



SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION

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Vincent Valdes

June 20, 2023

Dear Honorable Members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly:

On behalf of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization serving the 10-county southwestern Pennsylvania region, I urge you to support the University of Pittsburgh's annual appropriations bill for FY 2024.

SPC works with local, state and federal partners to plan the continued growth of southwestern Pennsylvania. SPC helps counties, cities, municipalities and townships access more than \$35 billion in state and federal transportation and economic development funds allocated to the region through 2045. SPC and its partners work regularly with our local universities to achieve this growth, and the University of Pittsburgh is a vital partner in this work.

Pitt is one of western Pennsylvania's and the Commonwealth's greatest assets and strongest economic engines. As the Commonwealth's 9th largest non-government employer, the University of Pittsburgh supports nearly 47,000 jobs. Pitt generates \$271.7 million annually in state and local tax revenues, bringing in over \$1 billion in research funding annually. The University and its four regional campuses in Bradford, Greensburg, Johnstown and Titusville fuel a statewide economic impact of \$5.2 billion annually.

The funding from the appropriations bill is used exclusively for lowering tuition costs for Pitt students and families. Last year, the University devoted \$284 million to discounting tuition for in-state students. The state-funded \$152 million of this total, and Pitt contributed \$117 million.

More than 16,000 Pennsylvanians take advantage of this benefit at the undergraduate level. Including graduate and professional students, over 20,000 students benefit. 86% of students at the four regional campuses receive reduced tuition. The savings are life-changing, allowing in-state students to pay 45% less at the Pittsburgh campus and 47% less at regional campuses than out-of-state students. The state's funding helps residents access higher education at an attainable value, allowing our region to retain local and diverse talent and prevent them from leaving the region or the Commonwealth in search of more affordable opportunities. Pitt has been and will continue to be instrumental to our region's economic vitality.

The University of Pittsburgh is a crucial engine of opportunity for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. We thank the General Assembly for your past support of Pennsylvania students attending Pitt and the other state-related universities. We look forward to working with the legislature to continue advancing the critical work of strengthening Pennsylvania's families, economies, and future. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Vincent Valdes
Executive Director