The House of Representatives returns to voting session this week since adjourning late June, with the Senate returning next Monday.

As legislative activity resumes, the Office of the Chancellor will continue to communicate accomplishments of System Redesign. And as Chancellor Greenstein embarks on his Fall 2019 campus visits, he will literally see again everything our universities are doing to ensure students have affordable access to postsecondary education.

"In the past 10 months alone, we have frozen tuition, taken tangible steps to improve our operating effectiveness and align revenues with costs, and have gotten our arms around our financially challenged universities. We have become radically transparent and accountable to elected officials, the broader public, anyone, everyone. We have, in effect, responded to issues that our owners have been concerned about for years," Chancellor Dan Greenstein said in his August blog.
He also knows the "[State System] cannot make significant progress in these and other areas without greater support from the Commonwealth. So, as we consolidate our track record of effectiveness and impact, we seek a wholly new kind of partnership with the Commonwealth through the General Assembly."

The System System looks forward to "a genuine partnership that expands opportunity for all and that invests properly in public higher education while holding education providers accountable to the highest of standard," and is ready, willing, and able to provide the "data and analytics to help legislators understand the implications of the different public policy options that are available to them."

For more on System Redesign, CLICK HERE.

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**Senate**

**Session & Committee Activity**

[Senate Session Days] | [Watch Session Live] | [Senate Calendars] | [Senate Committee Meeting Schedule]

The Senate stands in recess until Monday, September 23, 2019 at 1:00 p.m., unless sooner recalled by the President Pro Tempore.

Late August, the Public Higher Education Funding Commission, established pursuant to Act 70 of 2019, which was sponsored by Senators Ryan Aument and Pat Browne, held its first meeting. Senator Pat Browne, Representative Stan Saylor and Education Secretary Pedro Rivera were named co-chairs. Other members of the General Assembly serving on the commission include:

- **Senate**: President Pro Tempore Joe Scarnati; Senator Vincent Hughes, Minority Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee; Senator Wayne Langerholc, Chairman of the Senate Education Committee; Senator Andrew Dinniman, Minority Chairman of the Senate Education Committee; as well as Senators Aument, Timothy Keamey and Lindsey Williams.
- **House**: Representative Matthew Bradford, Minority Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee; Representative Curtis Sonney, Chairman of the House Education Committee; Representative James Roebuck, Minority Chairman of the House Education Committee; as well as Representatives Aaron Kaufer, Jennifer O'Mara, Brad Roae and Wendy Ullman.

The Commission is charged with proposing a new formula to be used in the distribution of funding to Pennsylvania's public institutions of higher education, including the State System, community colleges and state-related universities. The higher education funding formula proposed by the commission shall not go into effect unless the formula is approved by an act of the General Assembly. [Read more...]

The Commission will hold its next meeting Tuesday, October 23, 2 p.m., in the North Office Building,
In recent Senate committee activity, before the Senate Communications and Technology Committee, Dr. Joshua Battin, Interim Associate Dean of Faculty, Mansfield University of Pennsylvania, and Mr. Paul Allison, Associate Vice President for Information Technology, California University of Pennsylvania, provided remarks about high-speed broadband internet access. Both Battin and Allison spoke about the benefits of expanding broadband, which would open opportunities for public safety, universities, communities, and students. View video...

The Senate State Government Committee recently convened to discuss real estate modernization. View video...

Secretary Curt Topper of the Department of General Services (DGS) told the committee: "Our current statutory regime elongates our timeframes, increases our overall costs and prohibits us from taking advantage of modern commercial best practices." Topper discussed recommendations that would increase the agency's flexibility and enable it to better manage the commonwealth's real estate portfolio, e.g. authorizing DGS to transfer and convey covenants and easements without legislative approval.

House of Representatives

Session & Committee Activity

The chamber's session schedule currently includes 24 session days, starting with tomorrow, at 1 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday. The chamber will convene again next week, "6 more days in October, 6 days in November and 6 days in December, with the last planned December session day being Dec. 18," Capitolwire summarized.

On Tuesday, Rep.-elect David Rowe (R-Snyder/Union) will take the oath of office as state representative of the 85th Legislative District, for his first term, succeeding Fred Keller, who was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in May.

