



System Redesign Phase 2 | Frequently Asked Questions

How do we define shared services?

Shared Services leverage the collective power of the State System to serve our 14 universities and the Office of the Chancellor. Shared Services are governed by our universities with a mission to work collaboratively to deliver services that improve efficiencies and reduce costs throughout the System to better serve our students and employees.

How will the System Redesign impact students, their future employers, and the communities in which they live?

When our 14 State System universities succeed, we all win. Not only do we provide high-quality, affordable education to nearly 100,000 students, the State System generates more than \$6 billion in economic impact for Pennsylvania. We are the backbone of economic health for many communities and provide a pipeline of talent for employers. The System Redesign will make our universities and our System stronger; that will benefit everyone in the state, regardless of whether you attend any of the universities.

How does a liberal arts education and educational approaches that treat the “whole student” fit into the concept of a sharing system?

These approaches are central. As we focus even more explicitly on equipping our students to sustain themselves and their families and to contribute to their communities, we recognize the centrality of the critical thinking, communications, and other cognitive and non-cognitive skills that we are historically so good at developing. One of the most exciting things about reimagining our future is that we get to think about how to build upon these core competencies, adding to them in ways that we are able to also provide our students with the technical skills they require for their next job; to refashion our approach so it is open to students who will need access to life-long learning opportunities, etc.

What types of new programs will be available next year?

We will be constantly seeking new, innovative programs which are responsive to workforce demands. To do this, we will be hearing from employers and students on what they need and want, as well as constantly evaluating emerging trends and workforce data at the regional, statewide, and national level. Some of the newest programs in the System that have already resulted from this approach range from a Social Media Theory and Strategy major to a Doctor of Social Work program.

Is there a plan to close universities?

No, we are undertaking this redesign effort precisely because we don't believe that would best serve our students or communities. The plan, which is beginning to take shape, will strengthen our universities while transforming them so they thrive into the 21st century.

There is a lot of talk about consolidating services. What will this mean for our jobs?

The goal of sharing services would be to free up resources that can in turn be focused on our students and their success. It is too early to say how such actions would impact employees, what services will be consolidated, or what consolidation will actually look like. These are questions we look forward to addressing in the detailed planning process in which we are now engaged openly and transparently. You are seeing the redesign effort unfold in real time, and we will keep it that way.

How do our universities go from competition to collaboration?

Collaboration is in our DNA. From existing shared operations (payroll, legal services, etc.) to joint academic programs, we have shining examples that we can learn from as we take collaboration to a new level. A major component of the change is a new, highly collaborative and consultative governance structure that brings leaders together from across the System. Driving this more collaborative approach is the understanding that for any one university to be successful, every university needs to be successful.

Who is involved in the redesign effort?

Everyone. The process has and will continue to include students, faculty, staff, university leaders, community leaders, elected officials, business leaders, and the public. The System redesign will allow us to continue to fulfill our common mission of providing high-quality, affordable education to all Pennsylvanians, and so we must all work together to create it.

Why is the System Redesign necessary?

The State System is experiencing the same challenges as many, if not most, public higher education institutions around the nation—a shrinking number of high school graduates; lagging state funding; rising costs; and now the pandemic. We are redesigning the System to ensure our universities can overcome those challenges and continue to serve the students and the Commonwealth for decades to come.

How will changes resulting from System Redesign be communicated to the broader community?

In a variety of ways, including through university leadership. The System Redesign website will also be a good place to look for a comprehensive overview of activities and actions, and will additionally serve as a forum for people to put questions directly to the Chancellor's office and have them answered.

What happens next? How can I keep track of the Redesign's progress? How can I help?

We are moving into a detailed implementation phase. During this time project teams will be recommending concrete next steps which we should begin to see implemented immediately

thereafter. We are also working during this time on getting a number of basic building blocks in place – aligning university strategy planning and budget practices, implementing streamlined accountability reporting, etc. Details of the work that is underway and its progress are always available from the System Redesign website, where you will also have an to pose questions directly to the Chancellor and have them answered. There are also opportunities to be involved in task groups (nominated by leadership of key stakeholder groups) opportunity and in university-based planning processes that will emerge as part of the work.