like that; so -- but it was a -- I was quite
13 amazed actually. It was quite a facility. It
14 was very impressive and very -- parking lots
15 were jammed; and, obviously, a lot of students
16 taking advantage of that; so that's a good
17 thing.

18 I also have Boyce Campus of the
19 Allegheny County Community College located in my
20 legislative district, and we're certainly --
21 I've been very proud of that.

22 But just echoing a little bit about what
23 the Chairman started out with, the three-legged
24 stool of funding that you have from the State,
25 the tuition and in the local host, if you will,

1 part of it, funding, what -- in Allegheny
2 County, we have county as our local funder for
3 the -- sponsor for the community colleges. How
4 is that different -- and you mentioned school
5 districts. Some of the local community colleges
6 are funded through their school districts, some
7 from local municipalities.

8 How has that been affected particularly
9 with the lack of funding that we've seen for
10 basic education, those school districts that
11 perhaps may have helped fund their community
12 colleges? Have you seen a change there? And if
13 so, can you give us a status report?

14 MS. BOLDEN: Sure. There are ten
15 colleges that are sponsored by county or
16 municipal governments; and four that are
17 sponsored by school districts, some by as many
18 as 21 school districts.

19 And what we have seen is similar no
20 matter how you're sponsored. So those local
21 sponsors are undergoing their own financial
22 difficulties and financial stresses. They are
23 less able to fund the community colleges to the
24 level that they might want to. And so we see
25 them not able to make timely payments or not

1 able to fund them in the way that they have in
2 the past.

3 And Dr. Shanblatt can probably talk
4 about Bucks, in particular. She's a
5 county-sponsored.

6 MS. SHANBLATT: Well, I think Bucks
7 County -- the County of Bucks has tried very
8 hard to support us over the years. I have to
9 admit that they, and I don't want to say admit,
10 but I'm pleased that the County was able to find
11 a little bit of an increase for us for the
12 coming year.

13 They really value the workforce efforts
14 at the college and have been trying. And they
15 know it's not as much as it should be; but they
16 said, well, you know, let's start, let's not
17 keep it level funding.

18 We work very closely with our county
19 partners, and I know all the other colleges that
20 are funded by either a county or by several
21 school districts work very closely with those
22 partners.

23 But it certainly is a challenge for the
24 counties, certainly for my county, to find
25 additional money. So much goes to what you

1 might expect, which is corrections and
2 mental-health.

3 MINORITY CHAIRMAN MARKOSEK: Okay. I
4 mean, would you suggest then that it's fair to
5 say that the cut -- some of the cuts and the
6 financial problems with basic education with the
7 local school districts has crept over to a
8 funding problem, in some cases, for community
9 colleges?

10 MS. SHANBLATT: I think that's true; and
11 in some cases it's more direct for those
12 colleges that, I think, are funded by school
13 districts or groups of school districts. I
14 think those challenges are a little different,
15 but many counties in the Commonwealth also are
16 struggling.

17 And so the problems are not dissimilar;
18 but they might be from different buckets, I
19 guess, is a way to put it.

20 MINORITY CHAIRMAN MARKOSEK: Okay.
21 Thank you. I never really kind of thought of
22 things in that way, but I appreciate your
23 responses. Thank you.

24 MS. SHANBLATT: Sure.

25 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

1 It's customary that Chairman Markosek and I
2 invite the Chairmen of the standing Committees
3 in the House. And this afternoon we have with
4 us the Republican Chair of the House Education
5 Committee, Representative Stan Saylor.

6 CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Good afternoon. If
7 you would, and you don't have to all respond to
8 it, however you want to do it; if you want to
9 follow up each other, whatever you feel best
10 with, my question pertains to: How are you
11 making sure that you're meeting the needs of the
12 industry today, particularly the businessmen
13 need, businessmen and women of this
14 Commonwealth?

15 One of the things I hear as Chairman of
16 the Education Committee is that we're not
17 training people for certain jobs. We know we
18 have a major shortage in welding and we did have
19 in nursing and engineering and so on and so
20 forth. I could go on for quite a ways of what
21 we need.

22 How are you making sure that you as a
23 community college are making sure you're meeting
24 those needs? And exactly what are you doing
25 with -- another key thing here in education is

1 early childhood education, as well, what you're
2 doing there.

3 MR. LEARY: If I may just comment on the
4 first observation and question that you have in
5 terms of how do we ensure that we meet the needs
6 of, particularly, the workforce needs?

7 And I think the word collaboration,
8 although sometimes it's overused at times in
9 today's society, I think it's emblematic of what
10 community colleges have been very successful in
11 doing over the last several years.

12 And one example that I would point to in
13 terms of Luzerne County Community College is,
14 that we partnered with Northampton Area
15 Community College and Lehigh Carbon Community
16 College to secure a Department of Labor Grant, a
17 \$10-million grant, that basically allowed us to
18 define, number one, the high-demand occupations
19 in each region to be able to purchase equipment
20 and technology to support meeting the
21 educational needs of those occupational
22 demands, also to be able to retrain some of our
23 faculty to meet it.

24 And in each instance, each college had
25 different programs, academic programs, that met

1 their regional need, which I think is one of the
2 most important facets of community colleges. In
3 our area, we identified diesel, welding, and
4 advanced manufacturing.

5 And our research indicates, all the
6 surveys indicate, that there will be demands in
7 those occupations for the next ten years. So
8 that type of collaboration, that major grant
9 that we were able to secure is the type of -- I
10 think it's very incumbent upon us as the leaders
11 of community colleges, to understand that no
12 longer an education which was one time the
13 approach, we can no longer go it alone. We have
14 to join together and we have to do it in the
15 context of what is the regional demand.

16 So I think that that is the first
17 example in both our instance and what both the
18 other community colleges are doing. And I'm
19 very happy to say that in those areas this year,
20 our first year, and we turned this around in
21 less than 18 months, which is very challenging
22 to do all of the equipment and training, the
23 faculty and the technology.

