PENNSYLVANIA'S STATE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

University Integrations
Guide to Plan Changes
DRAFT as of July 7, 2021

University Integrations | Guide to Plan Changes

This document provides a summary of the substantive changes that have been made to the Northeast and West plans since they were originally released in April 2021. These changes stem from input received during the 60-day public comment period related to these plans.

Because both plans are slightly different in terms of page numbering, this guide provides an overview of changes based on the plan sections, which are consistent between the Northeast and the West. Not all sections of the plans required updates, so not all sections are identified in this document.

Highlights of revisions to the plans based on input from public comments

- Extended the timeline for the curriculum integration process

- Conducted survey that shows current and prospective students (and their parents) overwhelmingly are open to taking some classes online in exchange for more access to options; report will be [posted online once final](#)

- Conducted a community impact study that shows both the West and Northeast integrations would have a greater positive economic impact than their institutions would have if not integrated ([view study](#))

- Updated financial projections with current information about 2021/22 student tuition and the availability of federal funding

- Motion to approve integrations would include language that prohibits the closure of any partner campus that was previously an independently accredited university

- Included COT structure recommendations

- Clarified the intended use of, support for, and reliance upon online modalities

- Conducted a third-party review of financial projections that verify plan assumptions are within industry standards

- Built in transitional financial protections for universities operating sustainably at integration

- Clarified integration goals and objectives

- Clarified implementation timelines including timelines for more detailed organizational information

- Clarified importance and role of advocacy for greater state funding

Pennsylvania's
STATE SYSTEM
of Higher Education

Public Comment Themes
Plan Section 5: Academic Programs, Non-Academic Units and Accreditation (1 of 3)

Topics	Action	Plan Update
Timeline for integrating the curriculum	Academic curriculum is being adjusted to provide for phased-in integrated curriculum development, review, and implementation with a targeted completion by August 2024. Advantages include: - better, more thoughtfully developed integrated curriculum - additional time for increased faculty engagement, program specific accreditation - greater certainty for both new and current students with clear paths to graduation Associated milestones for key aspects of the plan will be adjusted in support of the phased-in curriculum development, review and implementation. This includes, but is not limited to, information technology and student recruitment and enrollment. There is no impact on the Middle States submission process, on appointment of integration leadership team or on start date of integrated entity.	Yes

Public Comment Themes

Plan Section 5: Academic Programs, Non-Academic Units and Accreditation (2 of 3)

Topics.	Action	Plan Update
Method of Delivery	Additional clarifications were added to address how the curriculum will be delivered, including through the use of online and other remote technologies, notably with regard to: •the relatively limited overall reliance on online modalities for residential students; •the perception of Zoom and/or asynchronous online as the learning tool of choice given the recent experiences resulting from the rapid transition to remote learning due to the COVID pandemic •planned investment in faculty and staff professional development and the technology environment as required to deliver the highest quality educational experiences, ensuring the broadest possible access and the best available student outcomes.	Yes

Public Comment Themes

Plan Section 6: Student Impacts

Topics	Action	Plan Update
Include data from the already completed NE and W student surveys in the final report	✓ Completed surveys shared with legislators and others as requested and will be included in the final report	Yes
Build on student survey data collected in the NE to assess market demand for higher ed experiences that engage online and hybrid learning to expand academic program breadth and maintain affordability	• Within this section the results of three student surveys are provided including a new survey conducted in June 2021 demonstrating that the integrated entity's reliance on online instruction is well within willingness and expectations of current and prospective students, and their parents.	Yes

Public Comment Themes

Plan Section 7: Community

Topics	Action	Plan Update
Conduct an economic impact study related to potential impacts on the community	Engaged the same firm that conducted the System's 2015 economic impact study to update the analysis and look at two areas: a) impacts of declining enrollments and resulting reduction in expenditure and workforce (FY15/16-FY 21/22), and b) impacts of integration (FY 22/23 – FY 25/26); report to be completed by end of June Plans will be updated to show results from analysis	Yes

