State System universities plan spring commencements
Gov. Wolf, state Treasurer Torsella among scheduled speakers

Harrisburg – Gov. Tom Wolf and state Treasurer Joseph M. Torsella will be among those addressing graduates of Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education universities next month during spring commencement ceremonies to be held on the various campuses.

Outstanding alumni, faculty and students also will speak during the programs, which will be held the first two weekends of May. Details of each of the programs follow:

Bloomsburg – State System Chancellor Frank T. Brogan and Board of Governors Chairwoman Cynthia D. Shapira will join Cole Campese, chief information officer and associate vice president at the University of Chicago, as speakers at separate ceremonies to be held May 13 on the university’s academic quadrangle.

Mr. Brogan, a lifelong educator who became the System’s fourth chancellor in October 2013, will address graduates of the Zeigler College of Business and the College of Education at 8:30 a.m. Mr. Campese, who earned his master’s degree from Bloomsburg, will speak to graduates of the College of Science and Technology at noon. Ms. Shapira, president of the Shapira Foundation and a community activist, will speak to graduates of the College of Liberal Arts at 3:30 p.m. Ms. Shapira was elected chair of the Board of Governors last July.

California – University alumnus Thomas L. Bakaitus Jr., partner-in-charge and chief operating officer at Herbein + Company, will address undergraduates and graduates in separate ceremonies, both of which will be held in the Convocation Center. The commencement program for graduate students will be held beginning at 7 p.m., May 12. The undergraduate program will be held at 10 a.m., May 13. Mr. Bakaitus, a certified public accountant, earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in administration and management with a concentration in accounting from Cal U. in 1983.

Cheyney – Gov. Wolf will serve as the keynote speaker at ceremonies scheduled to begin at 11 a.m., May 13, on the historic quadrangle. The governor will receive an honorary degree during the program.

Clarion – State Rep. R. Lee James will address graduates of the Venango campus at 6:30 p.m., May 12, in the Robert W. Rhoades Gymnasium. James was elected to the House of Representatives in 2012. He also serves on the university’s Council of Trustees.

Robert J. “Bo” Garritano will address students from the College of Arts, Education and Sciences at 10 a.m., and Frank Pici will speak at the ceremony for graduates of the College of Business and Information Sciences and the Venango College (Clarion campus programs), at 2 p.m., both on May 13, in Tippin Gymnasium. A 1966 Clarion University graduate, Garritano leads the Clarion Football Alumni Association and the Dare to Dream Scholarship Fund. Pici graduated from the university in 1977 and is an
executive-in-residence in the College of Business and Information Sciences. He also serves on the Board of the Clarion University Foundation, Inc.

**East Stroudsburg** – Nazareth Area School District Superintendent Dennis Riker will be the keynote speaker when graduate students receive their degrees in a program beginning at 6:45 p.m., May 5, in Koehler Fieldhouse. Blaise Delfino, who will receive a Master of Science degree in communication sciences and disorders, will be the student speaker. Delfino won the State System’s Student Business Plan Competition in 2016.

Robert W. Naismith, chairman of JUJAMA, Inc., a company that provides customizable mobile and web applications for conferences and meetings, will speak at separate undergraduate ceremonies on May 6, also in Koehler Fieldhouse. Graduates from the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Education and the University College will participate in the program beginning at 8:45 a.m.; those in the Colleges of Business Management and Health Sciences, at 1:15 p.m. Kelley Bahata, a communication major from York, will be the student speaker during the morning program; and Erin Bienkowski, a business management major from Jackson, N.J., will be the student speaker in the afternoon.

**Edinboro** – Pennsylvania Physician General Dr. Rachel Levine will speak during the undergraduate ceremony at 10 a.m., May 13, in McComb Fieldhouse. Dr. Levine, the highest-ranking transgender official in Pennsylvania, is a lifelong advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students. She will receive an honorary Doctor of Public Service degree during the program.

Graduate students will receive their degrees in a separate program scheduled to begin at 2 p.m. in Louis C. Cole Auditorium – Memorial Hall.

**Indiana** – Three ceremonies are scheduled. The program for students receiving master’s and doctoral degrees will be held at 7 p.m., May 12, in the Performing Arts Center in Fisher Auditorium. Undergraduates will receive their degrees in separate ceremonies scheduled for 9 a.m. and 2 p.m., May 13, in the Kovalchick Convention and Athletic Complex. Students in the Colleges of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and Health and Human Services will receive their degrees during the morning ceremony, while those in the Colleges of Education and Educational Technology, Fine Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Eberly College of Business and Information Technology, will participate in the afternoon program. No speakers are scheduled.