24 We have full programs in each of those
25 areas this year, and I think we need to be very

1 cognizant of our obligation to continue to do
2 that to meet regional demands.

3 MS. SHANBLATT: I will not spend a lot
4 of time on the industry piece, except to say
5 that we all collaborate with industry partners.
6 We have folks from industry on our advisory
7 councils to help with program development and to
8 make sure programs are up to date. We work with
9 the Workforce Development Board whose role
10 really is to serve employers, to understand what
11 local needs are; so we spend a lot of time doing
12 that.

13 But I would like to answer your question
14 on early childhood education. We do have an
15 early-childhood education program at Bucks, as
16 do many other of the community colleges. So we
17 are training the people who will be
18 early-childhood educators.

19 We even have a childcare center on our
20 campus, for both faculty and staff, as well as
21 for students who are parents; and we use that
22 center as a laboratory for our big students, not
23 our little students, as a place where they can
24 learn.

25 We also go out to many childcare centers

1 and actually provide education, course work,
2 onsite after the workday is done, right there;
3 so that they all can begin to learn new skills
4 and be better able to meet those challenges that
5 we know are there. So we work very actively in
6 early-childhood education.

7 CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: The only other
8 question I had was, it had to do with dual
9 enrollment. I know that's something that's
10 becoming more and more prevalent. I've talked
11 to many of the superintendents in the State of
12 Pennsylvania here. And could you explain a
13 little bit what you're doing with dual
14 enrollment and how it's working and how you
15 accomplish some of these things with the school
16 districts?

17 MS. SHANBLATT: Go ahead, Tom.

18 MR. LEARY: Well, that is one of the
19 achievements we've had over the last several
20 years, is establishing partnerships with school
21 districts. And in the past three years at
22 Luzerne, we have gone from an enrollment of
23 approximately 500 students in our early college
24 to over 1,000 students.

25 And we have not only focused on areas in

1 terms of the general education areas, but we
2 have also aligned with our career technical
3 centers so that we're also developing and
4 enhancing the skills that they're learning, the
5 students are learning there, as well as having
6 them on our main campus to further enhance their
7 opportunities in those skill areas.

8 One of the -- I think one of the unique
9 aspects that I would describe that we're very
10 pleased with, is a situation, I think, that
11 really demonstrates how the high schools and the
12 colleges can work together.

13 About a year-and-a-half ago, teachers in
14 the Wilkes-Barre Area School District identified
15 a situation where many students were coming to
16 the community college and were having a
17 difficult time in math.

18 So to address that issue, the teachers
19 in the math department at Wilkes-Barre met with
20 our faculty and our math department and they
21 developed a remediation program specifically to
22 address that need.

23 We offered the course in the fall term
24 to 86 students; and at the end of that term,
25 approximately -- I think, 73 students had

1 completed that remediation course successfully
2 and subsequently completed a Math 101
3 requirement, which is a credit-level course that
4 they could apply to Luzerne County Community
5 College.

6 I think the importance of that is in
7 addition to meeting what is sometimes a very
8 frustrating situation for students in the math
9 area, we were able to increase those students
10 self-confidence, their esteem, their confidence
11 in going onto college.

12 And I'm proud to say that 58 of those
13 students are enrolled at Luzerne County
14 Community College this year and are being
15 successful.

16 I mentioned that as, I think, a model
17 program for what we're attempting to do in the
18 area, to work with local high schools to help
19 facilitate the learning opportunities for
20 students. And I see more of that in terms of
21 getting students ready, getting them ready, and
22 prepared for college.

23 CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: The only thing in
24 closing is just, I agree with Chairman Adolph,
25 and I've said this for years, our community

1 colleges and our trade schools in Pennsylvania
2 are way undervalued.

3 What you guys do for business and
4 industry needs to be repeated, and we need more
5 of what you do out there. I hear it all the
6 time from employers. So I want to thank you for
7 your dedication and what you do for our
8 students. You save a lot of our students a lot
9 of debt, because they can start out at a
10 community college and go on to a four-year
11 school and all the other things that you do for
12 our workforce; so I want to thank you as the
13 Chairman for the Education Committee.

14 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 MR. LEARY: Thank you.

16 MS. SHANBLATT: Thank you, sir.

17 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you,
18 Chairman. Representative Kinsey.

19 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Thank you, Mr.
20 Chairman. Also, I want to echo Chairman
21 Saylor's sentiments. I think that the work that
22 you do is really extraordinary in regards to
23 helping our students.

24 And, Dr. Shanblatt, when you talked
25 about 93 percent of the students, is it students

1 or folks in the workforce job-training program
2 that went into the workforce?

3 MS. SHANBLATT: That was in a particular
4 workforce training program.

5 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Okay. But 93
6 percent is remarkable. I have a background
7 doing workforce development, and I don't recall
8 achieving 93 percent, so it's remarkable.

9 MS. SHANBLATT: Well, we did a lot of
10 things in that program --

11 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Well, again,
12 kudos to you and your staff there.

13 MS. SHANBLATT: -- that were used -- you
14 know, really helpful, prescreening; we involved
15 the employers at the beginning. They actually
16 interviewed potential applicants to the program.

17 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Great.

18 MS. SHANBLATT: And we only took
19 students that were quote, hireable.

20 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Okay. How long
21 is the training program for anyway?

22 MS. SHANBLATT: It was 13 weeks.

23 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Thirteen weeks.

24 MS. SHANBLATT: Wasn't real long, but
25 couldn't miss a day; couldn't be late. We

1 actually have to teach employability skills at
2 the same time as we're teaching welding or CNC.
3 Employers aren't comfortable when -- even if
4 you show up 10 minutes late, that's not really
5 okay. So we enforce those same sorts of rules.
6 And the students responded in amazing ways.
7 They got it. And that was really nice. You put
8 those expectations there and they meet or exceed
9 those expectations when they know what's
10 expected of them. It was very propound.

11 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Well, again, I
12 think that when someone hears of a 93-percent
13 placement rate, that's remarkable. So kudos to
14 you and your staff, as well.

