



**March 25, 2014**  
**Outline of Testimony**  
**House Majority Policy Committee**  
**Expanding Access to College and Keeping Student Debt Low**

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Highlands Community College

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**Pennsylvania Highlands Community College - Brief history and profile**

- Founded in 1993 as CCACC. PDE approved name change in 2004 re: regional approach (6 county SA)
- Cambria County sponsorship
- Mission: Pennsylvania Highlands Community College provides quality, affordable opportunities for learning that meet regional needs in a supportive, student-oriented environment.
- 5 physical facilities (Main Campus, Ebensburg, Somerset, Huntingdon, Blair) in 4 SA counties
- Workforce & Continuing Education actively engaged with B&I across 6 counties as well
- Enrollment (Core, Service, ACE/H.S. Dual Enrollment, on-line, %)
- Student profile – approx. 70% express interest in transferring; General Studies; Business; Criminal Justice; Medical Assisting/Coding; Human Services
- 2013 Budget \$10,166,905 (State: 24.21%; Local Sponsor: 8.59%; Student 65.71%)
- Highest graduation rate (31.6% 150% time 2010) among the 14 Community Colleges in PA according to a college completion report issued by Chronicle of Higher Education  
([http://collegecompletion.chronicle.com/state/#state=pa&sector=public\\_two](http://collegecompletion.chronicle.com/state/#state=pa&sector=public_two))

- Recognized by the U.S. Department of Education's College Affordability and Transparency Center (<http://collegecost.ed.gov/catc/Default.aspx#>) as having one of the lowest net prices for tuition and fees among community colleges in the country (Net price \$1,457 2010-11 after scholarships and grant aid. In-district students).
- 68% of FT students received grant aid

### **Focus on Access**

- Newest, smallest, and most rural of the 14 Community Colleges -- committed to serving first generation students, minorities, rural residents, and providing access/opportunity to those who would not likely attend college otherwise.
- Developed low cost, efficient Educational Centers in Ebensburg, Somerset, Huntingdon, and Blair Counties to meet student needs.
- Offering access via on-line courses and programs (14% of credits)
- Established in response to community and identified needs
- Welcomed by Penn State Altoona and Juniata – Transfer agreements in place or under development

### **Focus on Affordability**

- Heavy reliance on adjunct faculty (FT faculty teaching less than 50% of classes)
- Lean staffing (1 and 2 person offices)
  - Examples: President shares admin assistant with Assoc. VP for External Relations
    - Disability Services and Counseling funded by Perkins
    - Other critical functions (Career Services & IR) funded substantially through Title III grant ends in 2016
- Careful budgeting and rigorous expense controls
- Affordability depends on ability of students to earn a degree, certificate, or diploma and obtain good jobs

### **Focus on limiting/lowering student debt**

- Emphasized during admissions, orientation, testing and registration days
- Financial Aid Debt Management and Default Prevention Plan
  - work w/ DOE loan servicers to personal default letters
  - “Borrow wisely” campaign
  - Social media, FA TV
- PA Transfer and Articulation legislation (Act 50 of 2009) enables students completing articulated Associate degrees to transfer P2P to participating colleges without loss of credit
- Reducing need/impact of remedial education on student progress and completion

### **Cost of mission (quality, affordability, and access)**

- Compliance (State and Federal laws)
- Accreditation requirements
- Quality faculty and staff (attracting and retaining)
- Current teaching/learning technology (technical programs)
- Aligning programs with in-demand occupations
- Student interests/aptitudes don't sync with employer demand (STEM/Medical)