



PENNSYLVANIA'S STATE SYSTEM *of* HIGHER EDUCATION



# Chancellor Search

2024-25



## The Opportunity

The Board of Governors for Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) is pleased to announce the search for the next system chancellor, who will serve as the system's chief executive officer — responsible for providing leadership and strategic vision for Pennsylvania's state-owned universities. These 100+ year-old institutions serve their students and communities with a wide range of programs supporting 21st-century learning for all Pennsylvanians. The chancellor further serves as an important state-level voice for public higher education and its role in supporting the state's workforce and economic development.

The chancellor works with the state legislature, the Governor's office, the Board of Governors, the new State Board of Higher Education, and the students, faculty, and staff from all system universities to advance PASSHE's mission and strategic goals.

Reporting directly to the PASSHE Board of Governors, the chancellor provides oversight of the individual university presidents as they lead the universities in meeting financial, operational, and student outcomes established by the board's accountability policy. Moreover, the presidents regularly meet with the chancellor as thought partners in developing and executing strategies to achieve systemwide goals. This high level of engagement is just one example of "systemness" that has emerged in the last seven years and is replicated at other levels throughout the system.

With nearly 90 percent of PASSHE university system students coming from Pennsylvania and nearly 80 percent remaining in the state immediately after graduation, PASSHE requires a chancellor who will be committed to working in partnership with Pennsylvania's public and private sectors to help graduates obtain the knowledge and skills to be Pennsylvania's future leaders, thinkers, creators, educators, and more.

The chancellor will motivate and support the PASSHE universities as statewide and regional assets that provide not only educational opportunities — from workforce training and high-quality credentials to advanced degrees — but also serve as cultural and economic development centers. Through the strategic use of technology, the chancellor will work to ensure system universities are poised to prepare students from every walk of life to meet the higher education and workforce needs of every region in the Commonwealth.

### PASSHE Universities

Cheyney University

Commonwealth University

- Bloomsburg
- Lock Haven
- Mansfield

East Stroudsburg University

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Kutztown University

Millersville University

PennWest University

- California
- Clarion
- Edinboro

Shippensburg University

Slippery Rock University

West Chester University



## PASSHE's Evolution

For the past seven years, PASSHE has been on a journey that began with an introspective, top-to-bottom review of the entire system. Armed with detailed insights about the system's challenges and opportunities — a system that needed serious intervention — in 2018, PASSHE and its new chancellor undertook a system redesign focused on student success, university success, and transparent/accountable governance.

Today, the system has made transformative changes that have set it on a new trajectory. While there is more work to do on every front, today PASSHE enjoys:

- **Improved financial stability for the system;**
- **Improved enrollment trends that include flattening a decade-long enrollment decline;**
- **Improved affordability due to tuition frozen since 2018;**
- **Improved legislative relationships that have built support and trust among the system, the General Assembly, and the Governor's office; and**
- **Significantly increased state investment of more than 30% just in the last few years.**

As part of the system redesign effort, PASSHE integrated six of its existing universities into two larger institutions to preserve students' access to higher education. Today, those two integrated universities offer more degree programs together than any of the six individual institutions could alone. While much progress has been made, the work has been demanding for everyone involved, and the next chancellor must continue to provide ongoing leadership and support for the students, faculty, staff, and leaders of these institutions as they continue to chart new courses to ensure their success.

At the same time, the next chancellor must also be able to closely monitor and work to enhance the ongoing health of the other universities in the system. All of them are achieving higher levels of financial sustainability, but they face the same threats other universities around the nation face.





While the system redesign effort experienced both successes and challenges over the years, it crystalized the opportunity that all PASSHE schools have to think differently about what they can do as partners and collaborators across campuses, communities, and the state to attract more students and help meet the talent supply needs of Pennsylvania. The next chancellor will invite all willing participants to the table to help write the next chapter in PASSHE's story, one that can take advantage of this growing sense of partnership and systemness and tap into the potential of PASSHE universities focused on access, affordability, and workforce alignment.

## The Road Ahead

As with many institutions in the northeast and mid-Atlantic states, PASSHE has felt the effects of demographic changes that have impacted enrollment of traditional-aged college students. As such, the system has the opportunity to consider how to better reach these and other underserved students.

### System Priorities 2024-25

The graphic below shows the system's current priorities that are the specific areas of innovation and activity the Board of Governors has identified as key to the system's success.

The system is laying a foundation for building high-quality and industry-aligned non-degree credentials, shared academic programs, a systemwide student information system, and other efforts that help serve a much wider array of students. The next chancellor will have a leadership role in helping the universities think through these and other opportunities and effectively socialize them with the many constituents who rely on PASSHE.



