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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

NOVA CHEMICALS BUILDING  
1555 CORAOPOLIS HEIGHTS ROAD  
MOON TOWNSHIP, PENNSYLVANIA

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2014  
10:00 A.M.

PUBLIC HEARING  
HIGHER EDUCATION READINESS FOR CAREER SUCCESS

BEFORE: HONORABLE JAMES CHRISTIANA, MAJORITY CHAIRMAN  
HONORABLE MARK MUSTIO  
HONORABLE ELI EVANKOVICH  
HONORABLE SCOTT CONKLIN, MINORITY CHAIRMAN  
HONORABLE MARK LONGIETTI

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Good morning. First I'd like to welcome everyone and begin by thanking NOVA for hosting us today in this beautiful facility. We thank you for your generosity for what hopes to be a very educational hearing on higher education. So thank you to NOVA.

I also would like to thank my staff for their working on planning this with the House Education staff, as well as thank Representative Mustio's district staff for all their help getting us to this point and to work out such a distinguished panel. Thank you to all of our staffs.

I would like to give Representative Conklin, who's the Minority Chair, an opportunity to say some brief remarks, if he would like.

CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: I just want to thank Representative Christiana for giving me the opportunity to be here. And hopefully, we'll be able to have some good discussion today. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: I would also like to recognize my colleagues --- my Republican colleagues, Representative Eli Evankovich, as well as Representative Mustio. We are in Representative Mustio's legislative district, so I would like to give him an opportunity to welcome us and say a few words if he'd like.

1           REPRESENTATIVE MUSTIO: Thank you. I would also  
2 like to thank NOVA. I think this is the third hearing since  
3 I've been in the House that they've hosted us. And it's a  
4 great facility, great company, great corporate community,  
5 corporation, and thanks to them. And Jim, this is going to be  
6 a very informative hearing, and I appreciate you setting it up.

7           CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: My pleasure. And before we  
8 bring up Laura Fisher, I'd just like to maybe lay a little bit  
9 of a backdrop of why we're having this hearing and why I asked  
10 Chairman Clymer to allow us to host us this hearing out here in  
11 western Pennsylvania.

12           It was my hope that everyone in attendance could  
13 hear firsthand the accounts of the changing economy out in  
14 western Pennsylvania. And while we're all seeing the jobs  
15 climate across Pennsylvania do some great things coming out of  
16 the recession, I do believe that the oil and gas industry here  
17 in western Pennsylvania is providing a huge opportunity for the  
18 folks in this region. And we would like to have a conversation  
19 about making sure that our labor force is equipped for the new  
20 generation opportunities, as well as partnering with companies  
21 that have been here for decades, yet they are starting to see  
22 changes in their business and the skills needed for the  
23 available positions.

24           One thing that we continue to hear from job creators  
25 is that, while there's a lot of opportunity, there's not a

1 workforce that is prepared for all those opportunities. And  
2 throughout the appropriation process, I was really getting  
3 frustrated by the idea that we keep making financial investment  
4 decisions based off of history rather than present-day reality.  
5 We continue to make funding decisions that were put in place  
6 decades ago, but we continue to hear about young folks coming  
7 out of college with a tremendous amount of debt and a degree  
8 that is oftentimes not tied to a Pennsylvania job. And so, I  
9 think the first step is to have a conversation, talk about what  
10 jobs are available in this region, what skills are needed, and  
11 then what curriculum and programs we have to put in place so  
12 that those kids or those young adults or those displaced  
13 workers have the opportunity to get those skills to ultimately  
14 land those jobs. It's my hope that we invest in Pennsylvania  
15 students from Pennsylvania skills getting Pennsylvania jobs.  
16 And I think that should be what we all work towards in  
17 Harrisburg. And the first step is by having a conversation  
18 about whether or not we are doing that currently, and then, if  
19 we're not, what are some suggestions of how we can do that in a  
20 better way. And with that, I would like to call up Laura  
21 Fisher, who is the Senior Vice President for Workplace and  
22 Special Projects for the Allegheny Conference on Community  
23 Development. Laura?

24 MS. FISHER: Good morning. Thank you very much for  
25 the opportunity to offer some thoughts on some very important

1 topics. I think we know that the resilience of southwestern  
2 Pennsylvania's economy during the great recession, even as  
3 other parts of the country stagnated, has garnered national  
4 recognition. So 30 years after the collapse of the steel  
5 industry we have a very diverse economy, importantly with no  
6 one sector comprising more than 22 percent. And our  
7 unemployment rate in the Pittsburgh region has consistently  
8 remained lower than that of particularly all of our benchmark  
9 cities.

10 Right now, the job aggregator on  
11 ImaginePittsburgh.com shows more than 20,000 open jobs in our  
12 ten-county region. And we have an unemployment rate below six  
13 percent. So there's a supply and demand issue right there.  
14 Our challenge, too, is that we know many of these open jobs  
15 require skills that our residents simply don't have. And the  
16 increasing pace of innovation means, and I think very  
17 importantly, that this idea of so-called basic skills will  
18 become increasingly sophisticated. Employers frequently tell  
19 us that they're worried about being able to fill the jobs they  
20 are creating. And recently, we've been hearing from some  
21 employers in our region that they're actually turning away new  
22 business because of their concerns about the talent that they  
23 know they're going to need.

24 Aggravating the supply and demand mismatch is the  
25 fact that we have the oldest working population in the country.

1 And because of the lack of growth during the 1980s and 1990s,  
2 the talent pipeline is thinner than that in other regions. In  
3 our 2012 Energy Occupational Analysis, undertaken in  
4 partnership with Development Dimensions International,  
5 employers stated --- and this is in energy and related  
6 manufacturing sectors --- that they felt confident they could  
7 find only one in five suitably skilled workers they will need  
8 between now and 2020.

9           The energy analysis identified 14 high-demand  
10 occupations common to most, and in some cases, all energy and  
11 related manufacturing sectors. And I think, very importantly,  
12 there's strong and continuing demand for jobs that require many  
13 different levels of education. Certification, two year and  
14 four-year degrees are all going to continue to be in demand.  
15 Too often young people are told that there is a permanent fork  
16 in the road as they finish high school, college or no college.  
17 And I would like to suggest to you that this construct is as  
18 outdated as many people's images of energy and manufacturing  
19 jobs, and I think that it's a singularly deleterious message to  
20 young people.

21           All children we know need to complete high school,  
22 and they also need additional education and training no matter  
23 what occupation they may pursue. They also need to leave high  
24 school with more than competencies in reading, writing and  
25 mathematics. And we're still challenged, I would say, as a

1 state to have all of our students graduate just with those  
2 competencies. But computer science is the foundation of  
3 innovation in every single enterprise. And employers are  
4 telling us frequently that the young people they hire are great  
5 with handheld devices and social media, but they really don't  
6 know anything about IT. A study issued by Harvard's Graduate  
7 School of Education documented the importance of all students  
8 having both academic and technical skills, not the either/or  
9 that is so often promulgated. This morning I'd like to suggest  
10 just two key ways by which we can begin to effect how we  
11 prepare our children for productive lives and careers.

12           First is providing students with a range of  
13 education pathways. Despite the demonstrated demand for  
14 graduates trained and certified in technical fields, many  
15 school districts are reluctant to recommend CTE to their best  
16 students. Teachers and counselors are pressured, often by  
17 parents and school boards, to steer students away from  
18 technical education and toward four-year degrees from the  
19 outset, even if the field of study or interest is not yet  
20 defined. Post-secondary choices need to be as well informed as  
21 possible. The opportunity to attend college and to graduate  
22 with a B.A. or a B.S. degree has been fundamental to this  
23 country's growth and prosperity, but so to have been the career  
24 and technical education programs that have provided  
25 family-sustaining wages to millions. The headline here is that

1 what once required only a high school degree and some  
2 on-the-job training, and those are those middle skilled jobs,  
3 now require far more advanced skills. And that means a much  
4 wider range of opportunity to all if we equip our students with  
5 both academic and technical training. It means that all  
6 students would have an opportunity to pursue technical and  
7 professional degrees and certifications.

8           We need to create one system that connects the K-12  
9 part of our education system with higher education. Integrated  
10 programming between community colleges, career and tech schools  
11 and four-year colleges is one of the best ways to build strong  
12 skills in our students and provide them with a range of  
13 education and career paths. One effective way to create this  
14 continuity is through articulation agreements in which course  
15 credits are transferable across institutions. Dual enrollment  
16 programs, in which high school students also take college  
17 classes, has also been shown to increase the likelihood of  
18 pursuing post-secondary degrees and may improve students' first  
19 semester grades. These portable credentials give students more  
20 flexibility and more opportunity.

21           I do think it's important to note here, however,  
22 that the graduation statistics both at the two and four-year  
23 level remain abysmal both regionally and nationally, with only  
24 25 percent of students who start a two-year program finishing  
25 and only 42 percent of students who start a four-year program

1 finishing. So there's something we're not doing right in that  
2 space.

3 In terms of articulation agreements and  
4 collaboration, there are administrative barriers between high  
5 schools and post-secondary schools, including state mandates  
6 about teacher certification. It's important that the state  
7 government consider secondary and post-secondary education as  
8 one coordinated system, not as two separate systems.

9 And at the same time, in order to built a broad  
10 system of articulation agreements, we need to consider the  
11 pressures created by current funding models. Dual enrollment  
12 and other credit transferring arrangements, as important as  
13 they are, lead to reduced tuition revenue for participating  
14 higher education institutions, and therefore, disincentivizes  
15 such programs. To build a more connected system, we need to  
16 recognize these constraints and provide supports for schools  
17 that are willing to offer students those opportunities. And  
18 that might include offering more incentive in high-demand areas  
19 of study and less in places for which there are not jobs on the  
20 far end of an educational pathway.

21 Rising education costs, shrinking public resources,  
22 the clear evidence of a skills gap and the growth of middle  
23 skill jobs suggests now is a time to proactively realign our  
24 education and workforce system to meet the 21st Century  
25 economy. And I'll stop there. I'll be happy to entertain any

1 questions if you have some.

2           CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Thank you, Laura. I'd like to  
3 welcome our colleague, Representative Mark Longietti, to the  
4 hearing. And also, we want to recognize Chris Wakeley from  
5 Chairman Roebuck's office, who made the trip out here to be  
6 with us. Thanks, Chris, for making the commute.

7           Laura, just a couple follow-ups to some things that  
8 you had mentioned. In your testimony you said that teachers  
9 and counselors are pressured, often by parents and school  
10 boards. I can understand from the parents' perception. I was  
11 a product of you're going to go to college no matter what cost,  
12 no matter what the debt is. My parents were very uneducated  
13 about education. I think that is quite probably common in  
14 western Pennsylvania. But the one part of your statement I  
15 think that I would like you to maybe elaborate on is the  
16 pressure from the school boards for counselors and teachers to  
17 push kids towards a traditional four-year setting. Are there  
18 reasons ---? Are they ranked? Is there a ranking out there  
19 that they're taking the pressure of or is it a stigma? Why do  
20 you believe that the school board is pressuring to send kids to  
21 traditional four-year institutions?