15 Earlier today, we had the state-related
16 colleges and the state-run colleges here. And
17 one of the questions I sort of asked earlier
18 was, and I'm going to ask this from a reverse
19 angle this time; but I asked, I think, specific
20 of Temple University, the agreement that they
21 had with -- I'm from the City of Philadelphia,
22 so we're looking at Philadelphia Community
23 College there. And the agreement of taking the
24 transfers of a community college into a
25 four-year institute, you all are affiliated with

1 community colleges. And I guess the question
2 I'm asking you is, Have there been any problems
3 related to the transfer of credits from a
4 community college in your area to a four-year
5 institution? And if so, can you tell us what
6 they are, if you've experienced any of those
7 problems?

8 MR. LEARY: Actually, I think that's one
9 of the significant areas of improvement, the
10 cooperation between community colleges and the
11 public and private sectors, as well, in
12 dual-admission agreements.

13 And I'm very happy to say that Luzerne
14 County Community College also has an agreement
15 with Temple University --

16 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Oh, great.

17 MR. LEARY: -- for the past, I think,
18 five or six years; and we have a number of
19 students who transfer from Luzerne to Temple.
20 But that is one of the most important
21 considerations for students in terms of the
22 pathway to a four-year college degree.

23 And, for example, the dual-admission
24 agreements that exist today as compared to what
25 existed maybe six or seven years ago, is that we

1 have been able to formulate an agreement with
2 some state universities, as well as public and
3 private four-year institutions that identify
4 programs, total comprehensive transfer of
5 credits and scholarship awards in the junior and
6 senior year, contingent upon a student
7 completing their Associate degree at Luzerne
8 County Community College.

9 So today's situation is different for
10 our students that are coming to the community
11 colleges compared to the way it was; because
12 they can sit down, look at a college, look at
13 the program and know that they're going to
14 accepted and full transfer of credits.

15 The idea of academic planning, as well
16 as financial planning, is so important,
17 particularly with student debt being a very
18 important issue in today's world. Parents can
19 help their sons and daughters who are juniors
20 and seniors plan a four-year degree through a
21 community college, and that is becoming more and
22 more popular for families in our region.

23 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Great. Thank
24 you.

25 MS. BOLDEN: Well, I would say that we

1 do have the articulation agreements through
2 TAOC, but in addition we've been working very
3 closely with our partners and the public and
4 private sector to establish relationships
5 outside of TAOC.

6 And as I mentioned in my remarks, we
7 partnered with several of the public and private
8 colleges and universities, where they either
9 offer their courses on a community college
10 campus so that the students don't have to leave
11 their local community, or we have transfer
12 agreements that allow the students to transfer
13 with full junior standing.

14 So I think the good news is that
15 everyone in higher ed is cognizant of the
16 challenges, particularly financial challenges
17 that students have and we are all working
18 together to make sure that students can transfer
19 without losing time or credit.

20 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Great. Good.
21 Glad to hear that. The other question I have
22 very briefly, is that with the budget impasse, I
23 received calls from some of my constituents who
24 were basically telling me that they had a hard
25 time enrolling because of the delay with PHEAA.

1 Is that something that was a major
2 problem that you've experienced at any of your
3 universities -- or colleges? I'm sorry.

4 MS. SHANBLATT: We were able to flag
5 those students that were slated to get PHEAA
6 dollars.

7 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Okay.

8 MS. SHANBLATT: So that they were
9 allowed to enroll for the spring semester, even
10 though they technically had a balance due
11 because we did not get our PHEAA payment. So we
12 weren't allowed to actually put the money on
13 their accounts. PHEAA told us not to do that
14 because the money hadn't been appropriated, so I
15 get that.

16 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Sure.

17 MS. SHANBLATT: But we didn't want to
18 have the students not be able to register, so we
19 did a fairly manual workaround so that those
20 students were not negatively impacted. And we
21 also realized that if something happened that
22 the money didn't come through, we would be on
23 the hook for it; and we took that gamble.

24 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Okay. Well, I
25 just want to say I appreciate the work that each

1 of you have done with our students; and I just
2 want to say thank you for your hard work, and
3 hopefully we can get the work done up here so
4 you won't have to be faced with that type of
5 situation again in the future.

6 Thank you, all. Thank you, Mr.
7 Chairman.

8 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.
9 Representative Jim Marshall.

10 MS. SHANBLATT: Thank you.
11 Representative Jim Marshall.

12 REPRESENTATIVE MARSHALL: Thank you, Mr.
13 Chairman. I have a few comments and a couple of
14 questions. I will try to be brief and keep it
15 within our goal time limit.

16 I'm familiar, very familiar, with Beaver
17 County Community College. In Beaver County,
18 we're very proud of that college. We have an
19 excellent nationally-renowned aviation program
20 there. I'm somewhat familiar with BC3, Butler
21 Community.

22 I took a firefighters class there more
23 than a decade ago, and I learned that they also
24 have a very unique program with their culinary
25 school there. They're partnering with another

1 business and another type of situation where
2 they can partner with private and public.

3 So I agree with Representative Saylor --
4 Chairman Saylor. I'll make sure I get that
5 right, Chairman. I'm very, very interested in
6 workforce development. And specifically in
7 Beaver County, I know that there's programs that
8 you're considering on STEM and a process
9 technology.

10 If you could expand on that. And is
11 there any other unique course that the other
12 community colleges are offering?

13 MS. BOLDEN: Sure. Thank you. So 55
14 percent of the awards that the community
15 colleges conferred last year were in STEM
16 fields. We understand that that is a growing
17 field and we need to increase the number of
18 students that are pursuing those careers.

19 In the western part of the state, many
20 of our colleges are beginning to work closely
21 with industry partners to align for the expected
22 cracker plant that's going to be built in that
23 area of the state. But there are unique
24 programs across the state, from -- I'm thinking
25 of the vet tech program that is at Northampton

1 Community College. It's the only one in the
2 state. At Delaware County Community College,
3 where the Chairman may be familiar, they have a
4 program to teach folks how to, not just be
5 medical assistants but also to learn sign
6 language so that they can communicate with
7 individuals in the medical setting that use sign
8 language.