Bills of interest on which the full chamber could act include:

- HB 518: Amends the Private Licensed School Act to clarify that a "multibranch training school" can be in a different county than the primary licensed school

The House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee meets Wednesday, 9 a.m. to consider, among other bills:
• **HB 1773**: Amends Title 35 (Health & Safety), in emergency management services, providing for tuition assistance for active volunteers; & establishing the Active Volunteer Tuition Assistance Program & Fund.

• **HB 1786**: Amends Title 35 (Health & Safety), in incentives for municipal volunteers of fire companies & nonprofit emergency medical services agencies, establishing the First Responder Loan Forgiveness Program; and making editorial changes.

President Michael Driscoll of Indiana University of Pennsylvania presented remarks on September 5th before the committee on education incentives for first responders. He offered support for the proposed legislation but cautioned the committee to “make sure it’s a real investment and not a shift in funds that creates a burden to the participating institutions or that removes a benefit from other people.”

As we understand, under HB 1773, tuition would be limited to the System’s Board-approved tuition rate (plus tech fee). Such a provision is problematic with the Board’s new tuition policy giving the System universities more flexibility in the way tuition is set each year.

Before the **House Health Committee**, President Marcia Welsh of East Stroudsburg University (ESU) recently extended campus hospitality. The campus provided its Innovation Center for the committee use to hold a public hearing on Lyme disease and tick-borne illnesses. [View video...](#)

"Since 2005, the DNA Lab of ESU has been testing ticks for the public for a fee. In 2018, the DNA Lab received a $500,000 grant from the Committee of Health and Human Services to begin a free tick-testing program for all PA residents," Nicole Chinnici, director of ESU's Tick Research Lab, told the committee.

Ms. Chinnici further shared: “Continuing to fund the free tick-testing program is critical in generating important education and tick-borne disease prevalence data, as well as giving physicians an extra diagnostic tool to better understand their patients’ risk of developing a tick-borne disease.”

At Shippensburg University in August, the **House Education Committee** met. Prior to receiving a campus tour, Chancellor Greenstein engaged in conversation about System Redesign as well as higher education public policy choices and their impacts on the future health & well-being of the Commonwealth.

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**Bill Tracking Report**

The following information is updated during legislative session weeks.

**In the House:**

**HB 1759**: An Act providing for early college high school programs, requiring the Department of Education to establish a plan to expand the availability of early college high school programs by 25 percent over a
five-year period. Last Action: 08-16-19 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Education

**HB 1792**: Amends the PA Web Accountability and Transparency (PennWATCH) Act, further providing for definitions, for searchable budget database and for administration, requiring the sale and use of personal nonpublic information as a disclosure on the PennWATCH searchable public website. Last Action: 09-05-19 H Introduced and referred to committee on House State Government

**HB 1803**: Amends the PennWATCH Act, further providing for searchable budget database and for administration, to include information on each settlement paid to an individual or employee of a commonwealth agency as a result of an action taken by an employee of a commonwealth agency. Last Action: 09-12-19 H Introduced and referred to committee on House State Government

**HR 472**: A resolution recognizing the week of September 8 through 14, 2019, as "Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week" in Pennsylvania. Last Action: 09-12-19 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Education

**In the Senate:**

**SB 797**: Amends Title 24 (Education), in preliminary provisions, providing for student data privacy and protection; imposing duties on the Department of Education; and providing for penalties. Last Action: 07-09-19 S Introduced and referred to committee on Senate Education

**SB 838**: Amends the PA Prevailing Wage Act, providing for optional application of act. Last Action: 08-28-19 S Introduced and referred to committee on Senate Labor and Industry

**Co-sponsorship Memos:**

**HCO2470**: Allows for a limited form of indemnification, exclusively for losses caused by the negligence of the indemnifying party in construction contracts.

**HCO2463**: Requires new non-residential buildings in the Commonwealth to be constructed with the necessary infrastructure to support electric vehicle charging stations. Last Action: 08-29-19 H Filed

**SCO1128**: Creates the "Pay it Forward, Pay it Back" plan from which qualifying students can draw resources to attend a state university without paying a down payment. Last Action: 08-29-19 S Filed