PENNSYLVANIA'S STATE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Pennsylvania's STATE SYSTEM of Higher Education

Strategic Plan 2020

Rising to the Challenge

Adopted January 2014

BUILDING
on a Strong Foundation

Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education is the largest provider of higher education in the Commonwealth, with more than 112,000 degree-seeking students and thousands more benefitting from professional development and continuing education offerings. The System spans every region of Pennsylvania with its 14 universities, four branch campuses, and numerous off-campus centers and instructional sites.

Businesses, communities, and social and cultural organizations are served through a broad range of State System university programs and services. More than 500,000 alumni live and work in the Commonwealth and serve in leadership positions in both the public and private sectors as educators, elected and appointed officials, business owners, health professionals, scientists, entrepreneurs, and in various other fields.

Pennsylvania's Public Universities

Pennsylvania's
STATE SYSTEM
of Higher Education

+ Chincoteague Bay Field Station of the Marine Science Consortium, Wallops Island, Virginia.

Strategic Plan 2020

Rising to the Challenge

There have been few other times when higher education has captured so much attention at both the state and national levels. Not just students and their parents, but also employers, civic leaders, public officials, and a host of others, uniformly have recognized the importance of higher education. The demands and expectations have never been higher. The world today requires intellectual flexibility, as well as the ability to problem solve and to quickly learn new fields and competencies in both face-to-face and virtual environments. Graduates need the ability to live and work effectively in a diverse environment. As Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education responds to those demands and the opportunities they present, it must:

Adapt to an ever-changing student population: Pennsylvania's prospective students are becoming more diverse in terms of age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, academic support needs, and prior academic experience (credits and credentials). Students' expectations for how, where, and when they learn—coupled with a demand for education built around technology—create complex challenges for universities.

Align academic programs with real workforce and personal growth needs: The direct connection between the State System and the overall vitality and health of the Commonwealth is clear: almost 90 percent of State System undergraduates are Pennsylvania residents, and more than 80 percent of graduates remain in Pennsylvania to attend graduate school or to begin their careers. As such, students, parents, and the Commonwealth want quality in academic programs and the assurance that the knowledge and skills learned will be connected to career and community.

Strong Foundation:
VISION

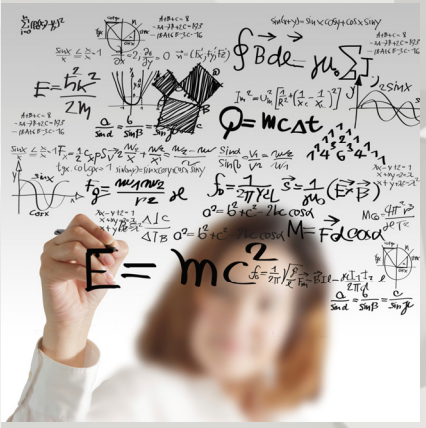
The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education seeks to be among the nation's leading systems of public universities recognized for (1) excellence, relevance, and value in education; and (2) responsiveness to regional, state, and national needs through its programs, service, scholarship, and research.

Provide greater flexibility in how, when, and where students learn: In addition to *what* is taught, it is important *how* it is taught, and that student learning is evaluated. Program design, transfer and articulation of credits, credit for prior learning, and increased collaboration among providers must work together to ensure academic integrity and student learning, as well as affordability and efficient degree attainment.

Ensure that competition and cooperation within the System is strategic: Choices about where and when it is best for universities to compete or collaborate must be thoughtful and purposeful. Quality and distinctiveness cannot be maintained by universities without collaborating in both academic and administrative areas.

Preserve and promote accessibility and affordability: The State System has carefully studied the factors that determine the total cost of attendance and is aware that students and their parents are reaching the tipping point in their ability to absorb higher costs. In response to declining state financial support, the universities have employed a host of efficiencies that have resulted in more than $250 million in cost savings during the past decade. With students carrying almost 75 percent of the cost of their education—and with average debt of $28,000 at graduation for the 70 percent of our students with loans—attention to identifying new resources and the careful use of existing revenues is of paramount importance.

Enhance accountability and transparency: Students and families want to know that their money is well spent on an education that will serve them not only at graduation but also decades later. They are entitled to detailed and current information on costs of a degree and career possibilities for fields of study, among other vital data. Likewise, elected leaders want to know that the Commonwealth is getting a good return on its investment in the State System, so performance data should be easy to obtain and understand.