9 So there are unique programs across the
10 board. And we also try not to duplicate
11 programs. So in the western part of the state
12 where you're from, we see that Beaver County
13 Community College is actually replicating some
14 of their high school academies in Allegheny
15 County, in coordination with the Community
16 College of Allegheny County so that they don't
17 have to completely reinvent the program.

18 They merely can take the expertise of
19 the Community College of Beaver County and
20 provide those opportunities for students in
21 Allegheny County, as well.

22 REPRESENTATIVE MARSHALL: And is there a
23 mapping program that they're working on in
24 Beaver and Allegheny?

25 MS. BOLDEN: A mapping? They very well

1 may be. I can get that information for you.

2 REPRESENTATIVE MARSHALL: Okay. Thank
3 you. I appreciate that. That's all I have
4 right now. Thank you. And thank you, Mr.
5 Chairman.

6 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you,
7 Representative. Representative Daley.

8 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: Thank you, Mr.
9 Chairman. And thank you for being here. It's
10 got to be tough to be the last group up, and
11 thank you for sticking around and answering our
12 questions.

13 Dr. Shanblatt, I wanted to just
14 acknowledge what you said about setting
15 expectations and helping the students and really
16 responding to them. I think it actually helps
17 them and makes them feel valuable.

18 MS. SHANBLATT: Yeah. Absolutely.

19 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: And, you know,
20 that they're important to the whole process.
21 And I do understand that self-skills, having had
22 to train people who were already working; it's a
23 tough time.

24 MS. SHANBLATT: Uh-huh.

25 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: I live in

1 Montgomery County. We have a fabulous community
2 college that makes great attempts to keep their
3 state representatives always in the loop and
4 good communications, which I think is really
5 terrific. We appreciate that.

6 My question is related to funding. It's
7 appropriations. So I know we need to deliver
8 predictable and reliable funding to invest in
9 higher education. But we're still in dire need
10 of a completed balanced budget for 2015-'16
11 that will help to solve the structural deficit
12 that we face for the upcoming budget year.

13 But based on the testimony this
14 Committee heard last week and earlier this week,
15 the only way we can solve this problem and
16 provide the resources you need is with
17 additional sustainable revenue.

18 So my question is, What happens if we
19 don't make that investment? What needs will go
20 unmet in the community colleges? And I guess in
21 some ways I'm asking for, What's the next
22 worst-case scenario for you?

23 MS. BOLDEN: Well, I'll talk about it
24 from a statewide perspective; and then I'll let
25 the Presidents talk about their individual

1 colleges.

2 But what will happen is, that we will
3 not make progress in Pennsylvania towards
4 increasing our degree-attainment goals. And we
5 know that investing in higher education and
6 increasing the level of college attainment
7 across the board in degrees is one of the
8 single-most important things that can drive
9 economic growth.

10 So instead of talking about starting new
11 programs, which President Shanblatt talked
12 about, the colleges will be forced to continue
13 talking about what to cut and how do we do more
14 with less.

15 And if those revenues don't materialize,
16 I do have a concern that the figure of students
17 paying more and more, anywhere from 42 to 66
18 percent of the cost, if the colleges are to
19 remain viable, those costs will unfortunately,
20 likely, be passed on to students. And that will
21 begin to erode at the accessibility of community
22 colleges, which is at the core of what the
23 community college does in Pennsylvania and, in
24 fact, what was envisioned when community
25 colleges were established. It's to provide that

1 opportunity for students that might not
2 otherwise have the resources to pursue
3 postsecondary study elsewhere. So that's the
4 statewide perspective.

5 I'll ask the Presidents if they want to
6 speak from their college perspective.

7 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: Thank you.

8 MS. SHANBLATT: I'll speak just a little
9 bit about it. I am in the process of developing
10 my fourth annual budget at Bucks, having been
11 there 3-and-a-half years now.

12 Every year, we have -- because of
13 increases, some of which we have no control
14 over, and I don't want to go into those; but if
15 you want me to, I will -- we have to cut just in
16 order to keep a flat budget. Right? So in
17 order to keep our budget at \$69 million, we have
18 to cut things because otherwise we would be
19 above that. We keep cutting and cutting. The
20 first year I cut 2-and-a-half million; the
21 second, 1.5 million; last year, another 1.5;
22 this year, over a million. Trying not to impact
23 instruction, trying our best.

24 Our budget office is so thin, I don't
25 know how they do the work they do now. Because

1 we've tried -- you know, purchasing is thin.
2 These areas that you think don't really matter
3 or whatever, but everybody has to be able to do
4 their job in order for the place to function.

5 There's no place -- there's nowhere else
6 to cut at this point. I mean, we are down
7 literally to the bone; and so the next thing we
8 will have to start looking at is programs.
9 And not just, do we start a new program; but
10 what current programs do we scale back?

11 And it's, essentially, come to that,
12 after years and years of flat or declining
13 funding. It's very difficult to see our way
14 forward to serving really the diverse needs, not
15 only of our students, but also of our local
16 employers. Because they want high-tech,
17 high-skilled things, right, whether it's in
18 healthcare or advanced manufacturing, IT. Those
19 things aren't free.

20 So it's a huge -- I don't mean to be
21 dire, but it's where we are.

22 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: Well, I did ask
23 for a worst-case.

24 MS. SHANBLATT: You did.

25 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: And I actually --

1 I think part of it was because, you know, I
2 worked in higher ed in the administrative area;
3 and so I know how we, as staff, reacted when we
4 were consistently asked to be doing more with
5 less.

6 And, like, it does come to a point where
7 doing more with less is -- you know, you end up
8 doing less with less.

9 MS. SHANBLATT: It becomes
10 counterproductive.

11 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: It really does.
12 So I appreciate what you're saying. And it must
13 also then feel as though the investments that
14 you've made in building a really great community
15 college that really serves is -- it's going to
16 be harder and harder, if not impossible.

