



Chancellor Dan Greenstein
Cynthia Shapira, Board of Governors Chair
Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education
2986 North 2nd Street
Harrisburg, Pa., 17110-1201

November 11, 2020

Dear Chancellor Greenstein and Chair Shapira,

Since its founding in 1881, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) has been committed to making the dream of higher education a reality for all women. AAUW supports a strong system of public education that promotes gender fairness, equity, and diversity, including vigorous enforcement of Title IX, summarized in [Quick Facts on Higher Education](#).

AAUW Pennsylvania wishes to express our perspective and concerns about the integration of six schools into two and the loss of faculty and administration positions at ten universities throughout the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education system.

We recognize that the fourteen state-owned colleges and universities in PASSHE have been struggling with financial issues and declining enrollment for some time, and that the current situation with the coronavirus pandemic has only exacerbated the situation. These schools offer access to higher education to students in areas where access to post-secondary education is limited and provide options for students who must attend part-time. These schools fill the gap because they exist in areas where community colleges don't exist and follow open access admission policies. Therefore we support the model of keeping current campuses open and consolidating administration to achieve the integration of the six schools into two entities.

The school integration and financial concerns throughout the system are driving reductions in faculty and administrative staff. We urge that the decisions you make as you integrate six institutions and make reductions across the entire system do not create a disparate impact on minorities and women.



Additionally, a major issue for AAUW is the student debt crisis, which disproportionately impacts women as shown in our [Deeper in Debt](#) research. Over the past many years, PASSHE has received reduced or stagnant appropriations that caused an increase in tuition. Since 1987, there has been a 103% increase in the price of a college education, while median household income has only increased 14%. As a result, student loans are filling the gap. It is our wish that the money saved from the consolidation will be used to benefit the state system of higher education to reduce its reliance on tuition.

We recognize the difficult situation you are navigating. However, we hope to see increased opportunities for women and minority faculty and administration in higher education not be adversely impacted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann K. Pehle".

Ann K. Pehle
President
AAUW Pennsylvania
Changing the climate for women and girls
aauwpa.president@gmail.com