System Strategic Goals

- Ensure academic program excellence and relevance
- Enable more students to obtain credentials that prepare them for life, career, and the responsibilities of citizenship
- Develop new funding strategies, diversify resources, and manage costs to preserve affordability
- Increase accountability and transparency; focus on results

Strong Foundation:
MISSION

"The primary mission of the System is the provision of instruction for undergraduate and graduate students… in the liberal arts and sciences and in applied fields…"
Act 188 of 1982

The mission of the System is as relevant today as it was at its founding: to increase educational attainment in the Commonwealth; to prepare students at the undergraduate and graduate levels for professional and personal success in their lives; and to contribute to the economic, social, and cultural development of Pennsylvania's communities, the Commonwealth, and the nation.

While the goals and directions of this plan vary from those of previous planning efforts, achieving a productive balance between university autonomy and System collaboration remains an essential component of System planning efforts.

Strategic Goal 1

Ensure academic program excellence and relevance

Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education universities offer a wide array of programs leading to associate's, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees as well as undergraduate and graduate certificates. To promote quality, each degree program will have clearly articulated and measurable learning outcomes that are regularly assessed.

Discovery, diversity, and distinctiveness are essential for a quality student experience.

Discovery entails creativity, problem solving and critical thinking. From *diversity* comes innovation—the insight that comes from exposure to and interactions with different modes of thought, experiences, backgrounds, and cultural heritage. *Distinctiveness* enables each of the universities to develop, deliver, and realign programs and services to meet the unique needs of their students and regions, as well as ensuring the optimum use of resources across the State System.

Each university is committed to ensuring programs provide graduates with the skills and competencies that prepare them for future life and career success: analytic, problem-solving, and critical-thinking skills; the ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing; the ability to work in teams; and the preparation for lifelong learning. State System universities will continue to expand opportunities for undergraduate research, international study, service-learning, and internships, all of which are critical to academic excellence and are designed to connect the classroom to the community.

Program relevance and quality must be regularly assessed and reviewed by faculty, university presidents, and university trustees for continuous improvement. Engagement with the Governor, General Assembly, and business and community leaders is essential for determining relevance. Aligning programs to workforce needs and addressing the increasing knowledge and skills needed for lifetime employment will increase Pennsylvania's economic competitiveness.

Strategies:

- Engage faculty in innovative instruction, employing proven course and program redesign strategies to enhance student learning.
- Focus on course and program sharing among the universities to expand student access to a full array of offerings while reducing unnecessary duplication across the State System.

- Conduct a gap analysis to aid in aligning academic program offerings with future regional workforce needs and student interests.
- Provide opportunities and services that enable all students graduating from a State System university to demonstrate competencies that prepare them to contribute to society.
- Create a forum for ongoing interaction and dialogue among System leaders, trustees, university presidents, and business and industry representatives, with the objective of enhancing the value of System graduates to related business enterprises.
- Promote innovation through basic and applied research, technology transfer, business support and other means.
- Seek diversity in university faculty fundamental to innovation and creativity in academic quality.
- Promote the use of research-based educational practices to enhance student achievement through programs such as internships, undergraduate research and/or scholarship, study abroad, or first-year experiences.

Expected Outcomes by 2020:

1.1 Increase the number of degrees or certificates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and health-related disciplines awarded annually to 7,500.

1.2 Align graduate programs to the needs of the Commonwealth, including offering at least five additional doctoral programs across the System.

1.3 Develop, implement, and increase enrollments in programs designed to meet demonstrated current and emerging workforce needs.

1.4 Complete regular, comprehensive reviews of all State System academic programs, with a clear description of student achievement and success, an assessment of learning outcomes expected of every program graduate, and a process for continuous improvement.

1.5 Engage in ongoing assessment of student competencies through expanded alumni and employer surveys**.**

1.6 Increase technology transfer activity to an average of at least two patents awarded per year.

Strong Foundation:

DISTINCTIVENESS

Each university is distinct in its programs, services, students served, and relationships with its communities and regions—affording students wide choices within the System. Although originally focused on public sector career development in areas such as teaching, social work, criminal justice, and public administration, the universities have greatly enhanced the strength and extent of programs in liberal arts and sciences, technology, mathematics, and health professions in response to the needs of the Commonwealth.

