

Board of Governors approves new degrees, streamlines program approval process

Will enable universities to respond more quickly to workforce needs

Harrisburg – The Board of Governors of Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education today approved six new academic programs designed to address workforce needs, even as it moved to streamline the program approval process to enable universities to respond more quickly to address those demands in the future.

The new process, while continuing to ensure proposed programs meet all of the necessary standards, will shorten the time from when a new academic program is conceived until it can be considered for final approval.

“As we move to implement the System Redesign, actions such as this one taken today not only will reduce some of the bureaucracy our universities must navigate; but, more important, will help our students by speeding up the process involved in getting new, innovative programs into the classroom,” said Board of Governors Chairwoman Cynthia D. Shapira. “This addresses all three of our strategic priorities, especially our No. 1 priority of ensuring student success.”

The State System is undertaking a redesign process guided by three strategic priorities: ensuring student success; leveraging university strengths; and transforming the governance and leadership structure.

The universities developed the new degree programs to help prepare students for successful careers in high-demand fields where there currently are not enough potential employees to fill all of the available job openings. Several of the programs respond to findings included in the supply/demand “gap analysis” conducted on behalf of the State System to gauge the current and future needs of employers across Pennsylvania. All of the new programs will begin this fall.

The new degrees are:

- Bachelor of Science in statistics and data science at California University of Pennsylvania
- Bachelor of Science in manufacturing engineering technology at Millersville University of Pennsylvania
- Bachelor of Science in music business technology at Millersville University of Pennsylvania
- Master of Arts in communications at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania
- Master of Business Administration at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania
- Master of Science in strategic communications at Indiana University of Pennsylvania

The Bachelor of Science in statistics and data science degree to be offered at Cal U will prepare students for entry-level professional employment opportunities as manufacturing engineers, industrial engineers, research and development engineers, field engineers, quality control inspectors, robotics technicians, CNC programmers, and a variety of other manufacturing technology positions. It will provide students with knowledge and skills in the key areas of statistics, computer programming, mathematics, data analytics and database technology. The program will integrate a variety of industry standard technologies into each course to provide

students with appropriate preparation in leading-edge software programs and systems used in the field.

A 2017 study conducted by the Business-Higher Education Forum and PricewaterhouseCoopers indicated there is a significant shortage in the number of job candidates with fluency in data science and analytics. The State System's "gap analysis" found that as many as one-third of the industry's projected job openings could go unfilled unless new college-level programs are developed.

The Bachelor of Science in manufacturing engineering technology degree at Millersville University will emphasize automated manufacturing, robotics, and computer aided drafting and design, often collectively referred to as computer integrated manufacturing (CIM). Laboratory courses, which will be a key component of the new program, will require students to design, develop and construct projects independently as well as in small groups. The curriculum will emphasize technologies commonly used by major corporations. Upper level students will be encouraged to participate in a cooperative education or internship experience to enhance their knowledge in technical areas within an industrial environment.

The program will prepare graduates for career opportunities that exist locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Despite misconceptions that "manufacturing is dead," the National Network for Manufacturing Innovation estimates that the industry employs approximately 12 million people nationwide, about 9 percent of the total U.S. workforce. The manufacturing industry also attracts about 57 percent of engineers and scientists and generates about 80 percent of all U.S. patents.

Millersville University's Bachelor of Science in music business technology program will include three concentrations: music production, music management and audio technology. It responds to marketplace and student demands, especially locally. More music industry related businesses are moving into the Lancaster area because of the expansion of international businesses such as Clair Global and the associated businesses at Rock Lititz. The region supports a thriving arts and entertainment industry that serves local residents as well as tourists, including venues such as American Music Theatre, Sight & Sound, Hershey Entertainment, and a wide range of music and theater venues.

