

STATE-RELATED UNIVERSITIES BUDGET HEARING WRAP

Thursday, February 20, 2025



General Overview:

President Dr. Neeli Bendapudi of Penn State University, President Dr. John Fry of Temple University, Chancellor Joan Gabel of the University of Pittsburgh, and President Dr. Brenda Allen of Lincoln University testified before the House Appropriations Committee this afternoon. House Republicans focused their questions on measures to ensure state funding is appropriately helping Pennsylvania students, how the universities are preparing students for high-need jobs, and supporting free speech on campus.

Key Takeaways:

- House Republican committee members focused their line of questioning to ensure that state dollars are being used accountably to lower tuition costs for Pennsylvania students.
 - Committee members sought input on how the governor's performance-based funding proposal might work and what impacts it will have on the universities moving forward.
 - Governor Shapiro's budget proposal falls short of the requests made by three of the four State-Related Universities last fall.
- Many Pennsylvania families had problems with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, commonly referred to as "FAFSA". Committee members were pleased to learn that the State-Related Universities are working to resolve the problem and are addressing any outstanding issues with students directly.
- Penn State, Pitt, and Temple maintain branch campuses throughout the Commonwealth. Members asked if any of the universities had intentions to further consolidate these campuses or even close; while "everything is on the table", no university shared plans to shutter any campuses at the present.
- Committee members also pressed the universities to address educating students for high-need jobs.
- Free speech was another topic members drilled down into, with concerns about political events and candidates on campus, with campus groups, and even professors. University leaders articulated their commitment to academic freedom and the open exchange of ideas on campus.

Notable Q&A:



Rep. Thomas Kutz questions university presidents on whether they support the governor's proposal.

Rep. Ann Flood asks for an update on how the universities are handling issues with the FAFSA program.



Rep. Josh Kail inquired with each of the state-related universities on how they protect free speech and diversity of thought on campus.