The distinct missions and strengths of each university must be advanced at the same time collaborations and commonalities are sought to achieve the System's full potential. The strategic goals outlined in this plan are "System-wide" goals and will be pursued in different ways by each university according to its specific mission, history, and capacity. University efforts to achieve the goals as well as achievements will be detailed in annual action plans and reports.

Strong Foundation:
VALUE OF A SYSTEM

A system is more than the sum of its parts. Public university systems are uniquely positioned to enable greater levels of student success and university contributions to their communities, regions, and states. The State System is committed to optimizing the value of the System through:

- Aligning policy and practice to meet strategic interests of students, the Commonwealth, employers, and communities
- Pooling the capacity of universities and their distinctive strengths to serve all constituencies
- Advocating the value of educational attainment for individual and collective success
- Promoting program quality through multi-institutional collaboration
- Developing and supporting shared services that increase operational efficiency while maintaining or increasing effectiveness
- Building credibility through transparency and results

Strategic Goal 2

Enable more students to obtain credentials that prepare them for life, career, and the responsibilities of citizenship

According to the report of the Governor's Advisory Commission on Postsecondary Education (2012), it is estimated that "by 2018 nearly two-thirds of American jobs will require a postsecondary credential." The report also notes that 57 percent of Pennsylvania jobs will require postsecondary training beyond high school. Because only 43 percent of Pennsylvania's working-age adults hold an associate's degree or higher, the result is a 14 percent skills gap that must be closed in order to promote and sustain a strong economy.

The State System is committed to closing that knowledge gap. In 2012-13, System universities awarded 25,563 associate's, bachelor's, and graduate degrees. By 2020, that number will surpass 31,500 degrees and certificates—an increase of approximately 6,000 additional credentials awarded annually. Each university's share of the System-wide target will be determined based on the unique market variables facing the institution.

To increase the success of all students, the State System must focus on reducing regional, income, and ethnicity gaps in access while increasing retention and completion. The State System is participating in a number of national initiatives to increase the success of underrepresented and low-income students. As part of the performance funding model, targets have been established to reduce gaps in access and degree attainment for both of these groups of students.

Many programs and courses are offered online or at off-campus locations, providing increased opportunities for students—especially the adult learner. For example, universities have joined together to meet workforce needs for affordable baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate education in downtown Philadelphia at PASSHE Center City. Similar centers are located in Harrisburg, Cranberry Township (outside of Pittsburgh), and Bethlehem.

To address the particular needs of returning students and veterans, the State System is providing access to programs and courses through online opportunities, and recognizing the value of prior learning experiences.

State System universities continue to work with community colleges to implement Act 114 and Act 50 to enable students to transition seamlessly from any of the 14 Pennsylvania community colleges to any System university.

Strategies:

- Adopt standards for awarding credit obtained through such activities as Advanced Placement, CLEP, prior learning experiences, military experience, and dual enrollment to reduce the time to degree and overall cost of educational attainment.
- Develop a mechanism for seamless student mobility within the System and across Pennsylvania's higher education sectors with minimal loss of credit.
- Encourage efficient student academic progress to increase awards and minimize cost to students.
- Attract, retain, and graduate students beyond the traditional 18- to 22-year-old, on-campus, residential population.
- Leverage the State System's intellectual resources in teacher education to enhance partnerships with the Commonwealth's school districts and Department of Education to better prepare more of Pennsylvania's children for success in higher education and life.
- Provide appropriate developmental education opportunities for students—traditional and nontraditional—to promote the success of all students admitted.
- Increase the opportunities for students to take courses and programs through online educational experiences by establishing a clearinghouse for all online courses offered across the System.

Expected Outcomes by 2020:

2.1 Increase the number of awards (degrees and certificates) annually conferred to at least 31,500.

2.2 Increase the success of low-income and underrepresented minority students by reducing the gap in graduation rates between these and other students by half.

2.3 Increase access to higher education of low-income and underrepresented minority students by reducing the difference in the entering class for these groups compared to those of all students graduating from Pennsylvania high schools by half.