**Kutztown** – Dr. Helen S. Hamlet, chair of the university’s Department of Counselor Education, and Lauren Geldon, who will receive a graduate degree in social work, will speak during the graduate ceremony, which will be held at 5 p.m., May 12, in O’Pake Fieldhouse.

Two ceremonies will be held for undergraduates, both on May 13, also in O’Pake Fieldhouse. Dr. Rudolph C. Mayrhofer, from the Department of Physical Sciences, and Maya Wilson, who will receive a degree in psychology, will address undergraduates from the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Science and Education, at 9 a.m. Dr. Lorri Engstrom, chair of the Department of Sport Management and Leadership Studies, and Jessica Burns, a communication studies major, will speak at 2 p.m. to graduates in the Colleges of Business and Visual and Performing Arts.
**Lock Haven** – Chris Raup, a 1990 Lock Haven University graduate and former Army major, will speak at the graduate commencement ceremony to be held at 7 p.m., May 12, in Price Performance Center. Raup is the owner of Paladin Financial Services, Inc.

State Treasurer Torsella will address undergraduates at 10 a.m., May 13, in Hubert Jack Stadium. Mr. Torsella was elected treasurer in 2016, after previously having served as a U.S. representative to the United Nations and leading the development of the National Constitution Center.

**Mansfield** – Richard Cashman, senior magisterial district judge for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and a 1975 Mansfield graduate, will be the speaker at the university’s 152nd commencement, at 11 a.m., May 13, at Karl Van Norman Field. Cashman served as a district judge in Columbia County for more than 20 years, hearing more than 125,000 cases.

**Millersville** – Dennis Downey, a professor of history and the director of the Millersville University Honors College, will address graduate students receiving their degrees at 6:30 p.m., May 12, in Pucillo Gymnasium. Dr. Downey is a recipient of three awards for historical scholarship; a prolific author of books, articles, essays and chapters; and an advocate for disability rights.

Marie Harf, a national security expert and a communications strategist who was a key member of John Kerry’s team during his tenure leading the U.S. State Department, will address undergraduates at 10 a.m., May 13, at Chryst Field at Biemesderfer Stadium. She is a commentator for Fox News.

**Shippensburg** – Alumna Erin Bailey, associate business analyst in the College of Global Studies at Arcadia University, will address graduate students who will receive their degrees in ceremonies beginning at 7 p.m., May 12, in Luhrs Performing Arts Center.

Tom Abell, co-founder of Gannon Associates Insurance and a member of the Shippensburg University Foundation board, will speak during the undergraduate program, which will be held at 11 a.m., May 13, in Seth Grove Stadium.

**Slippery Rock** – University President Dr. Cheryl Norton will speak at three separate ceremonies for graduate and undergraduate students May 12 and 13 in Morrow Field House. Graduate students will receive their degrees at 7 p.m., May 12. On May 13, undergraduates in the Colleges of Health, Environment and Science and Liberal Arts will participate in a 10 a.m. program and those in the Colleges of Business and Education, will receive their degrees in a program scheduled for 2 p.m.

**West Chester** – Patricia Meiser, a 1969 West Chester graduate, and head of Meiser Sports Consulting, will speak at the undergraduate ceremony for students in the Colleges of Business & Public Managements and Health Sciences, at 10 a.m., May 13. Meiser was named one of the nation’s top 50 women’s sports executives by Street and Smith’s *Sports Business Journal*.

Christopher Asplen, executive director of the National Criminal Justice Association, a member of the International Association of Prosecutors, and an internationally respected legal expert on forensic DNA technology, will address graduates from the Colleges of
Arts & Humanities, Education & Social Work, and Sciences & Mathematics, at 10 a.m., May 14. Asplen earned a degree in history from West Chester.

State Police Commissioner Tyree C. Blocker, who earned a master's degree in criminal just from West Chester, will address graduate students at 4 p.m., May 13. As commissioner, Blocker is in charge of State Police operations and oversees its approximately 6,000 employees, including more than 4500 state troopers.

*Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education is the largest provider of higher education in the Commonwealth, enrolling more than 100,000 degree-seeking students and thousands more in certificate and other career-development programs. Collectively, the 14 universities that comprise the State System offer more than 2,300 degree and certificate programs in more than 530 academic areas. Nearly 520,000 State System university alumni live in Pennsylvania.*

*The State System universities are Bloomsburg, California, Cheyney, Clarion, East Stroudsburg, Edinboro, Indiana, Kutztown, Lock Haven, Mansfield, Millersville, Slippery Rock and West Chester Universities of Pennsylvania. The universities also operate branch campuses in Oil City (Clarion), Freeport and Punxsutawney (IUP), and Clearfield (Lock Haven), and offer classes and programs at several regional centers, including the Dixon University Center in Harrisburg and in Center City in Philadelphia.*

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