The Master of Arts in communications degree at East Stroudsburg University addresses a rapidly growing need throughout the Lehigh Valley as well as in neighboring New Jersey and New York. Designed to be completed in 15 months, it will include a combination of traditional face-to-face courses and online offerings, and will be targeted to both currently enrolled undergraduates as well as professionals working within driving distance who are seeking a master's degree for professional development and/or for improved employment prospects

Various organizations that have conducted market studies have indicated "vast regional job openings" in public relations, applied communication, political communication and advertising. The State System's gap analysis projects 78,000 new jobs in professional, technical and management fields that require skills and dispositions consistent with the communication discipline. The data gathered in the study showed that recipients of the new degree would be well suited for occupations including general and operations managers, sales representatives, market research analysts and marketing specialists, social and human service assistants, human resource specialists and management analysts.

The Master of Business Administration degree at Edinboro University will serve individuals who hold or seek management positions in various organizations as well as students for whom a graduate degree is an entry requirement for their career. Erie County has a skills gap that is not being met by northwest Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio or western New York colleges and universities, according to a study conducted by the Education Advisory Board,

Students will be able to take courses both in a traditional classroom setting and online in an accelerated format. The program will begin with a concentration in business administration, with possible expansion into a variety of other areas, including accounting, finance, communication studies, education and criminal justice. Students enrolled in the program will be able to take some courses at either Clarion or Slippery Rock universities if it better meets their schedules and/or their areas of interest.

IUP's new Master of Science in strategic communications degree will serve current and aspiring communication professionals by combining writing, research and production. It will prepare students to pursue a variety of careers or for career advancement in professional communication, including crisis communication, communication management, political communication, health communication and strategic online messaging. The program will provide an option for a six-credit thesis or internship as the culminating experience. The research track will prepare students for doctoral study.

A recent search of job announcements seeking professionals for positions in "strategic communication" resulted in 495 position openings in the greater Pittsburgh area and 2,135 position openings across the Commonwealth. Organizations searching for these skilled individuals include higher education, healthcare, pharmaceutical companies, technology and media companies and consumer direct businesses.

For more information on any of the new programs, please contact the appropriate university. *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*

Lock Haven University provost selected

Dr. Donna Wilson to fill role beginning March 30

Harrisburg – The Board of Governors of Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education today selected Donna Wilson to serve as interim president of Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania, effective March 30. Dr. Wilson, who has served as the university's provost since 2012, will assume the role of interim president upon the retirement of Michael Fiorentino Jr., who has been Lock Haven's president since July 2011.

Dr. Wilson will serve as the university's interim president until the successful conclusion of a national search for Dr. Fiorentino's successor.

“Strong, stable leadership is important during a period of transition,” said Board of Governors Chairwoman Cynthia D. Shapira. “Dr. Wilson has been an important part of the university’s leadership team since her arrival on campus more than five years ago, and has played a vital role in its past success. We are confident she will continue to provide outstanding leadership during the search for a new, permanent president for Lock Haven University.”

“While we all will miss Dr. Fiorentino when he retires in a few months, we are pleased that Lock Haven will have continuity of leadership with Donna Wilson, who already has provided enormous contributions to the university,” said State System Interim Chancellor Karen M. Whitney. “She knows the university and the community, and has the necessary experience to take on this new role and to keep the university moving forward.”

In addition to serving as provost for the last nearly six years, Dr. Wilson has served as the university’s executive vice president since 2016. She came to Lock Haven from Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, where she had been associate provost for academic programs. She also held the positions of dean of undergraduate studies and assistant and associate professor at the college. She previously was a lecturer at the University of Texas at Austin and Austin Presbyterian Seminary.

She holds a bachelor’s degree from Central Bible College in Springfield, Mo.; a Master’s in Divinity degree from Austin Presbyterian Seminary in Austin, Texas; and a Ph.D. in classics from the University of Texas at Austin.

The Board of Governors is responsible for hiring university presidents within the State System. When the need for temporary leadership at a university occurs, the chancellor—in consultation with the chair of the Council of Trustees—makes a recommendation to the Board of Governors, which then meets to ratify the selection. An interim president serves as the university’s chief executive officer, with the same responsibilities and authority as a permanent president.

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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.