17 MS. SHANBLATT: It's difficult to
18 maintain the quality. We're very proud, just
19 like Montgomery and Delaware and the other
20 colleges in the state; we're very proud of the
21 quality of our instruction, of our programs, and
22 of how well our students do when they transfer;
23 but there are limits to maintaining that
24 instructional quality. And I feel like we're
25 getting rather close.

1 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: Thank you.

2 MR. LEARY: If you really think about,
3 you know, the investment just in terms of
4 people's future, I think community colleges have
5 proven over the last 50 years, that we are very
6 sensitive to maintaining and controlling costs.
7 I think we've proved that.

8 But it really reaches the point where if
9 you think about the number of individuals that
10 we are impacting in a very positive way, whether
11 that be in a 13-week program, whether it be in
12 Associate degrees that lead to Bachelor's and
13 Master's degrees, I think we are the one -- I
14 hesitate to use the word one -- we are one of
15 the best hopes for individuals and families who
16 need a quality higher education.

17 And I think if we do not have some
18 increases after experiencing level funding for
19 so long, it's going to adversely affect our
20 ability to continue to serve those needs. I
21 think it helps Pennsylvania in workforce, and it
22 demonstrates that a quality education people can
23 look at and say it's reasonably priced; we can
24 afford it, but we need the help to make sure
25 that we maintain quality.

1 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: And it rang home
2 what you were talking about with the four-year
3 college and spending a couple of years in
4 community. One of my nieces did that, and her
5 mother was not really so sure she liked that
6 idea; but she's at Temple University now and
7 she's doing really well.

8 And I do not think that she has
9 regretted one moment of her time in community
10 college. So thank you, all, for what you do. I
11 think it's really important to Pennsylvania's
12 economy and crucial to kids who either are not
13 quite ready to go to, you know, the four-year
14 college or not sure what they want to do and for
15 those people who need to fit it in because they
16 realize they need more education to get a better
17 job. So thank you. Thank you so much.

18 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.
19 Representative Sue Helm.

20 REPRESENTATIVE HELM: Thank you.
21 Locally, we have Harrisburg Area Community
22 College. And HACC isn't in my district, but it
23 borders my district. And several years ago,
24 DGS, Department of General Services, I got wind
25 that they were planning to build a shooting

1 range in my district to train the Capitol
2 Police.

3 So I have nothing against shooting
4 ranges; however, I didn't want it where it
5 was -- what they planned to do, it was two
6 private colleges or schools very close to where
7 the shooting range was.

8 So I talked to DGS, and they didn't
9 think this was going to work; but I arranged
10 meetings with HACC and DGS and now the Capitol
11 Police are being trained at HACC; and it's
12 worked out wonderful. It's saving the state
13 money, and there's no shooting range in my
14 district.

15 Also, many years ago, I did attend HACC.
16 And, at that time, my employer, as long as we
17 maintained a certain grade, they reimbursed us.
18 So I paid back, basically, nothing for my
19 two-year HACC education. But I don't know that
20 they do that anymore.

21 I just wondered, are there businesses in
22 the areas that do this for community colleges?

23 MS. SHANBLATT: There are some. We
24 certainly -- we call them third-party pays.
25 There are some employers that will pay for their

1 employees to attend a college. I think the
2 number is down from what it was years ago, at
3 least in my experience.

4 Tom, I don't know what your experience
5 is.

6 MR. LEARY: Well, there are some. There
7 are not as many as there were at one time. But
8 I'll give you an example where I think that, if
9 you think about the health profession, our
10 outstanding nursing program, which leads to a
11 registered nurse, by attaining that Associate
12 degree and going to work at a hospital, many
13 hospitals are paying the tuition for students
14 who are working in the hospital as long as they
15 make a commitment to stay for a minimum, I
16 believe in most instances, of five years.

17 So many students, many people who aspire
18 for the nursing profession, can complete an
19 Associate degree and then have the financial
20 opportunity to go on and receive a Bachelor's
21 degree, because they've chosen the path through
22 a community college.

23 REPRESENTATIVE HELM: I just haven't
24 heard too much about that. I think that would
25 be something to get the word out. You might

1 have more students, you know, going to school.

2 MS. SHANBLATT: We just have to get more
3 employers on board, too, I think is part of it.

4 REPRESENTATIVE HELM: All right. Thank
5 you.

6 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.
7 Representative Maria Donatucci.

8 REPRESENTATIVE DONATUCCI: Thank you,
9 Chairman; and thank you for being here today.
10 Can you tell us what the cost is of running one
11 of the smallest community colleges? And I'm
12 asking, because our community college system
13 doesn't have full geographic coverage across the
14 Commonwealth.

15 So I'm wondering, what would be the
16 process to start up a small community college in
17 a part of the state that doesn't have access to
18 one? Because your schools are so valuable to
19 students and would be such an asset and maybe
20 the start of education for people in a lot of
21 the rural areas.

22 MS. BOLDEN: Uh-huh. So the college
23 budgets range from a -- the smallest college,
24 which is Pennsylvania Highlands; their operating
25 budget is \$13.5 million, to one of the largest,

1 which is the Community College of Philadelphia;
2 and their operating budget is \$195 million. But
3 I can speak directly to your question about the
4 service to rural areas of the state, because
5 that is something that we are concerned about as
6 a sector, as well; and we want to make sure the
7 community college program is available to every
8 Pennsylvanian.

9 And, actually, we see a lot of instances
10 where community college programming is expanding
11 to other areas of the state. For example,
12 online learning is one of the fastest-growing
13 parts of community college education.

14 Currently, about 20 percent of our
15 students take at least one online course. In
16 addition to that, the colleges are reaching out
17 where there is partnerships with local areas
18 that want to bring community college programs
19 and they're leveraging the expertise of the
20 community colleges that already exist.

