



# PA State System of Higher Education Board of Governors

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**Effective:** January 16, 1997

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## **Policy 1997-02: Community Relations**

**See Also:**

**Adopted:** January 16, 1997

**Amended:**

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### **A. Background**

State System of Higher Education universities are partners in societal development with the host communities in which they are located. The universities make significant beneficial economic impact, as well as direct fiscal, human, and in-kind contributions to their broad geographical regions; however, these resources are not necessarily received by the host communities that bear the cost of infrastructure and operational support for the universities.

Host community infrastructure support includes, among its major items, sewer and water systems, transportation/highway systems, and storm water drainage. Operational support may include law enforcement, fire and ambulance service, housing code enforcement, and other services.

Notwithstanding the universities' contributions, some host communities have had an erosion of their tax base due to the increasing volume of nontaxable real estate, the general decline of small businesses (due to relocation and competition), and the migration of earned income taxpayers, leaving older residents with less tax support capacity.

### **B. Philosophy**

The Board of Governors believes the relationship between state universities and host communities should be characterized by collaboration and cooperation that will enhance the achievement of mutually beneficial goals.

### **C. Objectives**

The State System universities should work effectively with host governments to:

1. continue to promote the host community(ies) economic and community development through cooperative planning and consultant support, where possible;
2. minimize, to the extent practicable, the burden of municipal services provided to the university;
3. consult with the host community representative(s) at the appropriate levels of university planning, particularly in areas that may result in infrastructure impact with infrastructure defined as, but not limited to, utilities such as water, sewer, telephone, power, storm sewers, streets, conference centers, libraries, etc;
4. communicate with host community officials regarding university decision-making, council of trustees' agenda, public events, student programs, etc.;
5. continue and expand the very significant student community service projects;
6. provide expertise in developing local capacity in such areas as obtaining infrastructure grants from federal and state sources, etc.;
7. review and, where necessary, develop student life and off-campus housing policies that reflect the mutual interest of the host communities and the university; and
8. review and, where appropriate, change, modify, and/or develop new policies regarding off-campus student issues.