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February 6, 2020

Dear Trustees,

Sorry this is coming to you a little late, but there was a flurry of activity at the end of the month and I wanted to capture as much of it as I could.

As of Monday, 34 of the 54 individuals who received appointment paperwork at the end of the year have been confirmed by the Senate. The remaining 20 individuals will likely be addressed in mid-March. The order by which trustee nominations were sent to the Senate for approval had nothing to do with "preference" but was rather a result of the timing of when the appointment paperwork was received, approved, and forwarded to the Senate.

Last week Cody Jones, the PASSHE Chief Strategic Relations Officer, gave the COT chairs a briefing on the three bills dealing with ACT 188 changes that are currently in the house. The ensuing discussion convinced me that PACT needs to develop a consensus document that outline the trustees' positions on several of the changes included in the bill.

I have since asked the chairs and the PACT representatives to either discuss these bills at their next trustee meeting or during a special conference call. The goal is to receive all 14 universities' views by the end of the month. The PACT representatives and Council Chairs will then meet on March 3rd to share the results of these discussions and create a consensus document.

While I know your chairs will share this information with you, I have attached copies of the three bills to this update.

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This past Monday the PACT representatives were invited to participate on a special call with the Governor's Office to receive an advance briefing about the Governor's budget address that he delivered the following day. By now you have probably all read that among his proposals were to provide an additional \$30 million dollars in matching money to PHEA that will increase its scholarship fund by \$60 million, to commit \$12.9 million to the PASSHE redesign effort, and to create a \$204 million Nellie Bly scholarship program for PASSHE students who agree to stay in PA following graduation.

During the call I asked if the \$12.9 million was the response to the Board of Governor's five year, \$20 million per year request. I was told that it was and that it was only \$12.9 million for this year because after discussions with the Chancellor's office, the \$12.9 was all that was really required for this year. Hopefully, the system will receive more monies in the future.

The Nellie Bly scholarship was the biggest news for me. It will award up to \$10,000 a year to undergraduate students who agree to remain in Pennsylvania at least one year for each year that they receive this money. These grants target students who come from families making less than \$50,000 per year. They could impact as many as 25,000 students and will likely be available in 2021.

This is the first time that I remember the Governor's Office reaching out to PACT prior to the budget address and providing a budget preview. It was greatly appreciated and another sign that the importance of PACT and the trustees as an important part of the state system continues to grow.

Finally, preparations continue for the PACT annual conference on April 23rd and 24th. It promises to be a great event and with all the changes that are happening in the System, one that will be worth your time to attend.

Until next month,