21 In order to start a community college,
22 there's a process outlined in statute; and you
23 go through the State Board of Education to
24 accomplish that. But it is a little easier for
25 an existing community college to partner with

1 someone. And I'll let Mr. Leary talk about that
2 in a minute. And that way we can expand and
3 serve more students. The Community College of
4 Butler County is a good example, and they have
5 operated a program in Brockway; and that program
6 has seen an 80-percent enrollment increase since
7 it opened in 2013.

8 So the model is there, particularly when
9 you focus on programs and not establishing all
10 the infrastructure that goes around a school;
11 and you may not have the demand or the students
12 to serve it. And Mr. Leary can talk about that.

13 MR. LEARY: Well, we have partnered, for
14 example, with Northumberland County and we have
15 a site in Shamokin and serving approximately
16 450 students. And we are in a region where
17 there are many underserved students, so we are
18 constantly exploring how we might be able to
19 facilitate partnerships where we can go into an
20 area and establish a site and make certain that
21 we also look at what are the occupational
22 demands of that area so that we can prepare
23 academic programs that will meet that specific
24 region.

25 REPRESENTATIVE DONATUCCI: Thank you.

1 And, Mr. Leary, you had mentioned the WEDNetPa
2 program that helps employers with customized
3 job training. I remember years ago when I
4 worked for the Redevelopment Authority in
5 Philadelphia that the city, in conjunction with
6 the Philadelphia Community College, offered
7 classes and credits that we paid for but we went
8 to classes offsite.

9 And I was wondering, does such a program
10 still exist between municipality agencies and a
11 community college? And also, can you expand on
12 the WEDNet program?

13 MR. LEARY: Well, basically, we're
14 involved in a variety of training in terms of
15 either onsite on our campus or at that
16 particular site.

17 For example -- and it's small businesses
18 to larger companies -- we have a business in
19 Mountain Top, Pennsylvania called Wyman-Gordon;
20 and I think this is an example of how community
21 colleges can be very flexible.

22 They're receiving WEDNet Pennsylvania
23 funds, and they use our trainers to provide CNC
24 operation and CNC programming and training. The
25 company supplies the structural forgings for

1 aerospace and energy markets, and approximately
2 20 workers will receive this type of training.
3 That is the type of, I think, flexibility that
4 you need. So we can move right into a company
5 and provide what that small business needs.

6 And when we think about it not only in
7 terms of nationally but in the state, much of
8 the training opportunities are in small
9 businesses; and I think that's where at Luzerne
10 County Community College, I think those types of
11 partnerships are providing the chances for
12 people to enhance their skills so they can
13 either become more mobile in the workforce or
14 the company can have a good, trained workforce
15 that is technologically advancing.

16 REPRESENTATIVE DONATUCCI: Thank you.
17 Are they still doing anything with
18 municipalities, that you know of?

19 MR. LEARY: Municipalities in terms
20 of -- in areas -- I'm sorry.

21 REPRESENTATIVE DONATUCCI: Like, in
22 Philadelphia, like I said, I have taken courses
23 when I worked with the Redevelopment Authority
24 in conjunction offered, you know, through the
25 city. A community college taught it, and we

1 actually went to City Hall to have the classes.
2 And I don't know if they still have any programs
3 like that.

4 MS. BOLDEN: I don't know, but we can
5 certainly look into that.

6 REPRESENTATIVE DONATUCCI: Thank you.

7 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Representative
8 Warren Kampf.

9 REPRESENTATIVE KAMPF: Good afternoon.
10 First of all, just a comment quick: The help
11 you provide to the workforce training, you know,
12 the partnerships with our employers and with the
13 State in trying to enhance the educational
14 experience and the, you know, sort of the rest
15 of the life of an individual who's at your
16 institutions is just awesome. And listening to
17 it is really great to hear. So I thank you for
18 highlighting those things.

19 MS. BOLDEN: Thank you.

20 REPRESENTATIVE KAMPF: Back to the sort
21 of one-third, one-third, one-third formula, did
22 the -- did that include any PHEAA dollars? You
23 know, I guess some of your students get those,
24 so I just wondered.

25 MS. BOLDEN: Yeah, they do. But the

1 figures I cited do not include PHEAA grants.

2 REPRESENTATIVE KAMPF: Okay. So that's
3 in the tuition piece, and you'd have to extract
4 that. If there's a way to do that, or give us a
5 sample, I'd like to see it.

6 MS. BOLDEN: Okay. We'll work on it.

7 REPRESENTATIVE KAMPF: All right. Thank
8 you. And then lastly, you know, the funding
9 situation and getting dollars to you, put that
10 aside for a second. Are there any kind of
11 cost-saving, expense-side things that have been
12 done which, you know, could actually be called
13 efficiencies, like something you found that
14 you're proud of, you know, that made you more
15 efficient or things that you're working on in
16 that area that you might talk about?

17 MS. BOLDEN: Well, I'm sure the colleges
18 can give you specific examples. But I can tell
19 you that from 2012 to 2014, the colleges shed
20 1,589 employees. So as a sector, we are much
21 smaller than we were in 2012.

22 And they have all implemented
23 cost-savings initiatives because they, of
24 course, receive an appropriation reduction of
25 \$23.5 million; and so cost cutting is not new to

1 the colleges.

2 REPRESENTATIVE KAMPF: I know. I was
3 trying to talk about efficiencies that somebody
4 might actually say, you know, wow, that was
5 something we really discovered that's not a bad
6 thing. That's all.

7 MS. SHANBLATT: Sure, I can mention one
8 or two things. There are things that we
9 probably should be doing, all of us. One of the
10 things we've certainly been able to find some
11 efficiencies in is utilities.

12 We spent some money to run a natural gas
13 pipeline to our main campus. We did not have
14 natural gas there. And it costs us
15 significantly less, even with the cost of the
16 pipeline over several years, to heat the campus
17 with natural gas than it did with fuel oil.

18 So while we had to run -- or the utility
19 had to run a mile-and-a-half of pipe for us,
20 we're still saving money, even now while we're
21 paying for the pipe. So that was one thing.

