

Pennsylvania Association of Councils of Trustees elects new officers; terms begin July 1

Discusses State System's redesign efforts during spring conference

Harrisburg – Jeffrey Smith, a member of Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania's Council of Trustees, has been elected to a two-year term as president of the Pennsylvania Association of Councils of Trustees (PACT).

Also elected to two-year terms during PACT's spring conference were Jack Wabby, first vice president, a trustee at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania; Milissa Bauer, second vice president; Clarion University of Pennsylvania; Karen Russell, treasurer, Mansfield University of Pennsylvania; and Mary Coploff, secretary, Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania. All of the new officers' terms begin July 1.

PACT comprises the members of the Councils of Trustees of the 14 universities in Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education. The organization provides professional development opportunities for its members by holding workshops and conferences throughout the year. Each of the 14 State System universities is governed by an 11-member Council of Trustees. All 154 trustees are automatically members of PACT.

"The State System is on the verge of a renaissance," said Harold Shields, Edinboro University trustee and outgoing PACT president. "The entire system is undertaking an important redesign effort that will help our System be less bureaucratic and more focused on student success." Shields also serves as vice chair of the Board of Governors, which is overseeing the System Redesign process.

The System Redesign effort is driven by three strategic priorities—ensuring student success, leveraging university strengths, and transforming governance—and was a central topic of discussion at the PACT spring conference last week in Harrisburg. "It was especially helpful to have the engagement of students, who have the biggest stake in ensuring the success of our 14 universities," said Michele Mandell, California University trustee and outgoing PACT vice president.

"Trustees have a wide range of duties and responsibilities at their universities—from making recommendations for hiring and evaluating the university president, to approving the university's annual budget and academic programs, to setting room and board and other fees." said Mr. Smith. "We care deeply about the success of our universities—and the whole State System—and are committed to being good partners in designing its future."

Mr. Smith has spent his entire professional career working for PPG Industries, now known as Vitro Flat Glass. He also is active in local municipal government, and was recognized as the Outstanding Borough Councilman in Pennsylvania in 2008. He has served on Slippery Rock's Council of Trustees since 2013.

Mr. Wabby spent his career as a K-12 teacher and administrator. A Kutztown University alumnus, he has served on the Council of Trustees since 1992, including two terms as its chair.

Ms. Bauer is executive vice president and chief financial officer for The Kriebel Companies, one of the largest independent natural gas producers in the state. A Clarion University alumna, she has served on the Council of Trustees there since 2012.

Ms. Russell is president of Keystone North, Inc., a Mansfield-based manufacturing company specializing in the contract manufacturing of turnkey metal products, metal stamping, CNC machining, machine shop services, CNC plasma cutting, steel sales, and welding and fabrication services. A Mansfield University graduate, she has served on the Council of Trustees since 2013.

Ms. Coploff was a teacher for 27 years in the Danville Area and Keystone Central school districts. A graduate of Bloomsburg University, she has been a member of Lock Haven University's Council of Trustees since 2009.

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.