Public Comment Themes

Plan Section 8: Governance

Topics	Action	Plan Update
Include options for future COT composition developed by leadership and governance working groups	Will include along with a discussion about what is required to implement an option (legislative action) and what will happen regarding COTs if state legislature does not act to implement	Yes
Clarify that governance of university affiliates is NOT impacted by integrations	✓ Contained within the Community section of the April plans, but will amplify in final report and add to the Governance section	Yes
Address the concern stated by some that an integrated entity can cease operations at a partner campus (effectively closing it)	✓ Reiterate in the plan that the Board has no authority to close a university; furthermore, there is no plan to close a partner campus; doing so would create a higher education desert in the region and be cost prohibitive and counterproductive to System Redesign; the Board retains authority to preclude such actions ✓ Board resolution to approve integration will include language that prohibits a president from closing any partner campus that was previously an independently accredited university	Yes

Public Comment Themes

Plan Section 9: Organization

Topics	Action	Plan Update
Provide greater detail in the proposed organizational charts	Following BOG approval, more detailed organizational chart inclusive of all HR/LR and change management activities work effort will begin;. • The proposed organizational structure of the division of Academic Affairs in the integrated university was shared with faculty (June 23, 2021) for feedback as part of the implementation plan activities. • Based on the current timeline, it is anticipated that the proposed organization structure at the division levels for the remaining functions within the university will be shared in early August following the Board of Governor's meeting.	Yes
Provide greater detail about the roles and responsibilities of executive leadership including President of the integrated entity and the Campus Executive role	✓ To be provided in the section on organization	Yes

Public Comment Themes

Plan Section 10: Financial (1 of 2)

Topics	Action	Plan Update
Conduct objective third-party review of financial projections and their assumptions	Adding results to the narrative and appendix. Assumptions found to be within the standard range for projections.	Yes
Explain financial review data to clarify at what point the West will reach positive financial standing	✓ Contained within the appendix of April plans, will amplify in final report	Yes
Explicitly identify sources of projected cost savings in both plans	✓ Adding to narrative and appendix	Yes
Include explicit information about increased state funding levels required to achieve certain specific financial goals to support broader advocacy effort	✓ Contained in Conclusion and appendix, but will update to clarify and include funding levels that - get West to net positive revenues in 2 years - eliminate need for System cross subsidization - achieve specific student affordability, student outcome, and DEI-related goals	Yes

Public Comment Themes
Plan Section 10: Financial (2 of 2)

Topics	Action	Plan Update
Update financial data to reflect new information	Revised projections added to narrative and appendix	Yes
Include information about potential impact of deferred maintenance costs	✓ Contained within the conclusion of April plans, will amplify in final report	Yes
Provide information about potential options associated with buildings and debt service at selected universities	✓ Working with elected officials for potential additional funding	TBD
Protecting reserves of campuses operating sustainably in advance of integrations	Provided transitional protections from various fund sources and included in financial projections	Yes
Clarify integration goals and how they will be achieved	Included a terse statement of goals and objectives	Yes

Public Comment Themes
Plan Section 11: Timeline

Topics	Action	Plan Update
Articulate the timeline associated with consideration of the plans	The major upcoming activities to be completed over the first quarter of fiscal year 2021/2022 upon Board approval include the below. Based on the completion of these activities the timeline will be adjusted accordingly: • Detailed plan for phased-in curriculum development and implementation developed • Middle States submission of Complex Substantive Change Request (full detail is available in Section 5 of the Plan) • Organization charts at the division level (academic organization charts were distributed to faculty for feedback and are currently under review) • Marketing and Branding strategy • Student facing systems' integration implementation plan The timeline is iterative and a planning document and will be adjusted for a phase-in of integrated curriculum development, review and implementation and the associated impacts of aligning supporting systems and business functions.	Yes

Public Comment Themes

Plan Section 12: Additional Considerations and Conclusions

Topics	Action	Plan Update
Advocacy for enhanced state funding	Clarification that integration is not a substitute but a necessary complement to greater state investment in the State System	Yes