22           MS. FISHER: Well, I think it's a national issue.  
23 It's not simply a regional one. I think it's, in some cases,  
24 been exacerbated here really because of the collapse of the  
25 steel industry and what we went through over two decades and a

1 feeling that many middle-skilled jobs like the steel economy  
2 may just disappear, and that the path of success is going to  
3 involve a four-year degree. I think this is really at the  
4 heart of it, is the challenge of the disconnect between the  
5 K-12 and the higher education system. Because there's plenty  
6 of data out there, and right now the data shows that about 81  
7 percent of high school graduates will go on to pursue a  
8 four-year degree, but only 42 of them --- percent of them will  
9 finish that degree, usually in six years. So we all hear every  
10 year, and I'm certainly not suggesting any criticism of  
11 superintendents and principals, but it just is a disconnect in  
12 the system. A school may say that 95 percent of its high  
13 school graduates are going on to college, and the  
14 accountability for the outcomes ends there. So that student  
15 may or may not actually matriculate in the fall. And in many  
16 cases, students don't end up showing up for college for a  
17 variety of reasons, particularly lower-income students who  
18 don't have the support over the summer in that transfer from  
19 high school to post-secondary education that they had when they  
20 were in a school environment.

21           So it's the same issue for colleges, too, where they  
22 don't necessarily make public the number of students who don't  
23 finish, although now, when you look closely at the data, it  
24 will show the number of students who persist. And in many  
25 cases, it's well under 50 percent, and particularly in some of

1 the larger schools. So it's really that there isn't an  
2 effective handoff and there's no way of supporting a student's  
3 pathway out of high school into that post-secondary choice.  
4 And I think part of the conversation that we'd like to change  
5 is this idea of college or non-college, but really we're in a  
6 time now when there need to be multiple what people now are  
7 calling off and on ramps to education and lifelong learning.

8           You know, I can cite that one HR manager for a major  
9 natural gas company here told me that she would much prefer to  
10 hire a two-year engineering tech, get them on board, they're  
11 immediately productive, have great mechanical skills, and that  
12 company would pay for them to pursue their other two years and  
13 get a four-year degree. So when we make the calculation about  
14 the cost of college and indebtedness and the opportunities for  
15 jobs on the far end, it's really about infusing that  
16 conversation with more information about the different pathways  
17 you can take to end up with that degree.

18           CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: I want to thank you. First, and  
19 I do want to congratulate somebody --- that shows my age. I  
20 remember the old Strip District, slaughterhouse. Everything  
21 that Allegheny county's done is absolutely breathtaking and  
22 unbelievable. My hats off to everybody that's been involved  
23 all over the years. But if you had to name three work skills  
24 that are missing --- because you were saying earlier about  
25 employers coming in, looking for individuals that aren't quite

1 ready --- if you had to name three work sets that you believed  
2 that we need to get our young people pushed towards, what would  
3 you say they are?

4 MS. FISHER: Well, certainly critical thinking is  
5 named by every single employer and independent decision making  
6 ability. And I think a lot of schools are making a move toward  
7 more project-based learning and having students work in teams,  
8 which I think has been very productive.

9 I think this issue, though, of computer science  
10 education is critical. It's one of the major focuses of Google  
11 now nationally, is pursuing that all K-12 education include  
12 education in computer science, because it is the future. And  
13 if you look at a drilling rig or you look at a hospital system,  
14 any of them are involving IT, 57 percent of those 20,000 jobs  
15 have significant IT requirements associated with them. So it  
16 just tells us that that's part of every single sector. And I  
17 think --- you know, we're talking --- in the case of my  
18 comments about handheld devices and social media, the context  
19 for that conversation with a group of CEOs was around college  
20 graduates that they've employed. So I think if you look at the  
21 broader population, you know, you're going to see an issue  
22 around a lack of understanding of IT. And I think that's  
23 really a critical issue.

24 CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Representative Evankovich?

1           REPRESENTATIVE EVANKOVICH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
2 Laura, thanks for your testimony. It's a subject we've  
3 discussed on maybe too many occasions.

4           I was very happy to hear you talk about in your  
5 testimony the need for pathways. And we've had many  
6 discussions about pathways and what that means. And without  
7 giving away too many details, as you know, we're working on a  
8 proposal to create those pathways, mimicked off of other states  
9 and nations. As we lay out a new course for what those  
10 pathways mean, pathways to success for a student, to a career,  
11 really what a big part it comes down to is the business  
12 communities involvement in K-12. And the business community  
13 will have to be a big participant in how you move forward and  
14 how you show those kids what careers look like in our region.  
15 Do you believe that the business community is ready to step to  
16 the plate to provide that expertise to be engaged to the level  
17 with which they have to be in order to make it a success, that  
18 the kids are exposed to career opportunities, that the K-12 is  
19 properly informed with what exact things are needed moving  
20 forward?

21           MS. FISHER: It's a great question. And from where  
22 I sit, having worked with both educators and business to try  
23 and address some of these issues, there's huge frustration on  
24 both sides. I think businesses and schools have different  
25 calendars. They speak different languages. And you know, I

1 think there's also just the whole fragmentation. We have so  
2 many schools, so many school districts. I think we have the  
3 same issue at the community college level, where we have  
4 wonderful community colleges, but we have employers that have a  
5 big regional footprint. So we'll have schools, both colleges  
6 and schools, knocking on the doors of the same companies. And  
7 oftentimes it has really revolved around somebody at that  
8 company being passionate about the issue. But as soon as that  
9 person is promoted or retires or takes another job, you're back  
10 at square one. So it isn't a system at all.

11 I do think there's a lot of promise in using the  
12 intermediate unit organization as a way to aggregate schools  
13 around issues of career education and a way to make meaningful  
14 connections with business. I mean, if a business believes that  
15 it can come, you know, to speak with IU 3, which is Allegheny  
16 County. There are 140,000 students in those schools. So if  
17 you approach a big employer and you have an avenue to reach all  
18 140,000 as opposed to trying to reach 42 different schools,  
19 it's going to be a pathway that is going to be much more  
20 enticing. But I think we have to be more focused and directive  
21 in how we aggregate the schools so that, you know, we're really  
22 using businesses' time effectively and they know that they're  
23 talking to the right people.

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Representative Longietti?

25 REPRESENTATIVE LONGIETTI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 You talked a little bit about the dual enrollment program and  
2 articulation. And unfortunately, with dual enrollment, it was  
3 one of those programs that fell to the Budget axe a couple  
4 years ago. The program is still available. It's just, you  
5 know, for kids that don't have resources. You know, it's not  
6 as available.

7 But one thing that the legislature is looking at,  
8 and I want to get your reaction, is setting up a process where  
9 students who take AP courses could eventually articulate those  
10 over to college credit. And I'm wondering if there's a sweet  
11 spot there. I hear your testimony that, you know, for colleges  
12 we've got to make sure that we don't put more pressure on them,  
13 you know, with these types of programs. But I would assume for  
14 a college, if they can keep that student and actually graduate  
15 them, obviously, that's their goal. And also financially, it's  
16 rewarding to them. And if I remember correctly, the evidence  
17 indicates that students who take AP courses tend to fare better  
18 in college. Is that --- what's your reaction to that kind of a  
19 program where students could eventually receive college credit  
20 for taking advanced placement courses in high school?

21 MS. FISHER: I think it happens --- it has happened  
22 more in the past than it's happening now. And certainly, in  
23 the independent and private colleges, a big trend is  
24 downplaying of AP credit. And some colleges will even --- and  
25 I've heard this firsthand from some schools --- they'll give

1 you the credit, but you still have to pay for what would have  
2 been the course fee. And so much of this is driven by revenue  
3 generation. And I think, unfortunately, right now we have in  
4 our region for our state schools, you know, a dip in the  
5 college-age population, which will right itself, but right now  
6 I think it's creating particular strains.

7 I do, though, that there's really a great  
8 opportunity through the PASSHE system connecting to the  
9 community colleges and to our high schools to think about  
10 shortened time to degree completion, whether it's a two or  
11 four-year degree. And some states have very successfully  
12 incentivized those pathways that are around high-demand  
13 occupations, but not too narrowly focused. I mean, I think  
14 what you don't want to do is incentivize people in a space like  
15 weatherization, for instance, and then it turns out there  
16 aren't any jobs at the end. But part of what we did in the  
17 occupational analysis was to demonstrate the common demand  
18 across multiple industries, in energy and manufacturing. And  
19 particularly, those are all cyclical businesses. So if we can  
20 help young people understand that their skill set is in demand  
21 across all of those sectors rather than thinking if I work in  
22 this one company and I lose my job, I'm going to have to learn  
23 to do something else, you know, if they become more agile, then  
24 we have a much more nimble workforce that can, I think, respond  
25 appropriately. But we need to build more density in those

1 high-demand occupations. And incentivizing the education  
2 pathway with credits for dollars might be a way to help push  
3 that forward.

4 REPRESENTATIVE LONGIETTI: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Representative Mustio?

6 REPRESENTATIVE MUSTIO: Thank you. And thank you  
7 for your testimony. Are we really doing a good enough job  
8 matching employers with out-of-work or newly-graduated talent?  
9 The reason I ask that is I think that the large companies, like  
10 the one we're in today, are more sophisticated. They have an  
11 HR department. They have a training department. But the  
12 businesses that are clients of mine or even our constituents  
13 that we tour, a lot of them are smaller companies where the  
14 owner is the HR department, the legal department, the  
15 accounting department, the training department. And, you know,  
16 I can't tell you how many times I have --- and I assume it's  
17 the same for these gentlemen --- I can't find --- if you can  
18 get me three or four of these, I'd hire them on the spot. So  
19 that's the smaller work --- the smaller companies. It seems  
20 like the testimony here, I could picture all of this in a large  
21 corporation, and some of them that will be testifying today.  
22 Can you speak to that?

23 MS. FISHER: Sure. I think that's a critical issue.  
24 You know, I think even the large companies complain about their  
25 difficulty in finding talent. But really, the challenge is in

1 the small and midsized companies. And the few companies I  
2 referred to who are leaving business on the table tend to be  
3 smaller companies that don't have the ability to market  
4 themselves or may not even have, you know, an HR department.

