

DAVID G. ARGALL
29TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT

SENATE BOX 203029
THE STATE CAPITOL
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-3029
(717) 787-2637
FAX (717) 783-8657

MAHANOEY CITY (570) 773-0891
POTTSVILLE (570) 621-3400
HAZLETON (570) 521-9441
WEISSPORT 1(877) 327-4255

WEBSITE: senatorargall.com
EMAIL: dargall@pasen.gov
TOLL FREE: 1-877-327-4255



Senate of Pennsylvania

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April 14th, 2025

Dr. Neeli Bendapudi, President
Penn State University
201 Old Main
University Park, PA 16802

Dear Dr. Bendapudi,

We write to you today united in our strong opposition to any plan to close Penn State Schuylkill. This campus provides a world-class education for students from both near and far at an affordable cost and has been key to the fabric of Schuylkill County for more than 90 years. Closing it would harm our local economy and make it much harder to attain a four-year degree in our region.

Your recent announcement was shocking for us all. Students are concerned about their future educational path. Penn State Schuylkill educators and staff are gravely concerned about the stability of their employment. Local employers and community leaders are concerned about the loss of high-quality training opportunities.

We understand that the Commonwealth Campus Committee's decision will be data driven. We would like to provide the information we gathered during a recent roundtable discussion about the future of this campus to the committee to assist with your review:

- Enrollment at Penn State Schuylkill has increased **by 11.7%** from the Fall Semester of 2020 to the Fall Semester of 2024. This makes it the **only campus** with **consistent, rising enrollment**.
- Applications for the 2025 fall semester have increased by **37% to 946**, putting the school on the path to 1,000 applicants for the first time ever. **119 students** have committed, a **28% increase** from last year.
- Penn State Schuylkill has made **significant program advancements**, including the Nursing and Co-Op Programs. **100% of students** in the newly created nursing program

are placed in jobs at local healthcare systems. Additionally, **160 students work with 101 local employers** thanks to the Penn State Schuylkill Co-Op program, which the University has looked at utilizing as a model for other campuses in the Penn State University system.

- **96% of the 5,400 respondents** who took our legislative survey support keeping the campus open.
- Penn State Schuylkill's philanthropy is on the rise, raising over **\$3 million** since 2019. Penn State Schuylkill received its largest gift in its history this year.
- **80% of Commonwealth Campus students** are Pennsylvania residents, and **40% of that are first-generation college students**.
- According to Penn State's Strategic Plan for years 2014-19, it was found that this campus **contributes \$67.7 million annually** into Schuylkill County's economy. Payroll, student expenditures and spending by students added **another \$8.1 million** annually, making the **total economic impact \$76.8 million annually**. With inflation, that would put the total current economic impact **over \$90 million dollars**.
- The University has a physical investment of 145 acres, including **five residential housing buildings**, the Administration Building, the Student Center and Morgan Auditorium, the Kiefer-Jones building, the Business Offices, the Classroom Building, the Ciletti Library, and the Health & Wellness Center.
- Over the last decade, investment at this campus has been very significant, with the recent additions of the upgraded STEM labs, a significant addition to the Administration building, a new, innovative nursing suite, and a complete remodel of the Student Center.
- The campus is positioned **in a geographical region that is ranked as the third highest growth area** of any region with a Commonwealth Campus in the state.
- Multiple Penn State Schuylkill alumni have gone on to further their education at the University of Pennsylvania Veterinary School, Harvard Medical School, Widener Law School, and other graduate programs at various prestigious institutions.
- Penn State Schuylkill has impressive community support as reflected by its **42-member advisory board** made up of prominent local business owners, elected officials from all three levels of government including county, state, and federal officials, nonprofit leaders, lawyers, physicians, judges, and school district superintendents.
- Penn State Schuylkill serves as a **community hub** and event space, opening its doors to various community groups to host events.

We encourage you to watch the roundtable discussion we hosted on April 4, 2025. It can be viewed at www.senatorargall.com/2025/03/13/roundtable-schuylkill-delegation-040425.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our collective concerns, and respectfully urge you to give the strongest consideration to our request to continue the operations of Penn State Schuylkill.

Sincerely,



DAVID G. ARGALL
State Senator
29th District



TIM TWARDZIK
State Representative
123rd District



JAMIE BARTON
State Representative
124th District



DANE WATRO
State Representative
116th District



JOANNE STEHR
State Representative
107th District

Cc: Dr. Margo DelliCarpini, Dr. Michael Wade Smith, Dr. Cory Scherer, David Kleppinger, Esq.

DGA/sjh