2.4 Increase the number of working adult and transfer students enrolled in the System; specifically, increase the number of undergraduate students over the age of 25 to at least 11,000 and the number of Pennsylvania community college transfer students to at least 4,000.

2.5 Increase the number of courses and programs available to students through distance education; specifically, increase the number of students in online and blended courses to 53,000.

Strong Foundation:
CONNECTION

State System universities engage with local and regional business and industry sectors to address issues and seek solutions to problems and to capitalize on opportunities. For example, professional science master's (PSM) degrees have been designed to allow students to pursue advanced training in science or mathematics, while at the same time to develop workplace skills highly valued by employers. PSM degrees are available in areas such as Applied and Industrial Chemistry, Applied Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Integrated Scientific Applications. More than 50 employer partners comprise the PSM advisory boards, including the National Science Foundation, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Johnson and Johnson, Air Products and Chemicals, and Nuron Biotech.

Strong Foundation:
BUSINESS PARTNERS

State System universities regularly sponsor cultural and intellectual events on their campuses, helping to fuel community and economic development. Historically, the universities have been strong partners with their regions through a variety of ongoing economic development initiatives. As examples:

- Small Business Development Centers at Clarion, Indiana, Kutztown, Lock Haven, and Shippensburg universities provide a variety of assistance to existing businesses as well as start-up entities.
- Entrepreneurial Leadership Centers at every university are unique to the State System and focus on student/faculty collaboration and often involve successful alumni.
- Business Incubators at Clarion, East Stroudsburg, Edinboro, Indiana, and Slippery Rock universities leverage the intellectual capital of the campus to help small businesses get off the ground.
- Cheyney University's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Center enables minority - and female-owned businesses to compete for transportation contracts.
- The Marcellus Institute at Mansfield University coordinates educational initiatives to address opportunities related to the development of shale gas.
- The annual State System Student Business Plan Competition generates hundreds of submissions to juried panels and monetary awards for the winners, helping young entrepreneurs launch their dreams.

Develop new funding strategies, diversify resources, and manage costs to preserve affordability

Articles appear in the media on a regular basis about the rising cost of higher education. No sector of higher education in the Commonwealth has been as focused on this issue as the State System. According to the latest study by the College Board, the average total cost of attendance at a State System university—combined tuition, fees, and room and board—remains below the national average for all four-year public colleges and universities and significantly below the median in the Middle States region (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C.).

Not only has the State System's cost to students remained below the national average, the rate of increase in cost of attendance continues to be less than experienced elsewhere nationally and in Pennsylvania. This has been possible only through cost-saving strategies. Over the last decade, State System institutions have avoided more than $250 million in mandatory costs by achieving efficiencies through strategic sourcing, energy management, automating processes and services, reductions in personnel, and the elimination of noncore and lower-priority programs and functions. Efforts to identify additional areas where the universities can share services to further reduce costs and increase efficiency will continue.

State System universities are continuing to seek the right balance to address the continuing impact of the $90 million reduction in state funding enacted in 2011; limits on pricing and affordability; and personnel cost increases, including major increases in the System's required contributions to the state's pension funds. Balancing these financial challenges against the need to limit cost increases for students, while ensuring relevance in the classroom, has become increasingly difficult.

University efforts to retool by realigning academic programs predate the current demographic changes and have been focused on meeting evolving workforce needs. From 2008 to 2013, the Board of Governors approved 56 new academic programs while universities discontinued 40 programs in which no students were enrolled, placed 158 low -enrolled programs in moratorium (accepting no new students while ensuring currently enrolled students received the classes and support they needed through graduation), and reorganized 90 others to ensure their relevancy.

In order to increase efficiencies, State System universities consolidate business operations in payroll, human resources, legal services, construction contracting support, and information systems—reducing redundancy and costs. Universities draw on the System's size to drive down costs through collaborative purchasing of commodities such as energy, technology, software, library holdings, fleet management, and office supplies. These efficiencies help maintain the affordability of the System's administrative functions and academic programs, thus reducing the cost of

education to the student and to the Commonwealth. The State System must take even greater advantage of being a System in the future, while preserving the unique strengths of each university.