5           And I think what exacerbates the challenge is, you  
6 know, it's a very opaque market for people looking for work.  
7 Just those 14 high-demand occupations that I mentioned common  
8 across all of those sectors have almost 200 job titles in this  
9 marketplace. So nobody has any idea what they're qualified  
10 for. And the companies may be competing for the same talent,  
11 but they look like totally different jobs. So it makes it very  
12 hard for people to understand. We're actually working on an  
13 initiative right now for veterans to translate to those jobs.  
14 But I think that's really part of the heart of it.

15           What we are piloting --- or will be piloting in that  
16 job aggregator we have is aggregating basically the Department  
17 of Labor O\*NET codes for those jobs. So that if you search for  
18 something by the description of what the occupation is, you'll  
19 bring up all those jobs no matter what the title is, because  
20 they all have that common code from the Department of Labor.  
21 But I think that's where some of the systems thinking is  
22 important, where on the unemployment side we're working now  
23 closely with the Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board. They  
24 have now, because of the changes in the unemployment  
25 compensation rules, there's a lot of information available

1 about the people receiving unemployment. And they are actually  
2 now working on developing a much more comprehensive picture of  
3 the skill sets those people have. So one effort we're working  
4 on right now, and it's a slow process, but we're asking  
5 companies with high-volume entry-level jobs to give us those  
6 competencies and to agree to be part of the program. And then  
7 the WIB is about to scour the data of those --- right now it's  
8 about 20,000 people --- and they can make a match. It might be  
9 a 50-percent match or an 80-percent match. And then we know  
10 what additional services they need to get to be competitive.  
11 But I think it's really just a systems thinking that way that  
12 we need to employ in order to address it because there's just  
13 too much opaqueness on both sides of the equation, for  
14 companies and for the people seeking work.

15 REPRESENTATIVE MUSTIO: Thanks, Laura. Just one  
16 final follow-up. Did I hear you correctly during your  
17 testimony, 58 percent of folks that go to college are not  
18 finishing?

19 MS. FISHER: Only 42 percent finish, yes.

20 REPRESENTATIVE MUSTIO: Fifty-eight (58) percent are  
21 not finishing their degree?

22 MS. FISHER: Yes.

23 REPRESENTATIVE MUSTIO: I think no matter what comes  
24 from this hearing, I think we'll all be completely shocked from  
25 those numbers and know that we have a lot of work in front of

1 us.

2           When we look at --- when we're having this  
3 conversation in Harrisburg, one of the elephants in the room is  
4 funding. And the fact that we invest in 14 state schools,  
5 state-related branch campuses and state-related community  
6 colleges and we give hundreds of millions of dollars of tuition  
7 assistance for young folks that are going to any Pennsylvania  
8 school, whether they're public or private. And to be honest, I  
9 think we would all agree we're probably doing none of those  
10 adequately enough and we have to do a better job in going  
11 forward. But I feel like just throwing money down a current  
12 system when 58 percent of the kids aren't getting a degree,  
13 something's got to give.

14           In your research around the country, have you seen  
15 almost like a partnership between industry, whether it's labor  
16 or a specific company, investing in curriculums or scholarship  
17 programs so that they can invest in the final product of what  
18 they want in the trained workforce and the skills that they  
19 need? Has that worked in other parts of the country?

20           MS. FISHER: It has. It's worked here, too. I  
21 think the challenge, though, is that it's still kind of a one  
22 off effort, where you have one company working on a program  
23 with one community college. And when it's a cyclical business,  
24 if there's a downturn, those people tend to lose their  
25 employment. And to that point, we have a pilot now with CCAC

1 around Mechatronics, where we got six companies who all have  
2 common needs in energy but are in different sectors, to have a  
3 single cohort class at CCAC. And I think that's --- it's a  
4 little bit of the German model, where, you know, you define  
5 common competencies across an industry group, and then those  
6 companies can spend their dollars on whatever proprietary  
7 training they need to do. So I think there are some good  
8 models, certainly for --- you know, I think the Reading Area  
9 Community College has a great program for incumbent workers  
10 that actually funds their community college programs. They've  
11 got big companies like Carpenter Technologies and Hershey and  
12 others who have found it less expensive to train their  
13 workforce at Reading than to do it themselves. And I think  
14 that's a good model. They've developed a Center of Excellence  
15 there. I think our community colleges have the capacity to do  
16 the same thing. So we're not all each offering everything but  
17 thinking about who has the greatest strength in certain  
18 high-demand areas and working to get more students to go to  
19 that school for that field instead of everybody offering a  
20 little bit of everything.

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Well, Laura, thank you very  
22 much for your testimony.

23 MS. FISHER: Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: We greatly appreciate it.

25 MS. FISHER: I appreciate the opportunity. Thank

1 you.

2 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Next we'll have Michelle  
3 Buczkowski, manager of Talent Strategies for CONSOL Energy.

4 Hi, Michelle. Welcome.

5 MS. BUCZKOWSKI: Hi. Good morning. So as  
6 Representative Christiana mentioned, I'm the manager of Talent  
7 Strategies at CONSOL Energy. And for those of you who are not  
8 familiar, CONSOL is a diversified energy provider. We have our  
9 roots 150 years in the coal industry and have been a leader in  
10 that industry, but more recently have shifted a focus to growth  
11 within the oil and gas division. Of our 5,000 employees that  
12 we have CONSOL, less than 700 of those are devoted to our gas  
13 company. And that information is significant in better  
14 understanding the perspective that I hope to articulate for you  
15 guys today.

16 So as part of my responsibilities, I oversee talent  
17 acquisition for the company. And as a proud employee of the  
18 industry and CONSOL, I'm here today to confirm the challenges  
19 that we face with regard to talent. My focus --- just for the  
20 record, my focus will be more so on our recent graduates and  
21 less on the mid-career folks. But I do want to make note that  
22 those --- that is also a very important candidate stream when  
23 filling our recruit funnel. So I don't want to leave that  
24 aside.

25 The Pittsburgh Tech Council calls Pittsburgh's

1 current situation a war on talent. In fact, every quarter they  
2 host a series called Talent Wars with regard to the lack of  
3 talent or the lack of skills that we have within the Pittsburgh  
4 region as it compares to demand for workforce. Of course, the  
5 Allegheny Conference devotes a large amount of time and  
6 resources to these efforts. And as Laura mentioned the  
7 demographics this morning, that lays a very strong foundation  
8 for us. So thank you, Laura, for that.

9 I'm also here to tell you that all of that work is  
10 absolutely needed. In July of 2013, CONSOL Energy hired 25  
11 people. In August of 2013, the following month, we hired 25  
12 more in one hiring class for one job title that we needed. All  
13 50 of those hires were recent graduates from four-year  
14 engineering programs. Every single one of those 50 hires was  
15 offered \$72,000 to start and an eight-percent annual bonus, a  
16 six-percent match at 100 percent on their 401(k) and a Cadillac  
17 package when it comes to benefits. Those are students who had  
18 no work experience. They had a four-year engineering degree  
19 for drilling engineering positions.

20 In the first quarter of 2014, CONSOL Energy's gas  
21 division only has hired over 70 people. We have more than  
22 matched that number with internal promotions within the same  
23 time frame. The vast majority of those 70 carried two-year or  
24 four-year technical degrees, while CONSOL does primarily focus  
25 on four-year engineering.

1           With our plan to grow 30 percent year over year for  
2 at least the next three years, it is safe to say that our  
3 demand for qualified and technically competent candidates will  
4 only increase. Keep in mind this demand only represents roles  
5 that will be filled directly with CONSOL. Our partners and  
6 service providers call for numbers far larger than that, for  
7 positions such as rosters or rig hands, CDL drivers and  
8 well tenders. And please make no mistake, while those  
9 employees may not work directly for CONSOL Energy, they work  
10 directly on our property. And our livelihood and success as an  
11 organization is dependent upon the talent and performance  
12 standards of those partners and service providers.

13           To fill this gap, our recruiting efforts turn to our  
14 communities, our local colleges and universities, technical  
15 schools, community colleges and vocational CTCs. Companies  
16 like CONSOL work diligently and heavily invest in training and  
17 development programs inside of our organizations that will take  
18 students from local programs and continue to educate and expose  
19 them to the industry, ultimately creating a seamless pathway  
20 for your sons and your daughters to become highly trained,  
21 competent and, most importantly, safe experts within the  
22 industry.

23           As technology advances, so will our programs, and we  
24 will continue to find ourselves leaning on our community  
25 partners to fill that talent gap that exists within

1 Pennsylvania. We encourage our high schools and even middle  
2 schools to educate their students and parents on the  
3 opportunities that this industry provides. We encourage our  
4 local educational institutions to continue to work with us to  
5 provide training and upgrade curriculum to meet our needs. The  
6 career opportunities available provide far beyond what we would  
7 consider a liveable wage and the industry as a whole provides a  
8 career path for growth and promotion, as articulated with our  
9 nearly 70 promotions within the first quarter of this year.

10 Pennsylvania is in a position where we can look over  
11 the next five to ten years and know, within a reasonable degree  
12 of certainty, what career opportunities are available, and that  
13 is something we should absolutely take advantage of. I'm happy  
14 to answer any questions.

15 CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: When you were talking about your  
16 need for individuals in the field, when you're looking at that,  
17 what is the main job of the individuals that you're trying to  
18 hire. Are they in the field, are they in the office.

19 MS. BUCZKOWSKI: Specifically within CONSOL Energy?

20 CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: Yeah.

21 MS. BUCZKOWSKI: So yes, they would start in the  
22 field. We have a very fast career path, so we're looking at  
23 two-year and four-year technical degreed folks, and ---.

24 CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: So ---.

25 MS. BUCZKOWSKI: Sorry. Go ahead.

1           CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: So when they're in the field,  
2 what kind of job are they doing?

3           MS. BUCZKOWSKI: So CONSOL Energy provides  
4 supervision for the most part. When you're looking at a rig  
5 itself, and I believe actually through --- I believe Penn Tech  
6 College, if you go to the Allegheny Conference's website, you  
7 can find a lot of data that shows there's about 400 to 600  
8 people needed to complete a well, ---

9           CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: Okay.

10          MS. BUCZKOWSKI: --- from identifying the product  
11 all the way through completion. CONSOL may only have 20 to 25  
12 folks on that property or that well that we're actually  
13 operating. The rest of that comes from a service provider. So  
14 for the most part, we're providing technical supervision. When  
15 we're hiring a graduate out of an engineering school and hiring  
16 them into what we call our AEG program, which is Assistant  
17 Engineer Gas, they get their \$72,000 right out of school. They  
18 go through a two-year very intense technical training program.  
19 They get classroom, on-the-job training, mentorship, exposure  
20 rotations. And within that two-year period, they will  
21 ultimately pop out into a job where they are the on-site point  
22 person for that entire rig.

23          CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: Which is just overseeing the job  
24 itself.

25          MS. BUCZKOWSKI: They oversee every aspect of it,

1 safety compliance, environmental compliance.