**Expand Student Opportunity**

- Program and course sharing



**Improve Learner Outcomes**

**HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES:**

- Holistic advising
- Student health & wellness
- Integrating non-degree credentials (NDCs) & work-based learning (WBL)
- Improved andragogy



**Stabilize Financially**

- High-risk monitoring
- Space optimization



**Invest in People**

**TRAINING & SUPPORTS:**

- Sustainable budgeting and finance
- Sustainable program design/management
- Enrollment management
- CBA(s) implementation
- Developmental education
- Professionalize training
- Inclusive hiring



**Invest in Infrastructure**

- OneSIS
- Credential Registry
- Capability with non-degree credentials (NDCs)
- OneSIS data integration and mining
- Transcribing high-impact practices (HIPs)
- Engage AI (risk, policy, exploration of use)
- Federal funding



## An Environment of Support

As with any state system of higher education, the legislature and governor play a critical role in the system's success in addressing the state's changing needs and its evolving workforce and economic patterns.

Importantly, these elected leaders also provide the funding necessary for PASSHE to continue to meet those needs. The chancellor is the system's lead advocate in helping elected officials fully understand the power and promise of public higher education and PASSHE's unique role as the only state-owned four-year institutions in Pennsylvania.

In addition to advocating for state funding, the chancellor will work with the [PASSHE Foundation](#) to build on past success in creating and enhancing relationships with donors and grantmakers. In recent years, PASSHE has garnered the attention of numerous national foundations — organizations that see it as a living laboratory for how public regional universities can rethink their business model.

The chancellor will enjoy the support of a high-functioning [Board of Governors](#) comprising 20 voting members, including students, university trustees, members of the public, members of the General Assembly, the Secretary of Education, and the Governor. Additionally, the systemwide [Faculty Council](#) chair provides faculty perspective as a liaison to the Board of Governors. In recent years, PASSHE and the Board of Governors have received national recognition from both [AGB](#) and [SHEEO](#) for their leadership and ability to navigate transformative change.

While the Board of Governors provides system-level governance, each university also has a [Council of Trustees](#) made up of individuals who believe deeply in the value and promise of their local universities and understand that their university's success is tied to the success of all the universities in the system.

The next chancellor will work with students, faculty, staff, and all stakeholders to collectively define strategic priorities for the next decade and beyond — priorities that will help PASSHE universities meet the evolving needs of their students, their communities, and the state.





# PENNSYLVANIA'S STATE SYSTEM of HIGHER EDUCATION



The chancellor will join PASSHE at a time when the state is working to better align its higher education efforts through the recent creation of a state-level coordinating body. [The new State Board of Higher Education](#) — with representation from every higher education sector, the General Assembly, the Secretaries of Education and Labor & Industry, students, labor, and the business sector — includes a PASSHE Board of Governors member and one PASSHE university president. This body will work across all four education sectors within the state to identify ways to strategically advance higher education and close Pennsylvania's talent and attainment gaps.



Finally, the chancellor is supported by a [System Office](#) that comprises approximately 30 policy staff and 130 other staff who provide [shared services](#) to the universities and the system. Over the past six years, the office has reoriented itself toward service and leadership rather than just compliance. The chancellor will lead this talented and dedicated team to ensure that the structure serves the system and the universities well and to seek ways to continuously improve system office operations.





## Chancellor's Responsibilities



- Serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the system and direct the administration of PASSHE according to board policy.
- Work with and report to the Board of Governors in setting goals, priorities, and strategic direction for the system with a deep understanding of academic and fiscal accountability, student success drivers, national trends in higher education, strategic partnerships, legislative advocacy, and enrollment management.
- Lead comprehensive planning efforts and advise the Board of Governors on the creation and operationalization of policy.
- Advance systemness through the system's collective assets by promoting and supporting collaboration among the institutions to better serve students.
- Enhance collaboration with the state's other education sectors, including continued support for seamless transfer opportunities for community college students.
- Recommend to the Board of Governors the overall system budget and guide annual advocacy efforts to secure financial and legislative support for system universities and priorities.
- Review and approve academic programs to meet students' educational needs and the state's talent supply needs.
- Assist the Board of Governors and work with the university Councils of Trustees in appointing and evaluating the university presidents.
- Promote core system values that respect the dignity and diversity of all students, faculty, and staff and sustainably support their success.
- Facilitate and foster an environment of shared governance.
- Negotiate all collective bargaining agreements on behalf of the Board of Governors.
- Establish system-wide business procedures and attend to other statutory obligations.





## Qualifications and Attributes



- Innovative systems thinker and leader with a grasp of where higher education must go in the future and the ability to build a followership to take PASSHE there.
- Politically astute with experience working with public boards, legislators, governors, and other elected officials.
- Authentic, genuine interest in the people and places of PASSHE; active listener; empathetic.
- Collaborative, communicative leader who brings transparency, understanding, and respect to all interactions.
- Experience dealing with the financial vulnerabilities of state-funded institutions of higher education and the ability to work with all interested parties to ensure that the system continues to improve financial sustainability.
- Demonstrated emotional intelligence; an innate learner who sees criticism as an opportunity for continuous personal and professional growth.
- Ability to serve as a “working chancellor” — not only a representative of and advocate for the system but also a hands-on leader who can help achieve the goals set for the future.
- Experience as a change agent with the capacity to recognize what financial, operational, and cultural supports are needed.
- Capacity for data-informed decision-making and an ability to build followership in those decisions.
- Experience as an executive leader in a higher education setting is a plus.
- Experience in and appreciation for a collective bargaining environment is extremely valuable.
- An earned doctorate or terminal degree is preferred; significant higher education experience — including executive leadership at a public university, college, or system — is desirable.





