

State System consultant provides final report; Board of Governors to craft action plan for the future

Harrisburg – The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) today delivered its final report on the strategic review of Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education—a report commissioned by Chancellor Frank T. Brogan and the Board of Governors. The NCHEMS report builds on the consultant’s public presentation to the Board of Governors last week by providing additional information regarding each of its recommendations.

"Chancellor Brogan and the Board of Governors have demonstrated real courage and leadership in choosing to undertake this system review—looking at every level of the organization and beyond," said NCHEMS President Sally Johnstone. "They recognized that decades of mounting issues had to be addressed in a new way and have taken action to bring them to the forefront."

"With the final report in hand, we will be able to take a much deeper look at the findings and recommendations as we determine the path forward for the State System," said Board of Governors Chair Cynthia D. Shapira. "We will review the report thoroughly in the coming weeks and use it to help shape an action plan for the future that focuses on students first, and ensures they continue to have access to high-quality, high-value education that leads to a career path, at each of our 14 universities."

The report is the result of a widely inclusive process that included more than 120 meetings across the state, including sessions held on each of the State System campuses with students, faculty, staff, alumni, business and community leaders and elected officials. In addition, more than 800 individuals offered comments and suggestions through the website established for the project. NCHEMS also analyzed student, program and financial data, as well as regional and national trends in higher education and workforce demands to provide insights and recommendations.

"The NCHEMS recommendations are rightly focused on the overall organizational challenges facing our System—including its complicated governance structure," said Ms. Shapira. "We must tackle these foundational issues in order to ensure a strong future for our universities. Several of the recommendations focus on issues that the board, Chancellor Brogan and I have pointed to as critically important."

As examples, the report calls for treating the State System more like other higher education entities rather than like a government bureaucracy—thus reducing the regulatory burden that accompanies its status as a state agency. The report also recommends giving the role of the chancellor—supported by the board—more authority in the area of policymaking.

"We asked for an unvarnished, candid perspective, and we got one," Chancellor Brogan said. "I’m fond of saying if a report has things you love and things you

hate, then you probably have a pretty good report. There are some tangible, actionable options for the Board of Governors to pursue as it prepares for the future.

"Now that the final report is done, we can all see much more detail behind the very good recommendations we heard last week from the NCHEMS team. The next step is to decide which to put into action."

"After just a brief review, it's clear that this document pulls no punches," said Ms. Shapira. "These recommendations take on decades of systemic issues that must be addressed now. None of us can afford to ignore the hard questions, which is why we began this process last year. I'm convinced the Board of Governors is prepared to face those big issues head-on."

"To be clear, this report is not a criticism of board members, Chancellor Brogan, or any individuals," said Johnstone. "Instead, it reflects our recommendations regarding the System's outdated processes and governance roles, structures, and traditions that have amassed over years and years."

The final report is available on the NCHEMS website. To view the report, please click [here](#).

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, Shippensburg, 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.