2 CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: So CONSOL doesn't actually do the  
3 drilling, ---

4 MS. BUCZKOWSKI: Correct.

5 CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: --- you just oversee for the  
6 production of it?

7 MS. BUCZKOWSKI: Absolutely.

8 CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: Okay. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Representative Mustio?

10 REPRESENTATIVE MUSTIO: Thank you. Michelle, you  
11 supplemented the testimony that we have here with some very  
12 interesting information. And I was wondering, at your  
13 convenience, if you could provide the Committee a typewritten  
14 copy of that as well, ---

15 MS. BUCZKOWSKI: Sure.

16 REPRESENTATIVE MUSTIO: --- because that is  
17 something that I think one --- those of our colleagues that are  
18 not in areas that have this type of drilling going on, I think  
19 it would be beneficial for them to learn about. But also I  
20 think those in this community that have seen a significant  
21 increase in the presence of companies with no, at this point,  
22 industrial activity really here, but the office buildings are  
23 here, are filled with a lot of white-collar jobs, high paying,  
24 that are paying a lot of taxes to the communities, that type of  
25 information I think is valuable for us to get out to our

1 constituencies, the parents of the children and that type of  
2 thing. I think it would be valuable. I really don't have a  
3 question at this point, but I do have a desire to gather that  
4 information from you.

5 MS. BUCZKOWSKI: Absolutely.

6 REPRESENTATIVE MUSTIO: Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Representative Longietti?

8 REPRESENTATIVE LONGIETTI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 You talked a little bit towards the end of your testimony about  
10 the importance of high schools and middle schools even to  
11 educate both parents and students about opportunities. And  
12 then you also talked a little bit about the curriculum in some  
13 of the educational institutions. And I'm just curious if  
14 you're able to tell us what CONSOL's able to do in partnership  
15 with the schools both to expose students and parents to these  
16 opportunities and then also to make sure that curriculum is  
17 appropriate to eventually lead to job opportunities.

18 MS. BUCZKOWSKI: Sure. So I think it's safe to say  
19 that CONSOL would take a two-pronged approach to that. We  
20 partner with other organizations that go directly into schools,  
21 like a Junior Achievement. We are very involved with that. So  
22 we volunteer the services of our staff to partner with Junior  
23 Achievement that does all the organization, that gets someone  
24 from the industry physically into a classroom to teach  
25 students. And then we also do very direct recruitment. It's

1 not unusual to see someone from the recruiting team at CONSOL  
2 physically in a high school or middle school. We have hosted  
3 several times leaders within the educational institutions in  
4 the area, whether that's CTCs, high schools, middle schools,  
5 into our building to educate them. As much as we have the  
6 bandwidth when requests are there, we do as much as we can to  
7 fulfill them. But as Laura mentioned earlier, it's an  
8 overwhelming challenge. So just as they're looking --- as  
9 schools are looking at companies like us and they're saying  
10 there's so many of you, how do we manage it, inside of a  
11 company essentially there are three of us within the recruiting  
12 department, that it's our responsibility to make those  
13 relationships and foster them within our organization. We're  
14 looking out and saying there's so many of you. And so the  
15 challenge is very much the same, where you have a massive  
16 amount of people and agendas here and a massive amount of  
17 companies and agendas here, and then how do you match them up  
18 effectively? Every time that we get a request, we entertain  
19 it. And as long as we have the bandwidth, we will put  
20 something together. We'll pull resources internally to serve  
21 that purpose. I can't promise you that it's making an enormous  
22 impact because it's not necessarily organized through a process  
23 or something like that. But I don't think we've ever turned  
24 down a request that we were capable of delivering on.

25 REPRESENTATIVE LONGIETTI: Thank you.

1           CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Representative Evankovich?

2           REPRESENTATIVE EVANKOVICH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
3 Michelle, thank you for your testimony. You had alluded to the  
4 fact that CONSOL is doing the primary hiring for the  
5 white-collar engineering supervisory positions, but you were  
6 working very closely with your contractors to help them recruit  
7 and possibly train for the other --- some of that 500 to 600.  
8 My question, I guess, is the process by which you're hiring the  
9 lower-skilled workforce, the roost-abouts, the well tenders,  
10 laborers, haulers, things of that nature. Can you help the  
11 Committee understand a little bit of that process of, you know,  
12 what are the sheer numbers? Do you have to interview how many  
13 people to get one person on the well site? Are there  
14 challenges that you really meet once you get them in the door  
15 or once you're about to get them in the door, in other words,  
16 drug testing, testing, training, those things? My industry ---  
17 in my industry experience, sometimes we would have to interview  
18 upwards of 300 people to fill 15 positions. Can you help us a  
19 little bit with that.

20           MS. BUCZKOWSKI: So I could absolutely answer that  
21 question in regard to CONSOL's positions. I'm not at liberty  
22 --- you know, I don't have enough information to answer that on  
23 behalf of our service providers. I can tell you the role that  
24 we play in helping our service providers hit the standard that  
25 we have when operating a well.

1           So different organizations have different  
2 requirements that a supply chain department will put forth when  
3 it comes to whether or not you're willing to work on our  
4 property. So every supply chain department will have some sort  
5 of request.

6           When CONSOL Energy is looking at that, we have  
7 requests that are very much focused on safety, compliance and  
8 continuance improvement, which are our top three core values.  
9 And part of that is also tied into the hiring process itself.  
10 So we have a strong focus and we have a strong standard for our  
11 service providers and contractors that they have to hit certain  
12 marks when it comes to background checks, physicals. And then  
13 also we have to make sure, because there's so much activity in  
14 the industry itself, that if someone has worked on our property  
15 before and we no longer want them on our property for one  
16 reason or another, that they don't pop up in another  
17 organization and back onto our property. So there's a system  
18 of checks and balances there. Again, I'm not --- I'm focused  
19 much more on the talent acquisition side. That would be much  
20 more of a supply chain question. But those are the types of  
21 standards that we set forth for, for those types of service  
22 providers and contractors to ensure that our standard of work  
23 is there. And that's something you would probably find very  
24 similarly across the industry. Safety is a huge focus for the  
25 industry, and so things like background checks and physicals

1 and things along those lines carry a lot of weight in terms of  
2 safety.

3           CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Michelle, maybe it's the fact  
4 that, you know, 20 years ago this area went through a pretty  
5 difficult period. And for a lot of those years, it was labor  
6 versus industry, and it was more of a battle between them. But  
7 I think in the last several years, if you look at the  
8 legislation that Harrisburg passed to incentivize the Shell  
9 cracker plant, we see this, in recent times, this labor and  
10 industry working together. And I think CONSOL has a pretty  
11 strong partnership with labor, in general, in this area. Can  
12 you talk about your relationship, from CONSOL's perspective,  
13 working hand in hand with labor, the labor groups, the trade  
14 associations, so that when there's available jobs, we have the  
15 trained workforce in place to get those jobs? And whether it's  
16 for your vendors or CONSOL specifically, I do think that you  
17 have a --- the company has a strong relationship with labor, in  
18 general, in this region, and I think it's something you should  
19 be commended for. Could you just talk about --- a little bit  
20 about that relationship?

21           MR. BUCZKOWSKI: So are you referring specifically  
22 to union representation or are you talking about labor  
23 development, in general, so carpenters, development and things  
24 along those lines?

25           CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Development in general, and

1 mainly the trades and the training centers in the region.

2 MR. BUCZKOWSKI: Yes, that's absolutely --- that is  
3 critical. As far as trades are concerned, I believe --- if it  
4 wasn't me who Laura quoted earlier, saying that there was an HR  
5 manager that said if you have a two-year degree, we'll bring  
6 you in and give you a job and then pay for you to get the rest  
7 of your two-year degree and turn it into a Bachelor's, it  
8 should have been me, if it wasn't me that she was referring to,  
9 because that is a huge focus for us.

10 You will see us at CTCs. You will see us --- we've  
11 had the president of CCAC in. We've been in contact with CCBC.  
12 We've been in contact with all of the local CTCs. There's a  
13 ton of them in the area. We have a very large presence and we  
14 cover a lot of ground. But they're critical to what we do.

15 You say --- you kind of separate labor and industry.  
16 I would argue at this point labor is industry. That is what we  
17 do. It's the --- when it comes to CONSOL Energy, operations  
18 rules the roost. Orders don't come from corporate. Orders  
19 come from creating efficiencies and productivity and compliance  
20 and safety within our field operations. And so we are ---  
21 while we may be the white-collar jobs, we are serving the  
22 blue-collar ones. And that is the mindset that we have  
23 internally to CONSOL Energy. So the focus is much more on  
24 labor and the trade associations, and that is who we partner  
25 with and share curriculum with and sit on boards, to provide

1 information so that they can upgrade their curriculum, because  
2 that is --- that's our bread and butter.

3           CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: And I remember sitting in a  
4 meeting with Representative Mustio and a head of a local union  
5 said, you know, so many times the public or politicians think  
6 that labor can't stand industry and they're combative. But he  
7 said something that stuck with me at that meeting. He said,  
8 listen, if we don't have industry, we don't have jobs. And our  
9 folks need jobs and they need our workforce. And I think  
10 whether it's been the natural gas opportunity --- and I think I  
11 would be remiss not to mention the project that you have going  
12 on in the airport corridor that will help this region be energy  
13 independent, as well as putting a tremendous amount of folks to  
14 work --- I will say the partnership has been wonderful over the  
15 last four or five years, when we're looking at the natural gas  
16 opportunities. Labor and industry really have come together,  
17 and it's through leadership like CONSOL, the projects like the  
18 airport, as well as the labor organizations really being open  
19 to putting folks back to work. So thank you, Michelle, for  
20 your testimony.

21           MS. BUCZKOWSKI: Thank you.

22           CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Next we'll have Pace  
23 Markowitz, Director of Communications for NOVA Chemicals.

24           MR. MARKOWITZ: Good morning, Chairman, and  
25 Subcommittee members. On behalf of NOVA Chemicals, welcome to

1 our building. And please accept my comments on higher  
2 education.

3 NOVA Chemicals is a plastics and chemicals company  
4 with a commercial office here, that we're sitting in today, and  
5 manufacturing in Beaver County and Monaca. We also have  
6 manufacturing in Ohio, Alberta and Ontario. We hire many  
7 professionals and tradespeople at all of our offices and our  
8 manufacturing locations. The primary positions --- the  
9 majority of our positions are technical. They're STEM-based  
10 positions, science, technology, engineering and math. Although  
11 we hire a lot less in Pennsylvania than we do in our Canadian  
12 facilities, the trends are very similar throughout our entire  
13 organization.