22 Lots of other -- you know, lots of
23 little savings. We've cut our water consumption
24 in half in about ten years on campus, which is
25 pretty significant, because then that means our

1 sewage is half, also. So the Bucks County Sewer
2 Authority really likes that. So lots of things
3 -- lots of infrastructure things that, you know,
4 if you do one of them, it doesn't amount to
5 much; but if you do a lot of them over time,
6 which is what we've done to be more efficient;
7 because they actually save money in the end as
8 well.

9 We've done a lot of things there. We
10 have cut staff, as Elizabeth mentioned, mainly
11 through attrition and retirement. But, again,
12 it leads to a smaller payroll. We've also done
13 some things with purchasing so that we are now
14 purchasing products through a consortium of
15 colleges and universities, and we get basically
16 bulk savings. It's, I guess, sort of Costco
17 for colleges.

18 You know, we buy a lot of things, like
19 paper and pens and lots of things; and so we're
20 part of a large consortium that includes, I
21 think, both Temple and Penn; and so we can sort
22 of piggy-back on their big spending to get
23 better prices on things.

24 So those are some of the things we've
25 done that you might not ever see if you came to

1 campus.

2 REPRESENTATIVE KAMPF: Right. Okay.

3 Great.

4 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

5 Representative Marguerite Quinn.

6 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: Thanks, Mr.

7 Chairman; and thank you so much for being here.

8 I know you've had a long day. The only good
9 part about going so late is that you're going to
10 -- or you've already missed that Harrisburg
11 traffic leaving town.

12 It's been a delight to hear all of the
13 great work you do. And I will say I'm very
14 proud to have Bucks County Community College,
15 not with one, but with three campuses, none of
16 which are in my legislative district; but I'm
17 certainly familiar and do my best to support.
18 Thank you for your great work.

19 Years ago, probably my first or second
20 term, I remember going down to the college in
21 Newtown for a meeting and learned then that one
22 of the main problems then, was a student would
23 get out of the community college and their
24 credits weren't being accepted at the
25 State-Relateds or the state system of Higher

1 Education. I don't believe I've heard that
2 today. So has there been an improvement on
3 that?

4 MS. SHANBLATT: Yeah. I think there's
5 been a very significant improvement through a
6 number of things, through the TAOC agreement,
7 which we all work with in the PASSHE schools
8 with the state-relateds, and also with private
9 schools.

10 You know, we have get articulations with
11 Delaware Valley University. In fact, they're
12 going to be on the Newtown Campus offering
13 junior and senior level courses next year so
14 that students can get their Bachelor degree
15 right in Newtown.

16 You think it wouldn't make a difference,
17 but it does. There's bus service to Newtown.
18 That's a huge difference for students. So it's
19 gotten -- it's a lot of work to manage all of
20 these agreements with everyone.

21 But I think it's -- as President Leary
22 mentioned, we have made tremendous progress, I
23 would say, in the last six or seven years. You
24 know, they are all sort of one-on-one
25 agreements. You know, Bucks has an agreement

1 with everybody; Luzerne has an agreement with
2 everybody, and on and on. But we have some
3 templates now, and so it's much easier.

4 The other important thing, and I think
5 students are finally getting this message, is
6 students need to talk to an advisor so that they
7 take the right courses, they take transfer
8 courses.

9 So they need to talk to someone so that
10 they're not just choosing on their own and
11 perhaps not choosing wisely.

12 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: That's a good
13 start.

14 MS. SHANBLATT: So we have mandatory
15 advising now at Bucks. Every student has to see
16 an advisor before they can register. So we want
17 to make sure they're on track and not taking
18 something that won't transfer.

19 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: That's good. I'm
20 really glad to hear that there's been an
21 improvement there and obviously to the whole
22 community college community. No pun intended.
23 If you need more assistance with that, we really
24 are pleased with the full range of privates and
25 publics and community colleges that the State

1 has to offer.

2 MS. SHANBLATT: Yeah.

3 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: Dr. Shanblatt,
4 this is just for you. In previous conversations
5 today with testifiers, I mentioned a cost-saving
6 measure introduced by Bucks County a couple of
7 years ago; and I believe you may have just been
8 coming on board then when the county conducted
9 an eligibility audit for --

10 MS. SHANBLATT: Yes. Uh-huh.

11 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: -- it's long in
12 the day. I'm not even saying it right. Was the
13 college included in that, the healthcare
14 eligibility audit for dependents?

15 MS. SHANBLATT: We did our own sort of
16 right after the county finished theirs. We were
17 fortunate in that we found very, very few
18 individuals.

19 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: Right.

20 MS. SHANBLATT: But we still did it. We
21 weren't sure what --

22 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: Yeah. And that's
23 the same thing that happened with Bucks. They
24 didn't know what they'd find and they were kind
25 of wowed.

1 Thanks. I wish you safe travels on your
2 way home.

3 MS. SHANBLATT: Thank you.

4 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: And thanks again
5 for the work that you do for our kids.

6 MR. LEARY: Thank you.

7 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you,
8 Representative. Representative Karen Boback.

9 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: Thank you, Mr.
10 Chairman. Well, I am from Luzerne County; so
11 with your indulgence, I have a few questions for
12 Mr. Leary.

13 And I have to tell you, of course, we
14 grew up together in matters of transparency. In
15 fact, 47 years ago, we were sitting in a high
16 school classroom together, Mr. Leary.

17 MR. LEARY: Yes.

18 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: Who would've
19 thought? I used to think that Luzerne County
20 Community College was the best-kept secret in
21 northeastern Pennsylvania. I truly did.

22 Being an educator myself, when I would
23 bring up Luzerne Community College, people would
24 look, well, where's that? Well, what is it?
25 Well, I can't help but think because of your

1 Presidency, sir, now it's not -- I mean, it's
2 just so accessible, so available; and you're
3 always coming up with something that people want
4 to attend your college for.

