



Pennsylvania's **STATE SYSTEM** of Higher Education

October 19, 2020

Legislative UPDATE

Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education

Both chambers are in voting session this week, and legislative committee meetings include opportunity for Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education Chancellor Dan Greenstein to discuss the State System's [new phase of proposed university integrations](#).

With an eye toward expanding opportunity and service to the Commonwealth, the State System's Board of Governors affirmed last Wednesday the System's efforts to continue planning for the integration of six of its universities.

Today and Wednesday, at 9 a.m., before joint hearings of the Appropriations and Education Committees of each chamber, Chancellor Greenstein will present findings from an initial financial review of the proposed integrations. *Watch live [House](#) or [Senate](#) committee proceedings.*

#Redesigned4PA

“We must continue to think and act boldly so that any Pennsylvanian, regardless of zip code, can continue their education at a State System university.”

- Chancellor Greenstein

The next step in the integrations process is development of an implementation plan, which could be presented to the Board as early as April 2021. The process, laid out in Act 50 of 2020, includes a 60-day public comment period and periodic updates to members of the General Assembly. The earliest an integrated university could begin accepting students would be August 2022.

The Board also approved Wednesday a resolution that authorized the Chancellor to seek \$487 million in state appropriations for 2021-22 (a 2% increase over the current year). The System will also seek \$25 million for System Redesign efforts as part of a multi-year

request approved by the Board last year.

Before then, "Pennsylvania's General Assembly has to pass a new budget by Nov. 30. That's when the current budget expires, and when the current legislative session ends," reports [Pennsylvania Capital-Star](#). "But in order to approve new spending and revenue plans, lawmakers must confront a projected \$5 billion tax revenue shortfall that's expected to endure through 2021 — the result of job losses and slow economic activity during the pandemic-induced recession."

With it being the last session week before the election, it is expected that the House and Senate could look to November post-election to wrap up any unfinished work.

Senate

Session & Committee Activity

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

The Senate convenes at 1 p.m. this afternoon.

A concurrence vote in House amendments to [SB 1216](#), concerning teacher certification flexibility, instructional certificate grade spans and age levels, confidentiality, transference and removal of health records, is still pending.

State System property disposition resolution requests regarding the Dixon University Center and Porrecco College of Edinboro University also await the chamber's approval. Final action on these requests must occur within 30 calendar days following its date of transmittal (August 14th) to the General Assembly, excluding days on which either house is not in session because of an adjournment of more than 10 days to a day certain.

These bills of interest remain on the Senate Calendar:

- [SB 1350](#) (Browne): A Supplement to the General Appropriation Act of 2020 provides funding for the remainder of fiscal year July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021. Provides various federal and state appropriations for Pennsylvania departments, agencies and other commonwealth entities and is retroactive to July 1, 2020.
- [HB 2438](#) (Owlett): Amends Title 68 (Real and Personal Property), providing for broadband services.
- [HB 2503](#) (Miller): Amends Title 23 (Domestic Relations) adding language allowing child care providers to hire employees on a provisional basis, pending completion of all submitted background checks.
- [HB 1069](#) (Bernstine): Amends the Sunshine Act to require a public agency to post public meeting agendas at the meeting location, at the agency's office location, and on the agency's website, if they have one, no later than 24 hours prior to a meeting, and to prohibit an agency taking official action on items not in the meeting agenda.

Concerning CARES Act funding, which must be spent by December 31st on COVID-19 related needs, Senate Democrats outlined last week caucus priorities for spending the remaining \$1.3 billion, including \$141 million for higher education. [Read more >>](#)

Submitted by the Governor for Senate confirmation, these individuals have been [nominated](#) to serve as trustees:

- **Council of Trustees of California University:** Steve DeFrank
- **Council of Trustees of Clarion University:** Susanne Burns and Howard Shreckengost
- **Council of Trustees of Indiana University:** Anne White
- **Council of Trustees of Kutztown University:** Walter "Jim" Ludlow
- **Council of Trustees of West Chester University:** Senator Robert Tomlinson, Commissioner Marian Moskowitz, and Betty Silfa

Tomorrow, the Senate Communications and Technology Committee meets at 9 a.m. to hold an informational broadband roundtable discussion. Chief Information Technology Officers Sam Josuweit and Bill Balint, of Bloomsburg and Indiana Universities of Pennsylvania, respectively, will participate. [Livestream >>](#)

On Wednesday, at 9 a.m., before a joint hearing of the Senate Appropriations and

Education Committees, Chancellor Greenstein will discuss the System's efforts to continue planning for the integration of six of its universities. [Livestream >>](#)

House of Representatives

Session & Committee Activity

[House Session Days](#) | [Watch Session Live](#) | [House Calendars](#) | [House Committee Meeting Schedule](#)

The House returns to voting session at 1 p.m. this afternoon.

- [SB 835](#) (Langerholc): Provides for funding of high-speed broadband service infrastructure deployment in unserved areas of this Commonwealth and for powers and duties of the Department of Community and Economic Development.
- [SB 1241](#) (Argall): Amends the Administrative Code, in powers and duties of the Department of General Services and its departmental administrative and advisory boards and commissions, providing for report of State facilities owned or leased. Requires the Department of General Services to conduct an annual survey of state facility usage.

This morning in committee activity, Rep. Curt Sonney, chairman of the House Education Committee, with Rep. Stan Saylor, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, will hold a joint public hearing concerning the State System's financial review analysis pursuant to Act 50 of 2020 and the System's implementation plan for improvement of operations. [Livestream >>](#)

Last week, House Republicans have unveiled a pro-jobs, recovery-focused legislative package, "Commonwealth's COVID Comeback." Highlights include: a "Jobs of the Future Study," which would review opportunities for the development of new industries; and protections via limited liability to the critical suppliers, health care providers and employers operating during the pandemic. [Read more >>](#)

Bill Tracking Report

The following information is updated during legislative session weeks.

In the House:

[HCO4066](#) (Ullman): Allocates \$100 million from the Coronavirus Relief Fund to assist public institutions of higher education with COVID-19 relief. *Last Action:* 10-05-20 H Filed

[HCO4070](#) (Gaydos): Bill package that will study impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is having on Pennsylvania's students and education system. *Last Action:* 10-06-20 H Filed

[HCO4093](#) (Ecker): Provides specific civil liability rules that reflect the realities of the current unprecedented and unpredictable situation. *Last Action:* 10-13-20 H Filed

[HCO4095](#) (Reese,): Resolution establishing a select committee to review opportunities for the development of new industries in Pennsylvania, including advanced manufacturing. *Last Action:* 10-13-20 H Filed

[SB 487](#) (Laughlin): Amends the Breach of Personal Information Notification Act, prohibiting employees from using nonsecured internet connections; and for policy & entities subject to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability. *Last Action:* 09-29-20 H Received in the House and referred to House State Government

[SB 810](#) (Phillips-Hill): Amends Title 71 (State Government), providing for information technology; est. the Office of Information Tech & Information Tech Fund; providing for procedures, admin of PA Statewide Radio Network & Joint Cybersecurity Oversight. *Last Action:* 10-8-20 H Received in the House and referred to House State Government

This update is provided as a courtesy of the Office of the Chancellor as a preview of upcoming legislative activity and a review of action on legislative issues of interest to the State System. The Legislative UPDATE is distributed during legislative session weeks.

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