14 As we look at our workforce, we see an aging  
15 workforce. We see a lot of people that are beginning to plan  
16 for the next stages of their life, and we have to understand  
17 what are the best ways to refill those positions or rethink  
18 those positions. And this is true for our engineers and for  
19 our skilled labor people. They do need different training, but  
20 there is a very distinct similarity between them, and that is  
21 that they all have to be very interested in going into those  
22 fields of study from a very young age. So we look at this as  
23 something that has to start very early on. So before we can  
24 even talk about higher education, we have to talk about making  
25 the children interested in going into the fields of study that

1 we want them to ultimately graduate and be available to us. So  
2 we work very similar to CONSOL and other of the employers in  
3 the region, where we start, you know, pre-K, K, all the way  
4 through 12, and then with the college programs to look at how  
5 we do our community investments to ensure that students are  
6 getting the exposure they need to science and math so that when  
7 it is time to want to figure out what they're going to study,  
8 they haven't already decided science and math is not something  
9 that they're going to be good at. We need to make sure that  
10 they can see that it's fun, that it's engaging and that really,  
11 whether you're a boy or a girl, it's something that is very  
12 within your reach to do. So we do a lot of our community  
13 investments, actually the majority of our community investments  
14 that we do in this region are strictly based on engaging young  
15 people to want to ultimately be our workforce of the future.

16           And then we also, as we look forward, beyond the  
17 high school age, we also look at the colleges and we look at  
18 developing --- you know, whether it's an engineer or somebody  
19 that's not a college-based person --- and this isn't as much in  
20 Pennsylvania, but we do internships and co-op programs. We try  
21 to make sure that we give opportunities to young people to  
22 experience the workforce, to make sure that it is what they  
23 want to do. Not as much in this region, but in other regions,  
24 we also do that with tradespeople, where they're in their  
25 two-year programs where they take time to come into our sites,

1 see what it is to experience working in a chemical facility.  
2 And also for our engineers, to see that they can see what it's  
3 like to be a working engineer out there. So once we can get  
4 them to choose the fields of study, then they can start to look  
5 forward to becoming a professional, becoming what we need. And  
6 then similar to the --- both of the speakers before me, we need  
7 to make sure that the stigma is gone of just a four-year  
8 university degree. We need as many pipefitters, millwrights,  
9 instrument electricians, you know, DCS engineers as we do  
10 engineers, chemical engineers, civil engineers, mechanical  
11 engineers. And they need to be prepared to make those life  
12 decisions without feeling like they've taken a wrong turn, very  
13 similar to what the others have said.

14           And with the emergence of oil and gas, you know,  
15 we're a small manufacturing facility in Beaver County. It does  
16 draw away some of our skilled talent that could be possibly  
17 coming to us. So we need to continue to develop a large enough  
18 workforce to fulfill all the needs of not just the oil and gas  
19 sector, but the balancing businesses, too, the petro chemicals  
20 we use, the raw materials that are made by oil and gas  
21 facilities to run our facilities, whether it's the energy or  
22 it's actually a conversion where ethane gets converted to  
23 ethylene. That's what we do at our Ontario plant, not  
24 necessarily our Pennsylvania plant, but then ethylene gets  
25 turned into styrene which is what our facility in Monaca uses

1 to conform the products that we made. So again, this is more  
2 than just oil and gas. This is all the downstream businesses  
3 and as previous speakers have said, all of our support  
4 contractors, all of our other sectors on site. They also bring  
5 those professionals that come in and make sure they are  
6 prepared to meet all of our needs. Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Representative Longietti?

8 REPRESENTATIVE LONGIETTI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
9 Just, curious because you mentioned in your testimony  
10 internship possibilities and some on site experiences, but not  
11 so much in this region. Is that because of the types of jobs  
12 you have in this region or is there some other reason?

13 MR. MARKOWITZ: So first, I'll say that I myself I  
14 started with the company almost 20 years ago, and was offered a  
15 full-time position at the end of that, a very big supporter of  
16 that. The reason we don't as much here is we just don't have  
17 the amount of workforce. Our total workforce in this building  
18 is about 200. Our total workforce in the manufacturing  
19 facility is about 200, split evenly between the hourly and  
20 salary workers. We do have some students from the University  
21 of Pittsburgh right now at the facility learning to be  
22 engineers and experience what it's like to work.

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Representative Mustio?

24 REPRESENTATIVE MUSTIO: Representative Longietti  
25 read my mind.

1           REPRESENTATIVE LONGIETTI: Good minds think alike.

2           CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: I'd like to have your  
3 follow-up on the fact that you mentioned that we have the  
4 change the mindset that every child needs to go to college.  
5 And one issue they're finding out statistically we're doing a  
6 pretty poor job of getting those kids across the finish line,  
7 which typically means worse then having a degree with  
8 tremendous amounts of debt. The only thing worse than that is  
9 having a tremendous amount of debt and no degree, and I think  
10 we have to do a better job. And the status quo clearly isn't  
11 working, but maybe it's the way that colleges and universities  
12 needs to diversify and have collaborations and maybe we have to  
13 change the --- not saying that kids shouldn't go to college,  
14 but what is offered at college maybe needs to change. Can you  
15 talk about a little bit of maybe if you've seen some examples  
16 of collaboration that will work to change the model of the  
17 traditional four-year degree and the traditional offerings that  
18 the academic catalogues have been in the past?

19           MR. MARKOWITZ: Well, I think an understanding of  
20 the outcomes is very important. So to know what it means to be  
21 a drill rig operator or an instrument electrician or a  
22 pipefitter, what that ultimately means for the lifestyle that  
23 you can live and work and the balance that you can have as a  
24 --- you know, work/life balance. We don't do a very good job  
25 of just making that widely known. We work, you know, closely

1 with Allegheny Conference on understanding how to make this  
2 happen. We've done big pushes on the technical fronts, and  
3 it's worked. You know, the job postings has generated a lot of  
4 jobs. I think a lot of it has to do with just --- I don't want  
5 to say marketing, but it's making sure that the children  
6 understand that there is value. And the schools will  
7 ultimately match what the people want. And you know, in some  
8 other regions there are other programs that are developed to  
9 prepare people to do those programs, and I think it's just, you  
10 know, essentially telling them what it means to do those  
11 positions.

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: And if you have a follow-up to  
13 this, by all means, but I just kind of have an additional point  
14 to what you're saying, is so much of it is marketing. And we  
15 talk about marketing these jobs to the students, but if you'll  
16 use me as an example again that had parents that were  
17 uneducated about education, we have to do a better job of  
18 counseling parents as well, I believe, about the jobs that are  
19 out there.

20 MR. MARKOWITZ: Sure.

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: You can talk to --- we can  
22 talk to all the third-graders and fourth-graders and get them  
23 excited for a short amount of time, but I think we really need  
24 to do a better job of counseling parents and educating parents  
25 about education. What does it mean to have \$80,000 of student

1 loans? What are you going to do with that political science  
2 degree? And I think that conversation has to be a part of it.  
3 And I think it's that link between job creators in K-12, as  
4 well as higher education in K-12. I think we have to  
5 strengthen those --- both of those links, and I'm thankful that  
6 you're being a part of that conversation.

7 MR. MARKOWITZ: I agree completely with what you're  
8 saying. And the only thing I can say in closing is that, you  
9 know, we sit in Moon. The high school reached out to us and  
10 said please come work with us on our strategy. You know, one  
11 of our manufacturing leaders --- our manufacturing leader for  
12 our Bureau of Accounting plan is on the board of Penn  
13 State-Beaver. So we do try. And we also have somebody on  
14 CCBC. We try to make sure that we can influence where we can.  
15 And then, to your point, we have to see how we can get parents  
16 and others to also agree.

17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Thank you. Thank you, Pace,  
18 for your testimony.

19 MR. MARKOWITZ: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: And we're a little bit ahead  
21 of schedule, so we'll keep moving forward. I would like to  
22 just --- the reason that we're ahead of schedule is that Dr.  
23 Peter Garland, Executive Vice Chancellor for the Pennsylvania  
24 State System of Higher Education, couldn't be here today. You  
25 have the testimony in your folder from the Vice Chancellor and

1 at the door if any of the guests would like to pick it up.

2 Now we'll have Nancy Dickson, Vice President  
3 Community Relations and Development from the Community College  
4 of Beaver County.

5 MS. DICKSON: Good morning, Representative  
6 Christiana, members of the Committee. Thank you very much for  
7 allowing me to present to you this morning. I am Nancy  
8 Dickson. I am the Vice President of Community Relations and  
9 Development for the Community College of Beaver County. And I  
10 understand your interest here today is to gain insight into the  
11 effectiveness of institutions of higher education and on  
12 preparing Pennsylvania students for the new workforce needs.  
13 And you've already heard some very excellent testimony from  
14 these distinguished colleagues, we're all talking from the same  
15 songbook. We're just probably not on the same page just yet.  
16 So let me kind of take you on a journey with me on some  
17 statistics and some numbers.

18 From the statewide perspective offered by the  
19 Pennsylvania Commission on Higher Education that networks all  
20 14 community colleges, these are some basic statistics. More  
21 than 87,950 were enrolled in credit career programs, leading to  
22 a degree, certificate or diploma in 2012, 2013. Greater than  
23 19,180 incumbent workers were trained at community college  
24 through the WEDnet PA program during that same time frame. And  
25 over 1,120 companies contracted with community colleges in

1 fiscal 2012, 2013 to train 30,205 employees, representing a  
2 total employer investment of \$13.3 million. Those are the big  
3 numbers.

4           Now, there's no reason for me today to get into the  
5 capital needs of community colleges in great detail, but I  
6 would like to mention for the record that a recent study by an  
7 architectural firm, Santech, that more than \$726 million in  
8 capital is needed at PA community colleges, with over 58  
9 percent of that directly tied to instruction. That's nearly  
10 \$296 million is needed to update academic programs at existing  
11 locations. An additional \$127 million is needed to expand  
12 academic programs into the new service areas, which we're  
13 talking about. Now, those are broad numbers. Those are so  
14 big, I can't even get my head around it. But let me offer you  
15 a snapshot of what we are experiencing at CCBC and perhaps help  
16 you get your mind around what readiness really means.

17           CCBC is one of the smallest of the 14 community  
18 colleges in PA, and yet we are less than two miles from an  
19 industrial corridor of some major companies, AES, BASF, NOVA  
20 Chemical, ARDEX, that require a very skilled workforce. The  
21 corridor is also the proposed site of the Shell cracker  
22 facility. It would be a gross understatement to say we're not  
23 keenly aware of what's going on right outside our front door.  
24 So let me break down that \$296 million of updates are needed  
25 for academic programs. Public officials at all levels,

1 business and industry representatives are asking community  
2 colleges and others to get students ready for the new  
3 workforce, which requires some very sophisticated equipment,  
4 plus professional instructors that are at high levels of  
5 experience, and as well as we have a new way of approaching  
6 credentialing for those students. So I have some points that I  
7 want you to consider.

