

**MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**333 Market Street | 1st Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126
July 11, 2024**

Attending:

Hon. Carol Aichele
Nathan Barrett
Nana Bhatia
Brenna Chernich
Katherine Christiano
Yadira Cupeles

Sandra Dungee Glenn
Ernest Hadrick
Amanda Hetrick
Maureen Lally-Green
Robert Mitchell

Hon. Pedro Rivera
Monica Taylor
Karen Farmer White
Lee Williams
Benjamin Wilson

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:50 a.m. by the Hon. Pedro Rivera, Chairman of the Council. Dr. Rivera introduced the newest junior student representative to the Council of Higher Education, Ms. Yadira Cupeles. Ms. Cupeles is a student at the Lancaster School of Cosmetology and Therapeutic Bodywork.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the May 2, 2024, meeting of the Council of Higher Education was approved on a **Hetrick/Mitchell** motion.

**REPORT OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY AND COMMISSIONER
FOR POSTSECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

Dr. Kim McCurdy, Director of the Bureau of Postsecondary and Adult Education, provided an update on the Department of Education's PA MASLOW initiative that addresses collegiate basic needs. She was joined by Ms. Ali Caccavella, Special Advisor to the Deputy Secretary and Commissioner for Postsecondary and Higher Education, who provided an update on FAFSA completion rates. Ms. Caccavella noted that the Department has been engaged in concerted efforts to address a substantial decline in FAFSA completions and shared that, while progress is being made, completion rates are still down relative to last year.

Dr. Kate Shaw, Deputy Secretary and Commissioner for Postsecondary and Higher Education, discussed the closures of higher education institutions in Pennsylvania. Dr. Shaw shared that, between 2020 and 2025, ten degree-granting colleges and universities in Pennsylvania will have closed or merged, all of which are private, non-profit institutions. She further shared that, since 2022, 22 private licensed schools have closed. Dr. Shaw discussed factors that indicate

further closures are inevitable, including a projected decline in the number of high school graduates, the end of COVID relief funds, rising college costs, and declining public trust. Dr. Shaw noted that the Department provides substantial support and guidance, but the agency has no authority to require institutions of higher education to provide fiscal information and information provided to other sources, such as Middle States and the U.S. Department of Education, do not provide access to accurate and timely data.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Yamel Padilla Crisostomo, a student at The Pennsylvania State University, asked if there will be continued supports for FAFSA completion efforts beyond the current academic year.

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:22 a.m. on a **Hetrick/Taylor** motion.

Hemalatha Raja

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Administrative Assistant