



## Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education

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### Memorandum

Via Electronic Mail

**TO:** PASSHE Employees

**FROM:** John C. Cavanaugh  
Chancellor

**DATE:** November 30, 2010

**RE:** PASSHE Transformation

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I am pleased to share with you PASSHE's new strategic vision, which was approved by the Board of Governors at its meeting last month. It is focused first and foremost on student success; and, secondarily, on responsiveness to state, regional, and national needs through the delivery of quality academic programs, research, and service. It will serve as the basis for the next PASSHE strategic plan and will provide guidance to all PASSHE universities in their own planning.

The vision includes four major components, all grounded in the need for **transformation**: (a) how, when, and where learning occurs; (b) how the resources necessary to ensure learning are pursued, retained, and sustained; (c) how our universities relate to their various communities; and (d) how we partner with the Commonwealth to create and deliver a shared vision for the future. Only through **transformation**, grounded in a thoughtful reexamination of our historic emphasis on high quality student learning opportunities, will our success be assured during these very difficult economic times.

PASSHE's priority has always been and will continue to be our students and ensuring that their experiences are the most enriching possible. I am energized by the possibilities this new direction gives to enhancing our already thriving learning environments. PASSHE has talented faculty and staff who are committed to the success of our students. Today's economic challenges and the ever-changing face of education have already resulted in much change at our universities. We are serving more students, collaborating more, implementing and using more technology and creative approaches to teaching and learning, developing new programs, providing multiple modes of learning, improving student services, maintaining facilities, and meeting greater regulatory requirements, all with fewer employees and limited resources. Because of the changes we have already achieved for the betterment of our students and the Commonwealth, we are poised for a great future.

On behalf of the Board of Governors, thank you for your hard work and commitment to the students, your university, and PASSHE. I look forward to achieving this **transformation** with you, which not only will ensure the ongoing vitality of the System and its universities but, most importantly, the success of our students.

## **PASSHE Strategic Initiatives**

Approved by the Board of Governors on October 13, 2010

### **Transforming Students and the Learning Environment**

To be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, students must be prepared for lifelong learning, a habit of the mind that will continually encourage them to refresh their content knowledge. PASSHE is committed to leading the way in improving how students learn, faculty teach, and courses are delivered. PASSHE must ensure that students who learn in its universities reflect the diversity of the communities from which they come, and that faculty and staff who teach and support them do so as well. The physical spaces in which learning occurs and the means by which information and courses are delivered must be adaptable and flexible. Goals in this area include ensuring quality and currency in academic programs and services, expanding greater inter-university collaboration, employing technology and designing facilities to enhance teaching and learning, and providing evidence of student learning and achievement.

### **Transforming Resources**

Providing adequate resources in difficult economic times will require continual rethinking of university entrepreneurship and flexibility, and a realization that new ways of thinking and conducting operations are essential. PASSHE prides itself in being a national leader in implementing significant cost reductions and cost avoidance strategies. PASSHE universities are seeking the same opportunities for revenue creation as other publicly funded institutions. To recruit and retain quality talent, PASSHE will strive to create an inclusive environment in which its diverse students, faculty, and staff can thrive; to implement best practices in teaching and learning; to enhance institutional flexibility; and to increase private fundraising.

### **Transforming University-Community Relations**

The communities and regions in which PASSHE universities are located must be better for and enhance those institutions. This mutually beneficial relationship must be nurtured and enhanced in the myriad ways that respect and use each other's strengths. PASSHE universities have an obligation to enhance the quality of life of the citizens in their communities, and to help improve local and regional economic conditions. All core constituency groups (students, staff, and faculty) must work together with local, regional, national, and international communities to ensure that each leaves the situation better than he or she found it. Goals in this area include enhancing community and regional engagement, expanding opportunities for work force development, and fostering local and regional economic and community development.

### **Transforming PASSHE's Role in Determining the Commonwealth's Future**

As state-owned universities, PASSHE institutions have a special relationship with the Commonwealth. As a result, the System has an obligation to ensure that the strategic needs of the Commonwealth are its focus, and that PASSHE plays an appropriate role in creating the policy and direction for the state's future. This means that PASSHE must be part of the vision of the future, and have a significant role in creating and delivering it. Goals in this area include expanding capacity for public policy development; capitalizing on the broadband initiative for educational, health, and economic improvement; and aligning academic programs at all levels with the Commonwealth's strategic needs.