8           So point one, a qualified pool of professional  
9 trainers for industry to the classroom. CCBC partnered with PA  
10 Community College for the first round of the Trade Adjustment  
11 Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant, the  
12 TAACCCT Grant we call it. Our portion of the \$20 million grant  
13 awarded to Pennsylvania allowed us to introduce and equip our  
14 industrial maintenance program that now includes welding,  
15 wastewater treatment operator and mechanical technician, plus  
16 CDL training. The approximately \$450,000 that we received from  
17 that grant basically allowed the purchase of one room of  
18 equipment and an instructor. Could we have started that  
19 program without the grant? No. Can we grow the program  
20 without additional funding? No. Is there an increased demand  
21 for those skilled workers? Yes.

22           Our instructor for that grant program came from  
23 industry with over 20 years of industrial maintenance  
24 experience. He was making well over \$100,000 annually. We  
25 could not afford to pay that much for his services. But

1 because he was retired and because of his passion for the  
2 industry and his willingness to teach from his knowledge and  
3 the knowledge of that equipment, we were able to offer him a  
4 part-time opportunity. That skill base of knowledge is not in  
5 academia. It is in industry. But the salary differences make  
6 it impossible for community colleges to hire those type of  
7 instructors right at that workforce. However, an opportunity  
8 might well exist for the creation of a resource pool of retired  
9 industry professionals willing to work with higher education on  
10 developing these types of training instructor positions at  
11 community colleges.

12           So point two to consider, consider effective cost  
13 sharing of equipment acquisition. The equipment in our  
14 industrial maintenance lab cost over \$250,000. That's one  
15 room, is modeled after an actual process in a treatment plant.  
16 The instructor's adaptations make it useful for training at  
17 entry level and other plants and other industries. Now, with  
18 industry involvement, we learn what upgrades are needed to  
19 expand that training, but the cost is prohibitive. Even the  
20 maintenance is costly. So this is not your ordinary Lowe's  
21 pipes and valves and little gauges that you plug in. One meter  
22 alone cost \$1,800.

23           CCB is in the award stage of a National Science  
24 Foundation grant for \$200,000 to develop a process technician  
25 program. We partnered with four community colleges in Houston,

1 Texas, to adapt the course model and the program. In order to  
2 learn the program and how it was developed, our team went to  
3 visit those four community colleges, tour their facilities and  
4 visit with their industry partners.

5           On our visit to the Community College of the  
6 Midlands, just outside of Houston, we saw a training room the  
7 size of CCBC's athletic and events center. All the equipment  
8 inside was provided by a major industry partner. The  
9 equipment, we found out, came from their bone yard or equipment  
10 that had replaced or upgraded at the plant. In another outside  
11 area, industrial engineers helped disassemble an exact replica  
12 of a treatment plant. Retired employees were instructors. The  
13 partnership allows the College of Midland to offer a process  
14 technician two-year training program both at a certificate  
15 level, a diploma level and an advanced degree program.  
16 Graduates move to jobs at the area chemical industrials, and  
17 that was a natural fit. The demand for those graduates was  
18 more than could be filled. It is a symbiotic relationship,  
19 yes. The State of Texas is also involved in support of the  
20 funding for a community college, and the revenue generated does  
21 allow for growth and sustainability. The point is  
22 sophisticated equipment for the program comes from a  
23 partnership with local industry. Here's another resource  
24 connection that could assess and develop new educational  
25 resources or solutions. The benefits are twofold. Maintenance

1 of the equipment is just as important as getting the equipment  
2 and it creates another level of training.

3           We also saw in Houston that the dean or the head of  
4 the process technician training program at the Community  
5 College of the Midlands and other colleges we visited were from  
6 industry. The need to have technical faculty is only one step.  
7 We need for division chairs, for department deans to lead the  
8 programs. That is equally as important. It's a mindset, these  
9 programs.

10           Industry must now be at the program development  
11 stages to create the course material. And when we developed  
12 our process technician program, we have included our local  
13 industries as partners in helping us work out those programs.

14           Point three, the new approach for credentialing are  
15 stackable credits. Several of the colleagues here today have  
16 mentioned that opportunity. The success of our program under  
17 the TAACCCT Grant is encouraging. Our current program, we have  
18 24 students in the welding class, 24 completed and 24 moved to  
19 jobs. Twenty-six (26) started in the industrial maintenance  
20 technician class, and 11 have completed. In the CDL class, 26  
21 started, 19 completed. The wastewater treatment operator class  
22 is at 11 individuals, and it is ongoing.

23           Our industry partners have told us that the ideal  
24 candidate is a jack-of-all trades, able to move from one place  
25 to another. For example, a certified welder could take

1 additional courses and become a certified mechanical  
2 technician. Those certifications or credits earned would stack  
3 and eventually become an Associate's degree, transferrable to a  
4 four-year institution for a Bachelor's degree.

5           Every one of these people here today have alluded to  
6 those type of efforts. As the need for welders diminishes, the  
7 worker would move to another area. CCBC is currently engaged  
8 in the stackable credentialing concept. The key to these  
9 pathway requires businesses and industry to be right at the  
10 table as the course models and programs are created. Advanced  
11 degree granting institutions also need to be part of this.

12           At CCBC, our workforce programs designed for  
13 employers requires to develop with a company a training format  
14 that includes highly-skilled instructors. We pull our  
15 instructors, many of whom work for Fortune 100 companies, and  
16 that is a costly endeavor. However, the company is utilizing  
17 CCBC as their training resource, and they expect a high level  
18 of delivery. And it's our job to deliver at a quality and a  
19 cost that is beneficial to both parties. These workforce  
20 training programs are cost savings for industry and many are  
21 provided funding through WEDnet. However, we cannot continue  
22 to outsource to pay companies to train their employees. So  
23 they are getting savings by having training outsourced through  
24 community college. We've got to make companies understand the  
25 value of the savings that is benefit from workforce training at

1 community colleges. Companies know this and they can expect  
2 for that training. The need is there, and we have the delivery  
3 system in place. So the state may want to consider a better  
4 use of the distribution of training dollars as opposed to using  
5 just one agency for distribution.

6           Just looking at numbers is not enough. There is  
7 much more needed than a single training program. Our business  
8 and industry partners are seeking a skilled, trained worker,  
9 but also with soft skills like critical thinking,  
10 communication, time management, personal hygiene, just to name  
11 a few, and of course, the ever popular drug and alcohol-free  
12 candidate. Development of those soft skills is a cultural  
13 shift that can be accomplished through multi-levels of  
14 partnership through middle school, high school, with business,  
15 K-12 education and higher education. Our current efforts with  
16 CareerLink, the Southwest Investment Board and the new sharing  
17 opportunities with the Beaver County Career and Technical  
18 Center all underscore the need for wider and stronger  
19 collaboration and breaking down of the silos that separate the  
20 exchange of facilities and personnel. These outreach efforts  
21 are already offering positive resource-sharing opportunities.

22           We are planning to partner soon with Allegheny  
23 Conference and other area education institutions on the next  
24 round of the TAACCCT Grant, plus other area higher education  
25 institutions because business and industry need to be part of

1 all development as we move to the workforce-readiness model.

2           My final point, the need for career pathways with  
3 middle and high school with STEM emphasis. Part of our NSF  
4 Grant is the development of career pathway awareness programs  
5 that will target high schools just to start. Linkage of career  
6 opportunities are available with science, technology,  
7 engineering and math basics is now more important than ever.  
8 Also important is the encouragement of young women to embrace  
9 the STEM program.

10           At a recent STEM conference in Pittsburgh, I  
11 networked with companies, organizations and school districts  
12 advancing STEM in the classroom. While impressive, the David  
13 Lawrence Center Convention Center was not packed and not every  
14 area of our region was representative. There were excellent  
15 models being developed that demonstrated career pathways that  
16 focus on STEM. Pockets of business and industry partnerships  
17 with education are happening, but not nearly enough. Our  
18 efforts can only be in --- cannot only be in the classroom,  
19 perhaps we need a state --- as a state, as higher education  
20 leaders an industry representative to closely partner to  
21 reeducate parents about STEM opportunities throughout  
22 Pennsylvania. As a group, we need to show science as the  
23 happening lifestyle, make technology a household career move  
24 and not just another device, show engineering as cool and  
25 demystify math. That is a cultural change. We know that

1 Beaver County's community will need reeducated on that, what  
2 blue-collar jobs really mean in comparison with today's  
3 workforce standards.

4           At CCBC and other community colleges, we are putting  
5 these programs on the drawing board now because we are in a  
6 position to make a huge impact on the Marcellus shale and other  
7 companies coming into our community. Putting these programs  
8 into place comes with a price tag for the classroom equipment  
9 and training labs. Our state needs to put some skin in the  
10 game at different levels. There are other states doing exactly  
11 that to get industries into their states. Industries need a  
12 trained workforce. It's that simple.

13           Are Pennsylvania institutions of higher learning  
14 effectively preparing Pennsylvania students for new workforce  
15 needs? Albert Einstein said, one cannot keep doing the same  
16 thing over and over, expecting different results. Perhaps it's  
17 time for a paradigm change or a shift in the state education  
18 business approach toward economic development in our  
19 educational resources. Perhaps the question that needs to be  
20 asked is are partnerships with Pennsylvania institutions of  
21 higher learning being encouraged and supported to effectively  
22 engage with business and industry and utilize state funds  
23 collaboratively to prepare Pennsylvania students for new  
24 workforce needs.

25           States that are currently attracting new companies

1 are also providing the training needed once they get there.  
2 Community College of Beaver County stands ready to be the  
3 conduit that equips our community, our region with the  
4 workforce ready to face the future. Thank you very much. Do  
5 you have any questions?

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Thank you, Nancy. I do have a  
7 couple questions. If I heard you correctly, in order to start  
8 a new program, you need instructors, a curriculum, equipment  
9 and then the maintenance on that equipment; correct?

10 MS. DICKSON: Correct.

11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: And do we have enough industry  
12 partners investing in those four things currently for the jobs  
13 of --- that are available? I mean, I know we've heard of an  
14 isolated incident, maybe a company that helps incentivize a new  
15 program at a community college or some other higher education  
16 setting, but do we have companies investing in those four  
17 things to create a program and to sustain a program?

18 MS. DICKSON: Honestly, Representative Christiana, I  
19 don't think companies have been asked or shown exactly how they  
20 can partner. We saw that in Houston. But as Pace just said,  
21 NOVA's small here, so they will get involved with us and  
22 they're on our Advisory Board, advising us very closely, but  
23 they're small enough of a facility that for them to dip in and  
24 build a classroom is probably not logical for them. Is it  
25 something that they can ask their corporate across the board to

1 assist with? I don't know that. But I've also never asked.