In these challenging economic times, with declining or flat state support and limited tuition increases, new alternative revenue streams must be expanded. The State System institutions must engage in comprehensive solicitation for private support by increasing the number of individual donors and forging new partnerships with industry. A compelling case for higher education must be made in each of our respective local regions. Similarly, the PA State System Foundation must continue to increase engagement with donors who are seeking to invest in students, programs and priority needs that benefit multiple universities or even the whole System.

Strategies:

- Balance, diversify, and grow financial resources (state funding, tuition and fees, private giving, and entrepreneurial activities) and control expenditures to enable the State System and its universities to achieve their missions.
- Develop and implement a multiyear, strategic financial-operational planning model that addresses Commonwealth funding, tuition and fees, and ongoing financial and contractual obligations.
- Increase private fundraising, grants, and sponsored activities in support of university missions.
- Seek additional appropriations for targeted program expansion to meet demands for high-priority occupations.
- Advance operational effectiveness by optimizing the value of shared services, administrative flexibility, and entrepreneurial activity.
- Redesign financial and administrative models to reward academic and administrative collaboration, drive efficiencies, and strengthen access to a State System education.
- Align university and System plans (academic, enrollment, and facilities).

Expected Outcomes by 2020:

3.1 Decrease the time-to-degree as measured by credits earned at program completion to an average of 128 semester hours.

3.2 Increase the four-year graduation rate of full-time, first-time freshmen to 40 percent and the six-year graduation rate to 58 percent.

3.3 Increase System-wide annual private support each year. (University goals to be included in their annual action plans.)

3.4 Increase annual expenditures from grants, sponsored programs, and business partnerships consistent with university missions to $51 million.

3.5 Provide increased flexibility in tuition rates across the System.

Strong Foundation:
CONTRIBUTION

Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education contributes to the life of Pennsylvania

- Eighty-eight percent of State System undergraduates are Pennsylvania residents, and a large majority remain in the Commonwealth after graduation.
- STEM fields—followed by business and health-related fields—are the "most in -demand" undergraduate majors.
- The State System is the 15th largest employer in the Commonwealth, with more than 12,000 persons employed.
- Six State System universities are among the top five employers in their respective counties, and nine are in the top 10.
- Students, faculty, and staff contribute more than 1.5 million hours of voluntary activities each year, providing a value of $31 million annually to local communities.

Strong Foundation:
STUDENT LEARNING

State System students are expected to demonstrate the essential learning outcomes that will prepare them for the challenges of the next decade including:

- Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world gained through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, and the arts.
- Intellectual and practical skills such as inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative literacy, information literacy, teamwork, and problem solving.
- Personal and social responsibility including civic knowledge and engagement, intercultural knowledge, and competence; and ethical reasoning anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges.
- Integrative and applied learning including synthesis and advanced accomplishment demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems.

Strategic Goal 4

Increase accountability and transparency; focus on results

The State System's performance-based funding program has received national recognition. Since this program was initiated in 2000, nearly $340 million has been distributed to the universities as a result of demonstrated achievements. State System universities have experienced gains in student retention and graduation rates, program quality, faculty productivity, and campus diversity. The average number of credits at graduation has decreased, while retention and graduation rates have increased.

Beyond performance funding, the State System has an obligation to demonstrate accountability and stewardship to Pennsylvania's policymakers (the Governor and members of the General Assembly), parents, students, and taxpayers. Transparency of information related to student access and success outcomes, pricing, costs to degree, and other meaningful data must be available in aggregate form in an accessible, understandable way to measure the relative effectiveness of the System. These data also are valuable tools for the Board of Governors and the Councils of Trustees as they work to guide the universities and the System.

Strategies:

- Continuously assess and refine accountability and performance funding indicators to produce desired outcomes. (Use transparent metrics to describe, measure, and reward performance by State System universities, focusing on areas that advance the System's mission.)
- Ensure the development of detailed annual action plans from each university and the Office of the Chancellor to improve transparency and document progress toward System and university strategic goals.
- Increase public awareness and understanding about the State System's stewardship of resources to meet needs of the Commonwealth and its students.
- Expand and promote the role of State System universities in educating students of varied backgrounds, ages, and experiences.
- Develop university and System "dashboards" detailing student achievement, financial efficiency, and economic impact.