5 I do want to ask the breakdown, though,
6 coming from Luzerne. What do you get from the
7 county, Mr. Leary?

8 MR. LEARY: You mean in terms of
9 financial support?

10 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: Yes. Yes.

11 MR. LEARY: The county provides us with
12 approximately \$5-and-a-half million annually.

13 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: So with your
14 budget, like we talked about, one-third,
15 one-third, one-third, what would that --

16 MR. LEARY: Represents approximately 15
17 percent of the budget.

18 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: Fifteen percent.
19 And then with the schools, the high schools that
20 come to Luzerne Community, are they strictly
21 from the county or do you get high school
22 students from outside of the county?

23 MR. LEARY: We have students enrolled at
24 the college that come from about 85 different
25 school districts, so it's -- we're well beyond

1 the boundaries of Luzerne County. Although, 90
2 percent of our students still reside within
3 Luzerne County.

4 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: So do those
5 school districts pay into the pot, also, even
6 though they're outside of -- like, every high
7 school that participates, do they give you
8 something?

9 MR. LEARY: No. Because according to
10 basically the Community College Act, the
11 sponsor's either a county or a school district.
12 And as mentioned earlier, four of the school
13 districts -- four of their colleges are
14 sponsored by school districts, the other ten are
15 counties. So we only receive financial support
16 from the county, in terms of a local sponsor.

17 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: And it's just
18 Luzerne County, even though some of the students
19 come from different counties; or do they put in
20 a piece, also, the other counties?

21 MR. LEARY: If the students come from
22 outside the county, then their tuition rate is
23 double the tuition that it is in Luzerne County.
24 That's considered a nonsponsored student.

25 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: I see. All

1 right. Moving on to the courses that you offer,
2 it seems to me, living there, that it's almost
3 as if you design the courses based on need, for
4 example, the fire school that we have. I mean,
5 it's so popular, and the culinary arts school.

6 So is that -- and that's the perception,
7 I think, that if you want it, Luzerne County
8 will create it.

9 MR. LEARY: Yes.

10 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: And I might be
11 off case, but is that basically it?

12 MR. LEARY: I think you summarized that
13 very well. I mean, 85 percent of our graduates
14 remain in the region of northeastern
15 Pennsylvania. So we have to be really prepared
16 to develop programs that are going to meet the
17 regional need.

18 And, also, we are very flexible. So
19 when we get into either training programs or
20 doing some variation of existing programs that
21 meets a particular community need, then we will
22 be able to achieve that over a very short period
23 of time.

24 And I think one of the most important
25 contributors to designing that are local

1 individuals, you know, the employers and in the
2 private sector, who really identify for us and
3 serve on our advisory councils and tell us this
4 is what we need. And how long will it take you
5 to do it? And we will work with you.

6 You know, educators don't have all the
7 answers. We need to have input from the private
8 sector in order to provide us with the direction
9 for programs. So, yes, our programs are
10 basically intended to meet the region's needs
11 and we will develop new programs based on
12 demand.

13 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: I think that's
14 wonderful. And I do have to give kudos out,
15 too. It seems that you've opened your doors to
16 the community, so it doesn't have to be going to
17 school at the county community college. I think
18 it's your gym or your auditorium, many times
19 they host different functions there within the
20 community. So I think that's a great thing, and
21 it makes people feel comfortable knowing that
22 you're an integral part of our community.

23 The other questions, and I'm just going
24 to put these out there, and you certainly can
25 get the answers back to us at your leisure. I

1 was wondering a percentage from community
2 colleges in the Commonwealth, how many will go
3 on to a four-year degree? Number two, how many
4 of your students actually find positions in the
5 field that they have studied? And three, what
6 is their earnings based on the requirements that
7 they had from your college, like in other words,
8 their field of study?

9 So what kind of earnings do they get?
10 And I don't mean to put you on the spot. And I
11 browsed through your wonderful packet, but I
12 didn't see those numbers; so --

13 MS. BOLDEN: Sure. In the interest of
14 time, I can forward those first two answers to
15 you through the Chairman.

16 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: Thank you.

17 MS. BOLDEN: But I can address the third
18 issue, which is, what are the earnings of our
19 students? The only way that the community
20 colleges currently have to access that
21 information is by student surveys that they do
22 personally.

23 And, quite, honestly, being
24 under-resourced, it is difficult to find people
25 to do that. If the Commonwealth had a

1 comprehensive longitudinal data system, we could
2 connect to Labor & Industry data to understand
3 that in a more meaningful way. And I think that
4 you would be impressed.

5 Because the anecdotal evidence that we
6 have suggests that the colleges are doing
7 stellar work in finding folks employment so they
8 can obtain family-sustaining jobs. But,
9 unfortunately, without that data connection, I'm
10 not going to be able to provide that
11 information.

12 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: And that would
13 come through Labor & Industry?

14 MS. BOLDEN: Correct.

15 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: Okay. Thank
16 you. Well, thank you very much for your
17 testimony; and thank you for all the great work
18 you do. And, again, being from Luzerne County,
19 I've seen the proof in the pudding; so keep up
20 the good work.

21 MS. BOLDEN: Thank you.

22 MR. LEARY: Thank you.

23 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: Thank you, Mr.
24 Chairman.

25 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you,

1 Representative. I want to thank you folks for
2 being here today to testify. Hopefully we'll be
3 able to resolve the five percent as soon as
4 possible. We understand, and we're looking
5 forward to working with you. Keep up the good
6 work in educating Pennsylvania residents. Thank
7 you.

8 For the members' information, this
9 Committee will reconvene tomorrow morning at
10 9:30 a.m.; and the first hearing will be with
11 the Department of Corrections and Board of
12 Probation and Parole.

13 Thank you.

14 MS. BOLDEN: Thank you.

15 MS. SHANBLATT: Thank you.

16 (Whereupon the hearing concluded at 5:40
17 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence are contained fully and accurately in the notes taken by me on the within proceedings and that this is a correct transcript of the same.

Tracy L. Markle,
Court Reporter/Notary