2 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Then I guess my --- I would  
3 agree with that. And I think, as long as we continue to allow  
4 every company to be isolated, then we probably won't get that  
5 collaboration.

6 MS. DICKSON: Right.

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Maybe we should be looking at,  
8 you know, having a campus tailored towards an industry, where  
9 industry partners and multiple companies help to invest in a  
10 curriculum and a program that is for an industry and we have  
11 specialty, rather than having CCAC offer the same programs that  
12 CCBC offers that Penn State-Beaver down the road is offering  
13 the same program. I mean, clearly, Nancy, we're in need of  
14 some collaboration, and what are your suggestions on how we can  
15 --- in general, whether the state is encouraging it, forcing  
16 it? How do we have collaboration? Because there seems to be a  
17 tremendous amount of redundancy and waste.

18 MS. DICKSON: Well, let's go back to the TAACCCT  
19 Grant. That \$20 million was divided into the 14 community  
20 colleges. And as it was mentioned, and I don't know who did  
21 that, CONSOL Energy working with CCAC and their robotics or  
22 their lab there, each one of the 14 colleges did develop  
23 individual programs around new job creation. I think Butler  
24 did robotics. There's mechatronics at Westmoreland and CCAC.  
25 Each one had a different pocket. The western community

1 colleges entered into an articulation agreement to share those  
2 different programs for training in those stackable degree  
3 programs. So if a resident of Beaver County wanted to go into  
4 mechatronics at CCAC, he would register for the class at CCBC,  
5 of course, in the county tuition frame, and then go to CCAC and  
6 take those courses there, complete that degree and graduate  
7 from CCB. Same thing with Westmoreland and with Butler County.  
8 It's a great opportunity, and it's growing in recognition.  
9 It's just that it's not statewide. It's just in the western  
10 Pennsylvania community colleges. But you can't hardly see a  
11 student from Beaver County traveling to Philadelphia to do a  
12 program in wind energy, even though that's offered there at  
13 that community college. So there's got to be a system in place  
14 for tuition, reciprocity and sharing in order for that model to  
15 work. But it is working.

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: I will say that there may be  
17 parts of it that are working, but when --- my call to higher  
18 education would be that if we continue to make funding  
19 decisions for institutions, so an institution-based funding,  
20 then I believe that the higher education has a responsibility  
21 to change and be proactive in changing the status quo right now  
22 or we're going to go to an individual --- I believe in the  
23 future we're going to go to an individual-type funding and  
24 invest in students or job training and then allow them to  
25 dictate where the necessary training is to get that job. And

1 I've heard a few times today that, well, wherever the  
2 marketplace is or the demand is, that higher education will  
3 then offer wherever the demand is to fill the seats. But I  
4 don't think that's good enough any longer, when we're --- 58  
5 percent of every dollar that we spend in higher education is  
6 truly wasted, in my opinion, because it means it doesn't get to  
7 a degree. I think we have to do a better job of funding if  
8 we're going to continue to invest in institutions, like we  
9 currently do, rather than individuals.

10 MS. DICKSON: And that's a good point. And it does  
11 require a paradigm shift in the total way of the approach to  
12 that funding mechanism. But let's talk about those 42 percent  
13 that aren't completing that degree.

14 Life gets in the way for some of our community  
15 college students, the completion. For example, we have two  
16 19-year-olds. One lives at home with her parents. They pay  
17 the tuition. She goes to school. She does fine. Tuition is  
18 stable. Other 19-year-old got kicked out of the house. She's  
19 living with her boyfriend. They had a baby. She's on welfare.  
20 You raise tuition for those two 19-year-olds by \$5. The  
21 parents can still afford to send that 19-year-old to school.  
22 But this 19-year-old, she's going to drop out. She can't  
23 afford tuition any longer. She's got childcare. She's got  
24 healthcare. She has --- working two jobs. We have to look at  
25 lifestyles of what's happening within some of those people that

1 are in those colleges. Yeah, 42 percent may not be completing.  
2 But why aren't they completing? Is it because they don't like  
3 it? Not all the time. Sometimes life happens.

4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: I think so often it is that  
5 the product that we continue to talk about, the status quo, is  
6 that we're pushing every child to a four-year degree rather ---  
7 and then finding out in a year or two or three or four or five  
8 that that's not really what they should have done. They should  
9 have --- we should have put them in a workforce development  
10 program or a two-year program. I think we should have done  
11 more work to that point rather than figuring it out later,  
12 after the bills have already racked up, that they weren't the  
13 right candidate for college. They were right for a workforce  
14 training certificate.

15 MS. DICKSON: You're right. You're right. And we  
16 are doing more remedial class work preparing students just to  
17 take a college course at CCBC now than we've ever done before.  
18 I think I started at CCBC about five years ago, and I think we  
19 had 84 remedial classes. Remedial class means you're not able  
20 to take --- we're an open-door institution, so you're not able  
21 to take a college-level course. So you got to get yourself up  
22 to speed to do that, usually in reading and math. This year we  
23 did 300 remedial classes simply because students were not  
24 prepared to go into a college-level course. So as we're  
25 adjusting our thinking here, we also need to see what kind of

1 our model is, what's happening to our model of preparing our  
2 students just to get into college.

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Representative Conklin?

4 CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: Thank you. Thank you, Nancy, for  
5 coming out. One of the opportunities I have is I work with a  
6 lot of smaller community college and technical schools. And  
7 I'm just asking --- and this is a question for you to ask if  
8 you match into this criteria. Many times we see young people  
9 leave high school and they're expected to go to college, not  
10 because they want to go to college, because they're expected to  
11 go to college. They go --- I like your term life gets in the  
12 way. They drop out. They go back to community college or  
13 trade school a number of years later.

14 MS. DICKSON: Uh-huh (yes).

15 CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: Is your particular school seeing  
16 the same thing, that you have a number of your students who may  
17 have started with a different career path, decided it wasn't  
18 the path they wanted, found out that they needed that  
19 education, and now are going back to that two-year degree?

20 MS. DICKSON: Absolutely. Our average age is around  
21 26.

22 CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: Good. You answered my second  
23 question. I was going to ask what the average age is. And the  
24 reason I find it interesting is that we found that those  
25 individuals are the motivated ones. They're the ones that you

1 have the 20 out of 20 graduating, because they've been down  
2 that road. What's the oldest student you have right now?

3 MS. DICKSON: We graduated, I guess last year, a  
4 gentleman that was 82.

5 CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: I need to know ---.

6 MS. DICKSON: I don't know who's employing him, but  
7 wow, that is impressive.

8 CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: Well, actually, I work --- I'll  
9 leave the others go, but actually one of the places I work  
10 with, they have retired --- they have a lot of seniors. I'm up  
11 in State College, with the university, and we have individuals  
12 there that want to learn how to restore their old cars, so they  
13 retire at 62, go into the trade school, learn --- get a  
14 two-year degree for no other reason but to play. But I do love  
15 hearing that. Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Representative Mustio?

17 REPRESENTATIVE MUSTIO: Thank you. Before I forget,  
18 the comment that you made about the remedial education  
19 requirements, could you get us some more specifics on that  
20 data? You don't have to do that today, but the numbers showing  
21 it significantly increased. Now, would you also please tie  
22 that to the amount of applicants, enrollees and the age? You  
23 don't have to do that now, but if you could get us that ---

24 MS. DICKSON: Oh, sure.

25 REPRESENTATIVE MUSTIO: --- information because I

1 think, you know, you just look at that statistic and it says,  
2 oh, our schools aren't doing the job, and then people can start  
3 tying that to whatever reasons they want to tie it to. But it  
4 would be interesting to get us that data, and then we can maybe  
5 come back with some follow-up questions, not to take more time  
6 here. Dr. Garland wasn't able to be here today, as  
7 Representative Christiana said, but in his testimony he  
8 highlights that the universities --- the state universities are  
9 starting to change. And he, you know, lists here several of  
10 the universities and some of the programs. So how sincere is  
11 that effort, how motivated is it, you know, how much of it's  
12 going to be tied to additional appropriations, which they did  
13 make a request in front of the Appropriations Committee this  
14 year for an additional \$18 million just to start some of these  
15 new programs. You know, what other programs have been phased  
16 out, I don't know. But just for those people that are  
17 watching, I want the public to know and to you to know, since  
18 you brought it up, that the State System of Higher Education is  
19 starting to partner with industry, and that specifically what  
20 the programs he highlights in here are is they've sat down with  
21 business and industry to go through that.

22           And one other comment. There's a book called Ask,  
23 and I read it once. You don't get it, unless you ask; right?  
24 And Jim and I both come from a sales background, but there's a  
25 former Speaker who gave that book to all of us to read once.

1 And I can tell you that --- I'm sure I can speak for all of the  
2 members here, that we've all toured training facilities, and I  
3 can't tell you --- I can't think of one that has not had a  
4 program or a classroom or training facility built by local  
5 corporations. And how did that happen? I can think of  
6 Manchester Bidwell down on the North Side of Pittsburgh  
7 specifically that I toured recently. Great program. What did  
8 they do? They brought in business and industry to show off  
9 what they're doing, and the corporations do have hearts. And I  
10 can tell you, you know, Bayer specifically built out a lab.  
11 There was a pharmaceutical --- a pharmacy, a large pharmacy  
12 group, and I don't want to misstate which one it was, built out  
13 the technical lab for pharmacists. There was a restaurant  
14 there that's open every day that one of the large restaurant  
15 chains in Pittsburgh built, because they want to make sure that  
16 they have employees coming into their companies in the future  
17 and, you know, all the items that are there to train on are  
18 what they use in their company. So I suggest it's a short  
19 title, Ask, but it's a great read. And I think you'll find it  
20 very productive and beneficial.

21 MS. DICKSON: And it has been very beneficial for  
22 our nursing program. We asked Heritage Valley to support us  
23 for beds and equipment, and they do. You're right, ---

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: See, you're on the start.

25 MS. DICKSON: --- you got to ask.

1           CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: So now we just got to start  
2 for you to start asking some of these other --- and we'll be  
3 happy to go with you to do that.

4           MS. DICKSON: It's easy to ask you guys.

5           CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Right. But we'll be happy to  
6 go with you to help ask. Representative Longietti?

7           REPRESENTATIVE LONGIETTI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
8 Just curious, the trips down to Midland, Texas, was there  
9 anything that folks brought back in terms of how they were able  
10 to engage businesses, to partner with them? Was there anything  
11 learned there? Was government involved in that process or was  
12 it purely the institution, making the ask ---? Does anybody  
13 --- did anybody come back with any information on that?