Expected Outcomes by 2020

4.1 Provide key performance indicators and other relevant data for the System and the universities in an easy-to-use format on the State System website.

4.2 Publish periodic reports presenting the impact of the State System and its universities on students and the Commonwealth.

4.3 Report annually on continuous review of shared services to promote effective and efficient operations in support of university missions, including the ongoing evaluation of the need for new or expanded services.

4.4 Provide regular communications to the Governor, General Assembly, university trustees, business and community leaders, and the public about the State System and its universities, making use of diverse media platforms to facilitate accessibility and reach a broader audience.

4.5 Comply with all relevant Board policies, state and federal requirements, and professional and ethical standards.

Strong Foundation: STUDENT EXPECTATION

The emerging consensus among employers is that innovation, critical thinking, and a broad skill set are important for taking on complex challenges in the workplace. They also agree that, in addition to the content knowledge of the major, a broad set of college learning goals for all students includes educational experiences that teach them how to solve problems with people whose views are different from their own; that build knowledge, judgment, and commitment to communities; and that help them learn about societies and cultures outside of the U.S.

Employers are looking for graduates who can demonstrate the ability to:

- Think critically and use successfully analytical reasoning skills to solve complex problems
- Locate, organize, and evaluate information from multiple sources
- Apply knowledge and skills to real-world settings
- Communicate effectively orally and in writing
- Collaborate with others in diverse group settings using teamwork skills
- Connect choices and actions to ethical decisions
- Develop professionally and continue to learn
- Give back to their communities

Source: Hart Research Associates (April 2013)

Expected Outcomes by 2020

By employing the strategies described in this plan, the State System and its 14 member universities will strive to achieve the following outcomes by 2020:

Strategic Goal 1

1.1 Increase the number of degrees or certificates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and health-related disciplines awarded annually to 7,500.

1.2 Align graduate programs to the needs of the Commonwealth, including offering at least five additional doctoral programs across the System.

1.3 Develop, implement, and increase enrollments in programs designed to meet demonstrated current and emerging workforce needs.

1.4 Complete regular, comprehensive reviews of all State System academic programs, with a clear description of student achievement and success, an assessment of learning outcomes expected of every program graduate, and a process for continuous improvement.

1.5 Engage in ongoing assessment of student competencies through expanded alumni and employer surveys.

1.6 Increase technology transfer activity to an average of at least two patents awarded per year.

Strategic Goal 2

2.1 Increase the number of awards (degrees and certificates) annually conferred to at least 31,500.

2.2 Increase the success of lower-income and underrepresented minority students by reducing the gap in graduation rates between these and other students by half.

2.3 Increase access to higher education of lower-income and underrepresented minority students by reducing the difference in the entering class for these groups compared to those of all students graduating from Pennsylvania high schools by half.

2.4 Increase the number of working adult and transfer students enrolled in the System; specifically, increase the number of undergraduate students over the age of 25 to at least 11,000 and the number of Pennsylvania community college transfer students to at least 4,000.

2.5 Increase the numbers of courses and programs available to students through distance education; specifically, increase the number of students in online and blended courses to 53,000.

Strategic Goal 3

3.1 Decrease the time-to-degree as measured by credits earned at program completion to an average of 128 semester hours.

3.2 Increase the four-year graduation rate of full-time, first-time freshmen to 40 percent and the six-year graduation rate to 58 percent.

3.3 Increase System-wide annual private support each year. (University goals to be included in their annual action plans.)

3.4 Increase annual expenditures from grants, sponsored programs, and business partnerships consistent with university missions to $51 million.

3.5 Provide increased flexibility in tuition rates across the System.

Strategic Goal 4

4.1 Provide key performance indicators and other relevant data for the System and the universities in an easy-to-use format on the State System website.

4.2 Publish periodic reports presenting the impact of State System and its universities on students and the Commonwealth.

4.3 Report annually on continuous review of shared services to promote effective and efficient operations in support of university missions, including the ongoing evaluation of the need for new or expanded services.

4.4 Provide regular communications to the Governor, General Assembly, university trustees, business and community leaders, and the public about the State System and its universities, making use of diverse media platforms to facilitate accessibility and reach a broader audience.

4.5 Comply with all relevant Board policies, state and federal requirements, and professional and ethical standards.