## An Engaging Work Environment

The System Office has been a remote-work organization since 2020, following a decision to sell its physical campus after it was clear the staff could support the mission without the added cost of facilities.

PASSHE has a small physical office for group meetings, training sessions, equipment and records storage, and a few in-person operations. While the physical office is located in the state capitol—Harrisburg, PA—the staff is located all over the state as they serve the universities and the system remotely. The remote-work model has been proven to save millions in operating costs annually, all of which have been reinvested into the system.



Daily interactions with the staff are done primarily through Zoom/TEAMS/phone, though the leadership team meets face-to-face for the quarterly Board of Governors meetings and all staff convene in person for an annual staff development conference. After four years of remote work, the team has developed operating standards and expected norms for interactions to ensure a supportive and highly productive working environment.



The chancellor will be expected to live in the state of Pennsylvania and be able to travel frequently to the capitol, the system universities, and other locations around the state for meetings and activities.



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### **Non-Discrimination Statement**

*PASSHE prohibits any form of discrimination or harassment on the basis of sex, race, color, age, religion, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, marital or family status, medical condition, genetic information, veteran status, or disability in any decision regarding admissions, employment, or participation in a University program or activity in accordance with the letter and spirit of federal, state, and local non-discrimination and equal opportunity laws, such as Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act and ADA Amendments Act, the Equal Pay Act, and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act. For information regarding civil rights or grievance procedures and for inquiries concerning the application of Title IX and its implementing regulation, contact Christa Cobb, State System Title IX Coordinator, 2300 Vartan Way, Suite 207, Harrisburg, PA 17110; Phone: (717)720.4167; Email: [CCobb@passhe.edu](mailto:CCobb@passhe.edu). Additionally, inquiries concerning Title IX and its implementing regulation can be made to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, Region III, The Wanamaker Building, 100 Penn Square East - Suite 505, Philadelphia, PA 19107; Phone: (215) 656-6010; Fax: (215) 656-6020.*





**\$4  
billion**

*in annual  
economic impact  
systemwide*

**62%** OF GRADUATES

ARE STILL LIVING  
& WORKING IN **PA**

ONE DECADE *after*  
GRADUATION

**73%** of students  
from **low-income families**  
move into the middle  
class *within a  
decade of  
graduation*

## PASSHE at a Glance

PASSHE was established in 1983, though its universities have a much longer history — each exceeding 100 years. The mission of the system is as relevant today as it was at its founding:

- to provide high-quality education at the lowest possible cost to students;
- to increase educational attainment in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania;
- 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.

PASSHE [universities](#) combine to enroll the largest number of Pennsylvania residents among all four-year colleges and universities in the commonwealth. With approximately 80,000 degree-seeking students and thousands more enrolled in certificate and other career-development programs, the State System is vital to Pennsylvania's economy. The universities award nearly 20,000 degrees each year, with the top areas of study being business, education, health, and STEM. The system operates one of the most transparent and robust [data systems](#) in the nation, providing interactive dashboards that track progress for key [Board-affirmed metrics](#).

PASSHE universities collectively offer nearly 800 degree and certificate programs in more than 300 academic areas. The universities have nearly 800,000 living alumni, most of whom reside in Pennsylvania.

The State System employs approximately 9,000 dedicated full-time faculty and staff, making it one of the largest employers in Pennsylvania. Several system universities are the largest employers within their counties, helping to fuel the local and regional economies, as well as that of the entire Commonwealth.

PASSHE has an operating budget of approximately \$2 billion and generates more than double that in [economic activity every year](#). PASSHE maintains [nine collective bargaining agreements](#) that cover about 85 percent of all employees.





## Nominations and Expressions of Interest

AGB Search is pleased to assist the PASSHE community with this search. To apply, candidates are requested to submit:

- curriculum vita or resume;
- letter of interest that addresses the leadership opportunities and desired experiences and attributes in this profile;
- contact information for five references (to be contacted at a later date with the candidate's permission).

Please click here ([bit.ly/4efDFHY](https://bit.ly/4efDFHY)) to apply for the position by **January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025** for best consideration. The search will remain open until an appointment is made.

### Timeline:

- Initial interviews late February 2025
- Final interviews mid-to-late March 2025
- Anticipated start date summer/fall 2025

According to [policy](#), candidate names will remain confidential until the final stage of the search and the appointment is made by the Board of Governors. Nominations and expressions of interest are encouraged. Please direct them to [PASSHEChancellor@agbsearch.com](mailto:PASSHEChancellor@agbsearch.com) or to the AGB Search consultants listed below.

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