14           MS. DICKSON: Have you ever been to the oil fields  
15 in Houston, Texas, ---

16           REPRESENTATIVE LONGIETTI: I have not.

17           MS. DICKSON: --- looked at the pictures on the  
18 internet? It's like a different world. The demand that those  
19 companies have for a skilled workforce coming out of a  
20 Associate's degree program is huge. They will do just about  
21 anything to get that training into their companies. I don't  
22 think that's unlike anything here.

23                   What we learned was that the demand for soft skills,  
24 critical thinking, personal hygiene that I mentioned earlier,  
25 drug free, safety is so critical. And there is no tolerance.

1 And in academia, we have a little bit more lax way of  
2 approaching writing courses. And some of the courses that we  
3 offer, the student, you know, maybe shows up 10 or 15 minutes  
4 late for the class. Maybe has something pressing on his cell  
5 phone, gets up and leaves. You know, that's the environment of  
6 a classroom. Not all of them are like that, but students  
7 coming in feel more --- you know, it has to be comfortable for  
8 them.

9           Our industrial maintenance program, with the  
10 gentleman that is running that program, closes that door at  
11 eight o'clock. He gives them a 15-minute break. They better  
12 be back or the door is closed. They have standards to meet.  
13 And then they do spot drug testing on those students. That's  
14 the real world. So that real word is what we learned in Texas,  
15 that we have to replicate in a classroom to get those students  
16 up to par, so they can go out and get an entry-level position.

17           The other thing that we came back with to learn was  
18 money management. When these students walk out and get a  
19 \$70,000 job, handing my kid \$70,000 a year, he'd work for six  
20 months and party the next six months. So there is a money  
21 management portion of getting that kind of salary that has to  
22 go hand in hand with even an entry-level position. So those  
23 things weren't in the course structure, but they are part and  
24 parcel of what we have to deliver with that student.

25           REPRESENTATIVE LONGIETTI: Financial literacy is

1 certainly one of my passions, and I think you just spoke to  
2 that. The other thing that occurs to me is, you know,  
3 Representative Christiana talked about bringing multiple  
4 companies together within an industry to be partners. And that  
5 makes sense to me because there may not be one big one that can  
6 foot the whole bill or help buy the equipment or help write the  
7 curriculum. And I'm just wondering, and we have the Industry  
8 Partnership Program in Pennsylvania. My understanding is it  
9 has been very successful. And when it first started, companies  
10 were not so sure about it. You know, do we really want to  
11 train our incumbent workers together because we're competitors,  
12 and it's been wildly successful. And I'm wondering if that  
13 also needs to shift not just to incumbent workers, but to the  
14 new workforce, to bring these --- as Representative Christiana  
15 said, bring these companies together so that they can each  
16 bring something to the table to help develop the program, help  
17 buy the equipment, help maintain equipment, whatever it is, but  
18 to use that industry partnership model that already exists to  
19 try to do that.

20 MS. DICKSON: Absolutely. But I think you're also  
21 going to find within companies --- like they said from CONSOL  
22 Energy, they got three people. I mean, the resources within  
23 the companies are equally as tight as they are in colleges.  
24 The Allegheny Conference has done a tremendous job in  
25 networking and starting to pull that resource all together.

1 They're crossing boundaries. They're making this a region  
2 again. Companies are regional in that, but they're still --- I  
3 mean, they're still small HR departments within ---

4 REPRESENTATIVE LONGIETTI: Sure.

5 MS. DICKSON: --- these companies. So you're asking  
6 for something that's going to require some time and energy and  
7 some dedication from the company to be engaged. And that's  
8 something that a company has to address as well.

9 REPRESENTATIVE LONGIETTI: Understood. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: While we're talking about a  
11 lot of frustrations and shortcomings and how we're going to do  
12 better, I do think that this region of the world is --- maybe  
13 like Texas, has a long history of working 60-hour weeks, and  
14 the blue-collar jobs is what I think made this area into what  
15 it was. I just feel like we've lost a generation, ironically,  
16 probably my generation, because of --- I'll use my parents as  
17 an example --- that just said I don't want you to work in the  
18 mill like I had to work in the mill, so you're going to go to  
19 college, as if --- the blue-collar jobs that have been devalued  
20 in the last 20 years ---

21 MS. DICKSON: Absolutely.

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: --- I think is a disservice  
23 to ---

24 MS. DICKSON: Absolutely.

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: --- the next generation and to

1 my generation. And I think we have to rebuild the value in a  
2 blue-collar job that provides a wonderful living for a lot of  
3 families in this region, build it to what it was, and I think  
4 will take it back to that high standard that we're used to.  
5 And this area does have a tremendous workforce. I think we  
6 just have some redundancies that we have to work through, and  
7 we've got to strengthen those links between K-12 and higher  
8 education and eventually job creators. And I think, once we do  
9 that, we'll put the plan in place to overcome some of these  
10 shortfalls. So thank you for your work on that ---

11 MS. DICKSON: You're welcome.

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: --- and CCBC's work.

13 MS. DICKSON: Thank you, sir. Thank you, gentlemen.

14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: And lastly, we have Barry  
15 Balaski, principal, Moon Area High School.

16 MR. BALASKI: Well, good morning. I appreciate you  
17 letting us have a voice here at the table. And I was excited  
18 when I got invited, but I will tell you that, at this point,  
19 I'm downright pumped to be able to speak because, as I listened  
20 to all these speakers, I found out that they stole a lot of my  
21 thunder. And a lot of your questions were a lot of my thunder.  
22 But what it really did is just reinforce the fact that we, as  
23 educators, are doing what we're supposed to do. And I'm going  
24 to tell you a little bit about what we're doing so that you  
25 have an idea.

1 I do represent not only myself and Moon Area High  
2 School, but I represent some of my peers. In the back we have  
3 Todd Price, who's the principal of Montour High School; Chris  
4 Stone, who's the Curriculum Director; and Dan Smith, who's the  
5 principal of West Allegheny Schools. And we are pretty much  
6 some of the airport corridor schools that we've --- you've been  
7 talking about.

8 So there are some things that we do here that just  
9 really do excite me. And I've heard a lot about STEM, but I  
10 would tell you also that we need to call that STEAM because ---  
11 two reasons. One, arts aren't what you are used to seeing in  
12 the school. And I would invite you to come into our school to  
13 let you know that we truly aren't educating kids the same way  
14 we did a hundred years ago. Unfortunately, it's a little too  
15 similar to what we've educated kids a hundred years ago. But  
16 it probably isn't what you were used to when you were in high  
17 school. And I know that Representative Mustio's been through  
18 our school several times, but I would tell you it's really a  
19 sight to be seen, because what we do really does drive our  
20 community, and our students are our future of what we do here.  
21 But the reason I say STEAM is it takes steam to drive that  
22 locomotive, and we want to make sure that those arts are  
23 support what we do. Our art classes involve graphic design,  
24 digital imaging, so it's --- all these corporations, you have  
25 to find a way to market them. So arts aren't what you're used

1 to seeing. I have two computer labs that are just dedicated to  
2 the arts, and that's all. That's all they're used for, so ---  
3 and they're used all day long, every period of the day. So it  
4 has changed, and technology has changed, but that arts needs to  
5 be in there.

6           We have an award-winning program over at Moon as far  
7 as music, and it's just something that involves the whole  
8 community. It allows you to bring the whole community into  
9 your school so that they understand what our kids are capable  
10 of doing and allows them to see all the other things that  
11 involve the math and the language arts and the engineering that  
12 we offer. We offer many engineering classes and so do the  
13 neighboring schools around us.

14           One of the other things that I heard today is I  
15 heard that we need to form partnerships. Well, that's partly  
16 what we do here. We have formed --- some of these guys that  
17 are sitting behind me are some --- I call some of my best  
18 friends because I see them on a regular basis. We do work  
19 collaboratively to make sure our students are progressing  
20 together. It's not what can Moon do; it's what can our  
21 students of western Pennsylvania do.

22           And with that being said, one of the things that you  
23 hear in education and one of the terms that's becoming pretty  
24 popular in education is the term grit. And I heard a lot of  
25 what was really being spoken about today, and what we really

1 lack nowadays in the school is we don't allow our kids to fail.  
2 We want our kids to be successful every way. And every time  
3 they're not successful, there's another safety net that picks  
4 them up and holds them up and says, well, we're going to just  
5 drive you to the next thing. And although we want safety nets  
6 and we want to take our kids to the next level by helping them  
7 every way we can, our kids need to learn how to fail sometimes.  
8 We need to value the steps along the way as much as we value  
9 the right answer sometimes. What I want out of my kids is I  
10 want them to fall down 100 times, but I want them to learn how  
11 to get up 101 times, and so that grit is what really is going  
12 to drive us. And if you listen to some of the things that are  
13 out there about grit, if you search that and you look at some  
14 of the sites out there, like Ted Talks and things like that  
15 that are on the internet, you'll see that grit has become a  
16 very big part of it. And they'll talk about the idea that,  
17 yeah, it's important to have good SAT scores and it's important  
18 to have good AP scores, but that's not a determinative factor  
19 of whether our kids are successful. And I heard about how our  
20 students aren't as successful as they need to be in college,  
21 but that's not the number one driving factor. The number one  
22 driving factor is the work ethic that we put into our kids and  
23 what they put into it. No one has to teach a kid how to be  
24 very good at a video game. Why don't they show the same  
25 interest in our classrooms? We need to find a way that we get

1 them to show the same interest in that classroom that we do in  
2 things that they truly are, by nature, interested in.

3           One of the things that we looked at as we were  
4 moving on, I used the idea of grit to really address the ideas  
5 of a shifting economy. I know you've heard over the years, and  
6 it was brought out by many political figures in the past that  
7 we are truly educating a student for jobs that we don't know  
8 exist. And so what I ask is that, as we sit in these meetings,  
9 how do we form these business partnerships? And that's what  
10 I've actually used you guys as Representatives to do. I know  
11 that I've called on Representative Mustio and I've called on  
12 Representative Murphy to ask us to get a foot in the door. And  
13 I got an opportunity this past spring to get a foot in the door  
14 at CONSOL Energy, and I sat down with some of their  
15 representatives, Jessica Kearns and Tommy Johnson, to sit down.  
16 And one of the questions that they kind of asked, and I don't  
17 remember exactly how it was asked, is how did you get in this  
18 door? Well, we got in the door because we showed a little  
19 grit. We got in the door because we weren't willing to accept  
20 the answer no. And although we'd love to spend a lot of these  
21 companies' money that they say have educational funds, what  
22 we're really looking for is their expertise. I don't want my  
23 kids necessarily to spend the whole day in my classrooms. I  
24 want my kids to get out and get into their companies. I want  
25 them to see what's going on. Because I can't afford to spend

1 the amount of money that these companies do to educate their  
2 people. I can't afford to stay up with the changing trends  
3 that these companies are staying up with.

4           CONSOL Energy, five to ten years ago, was nothing  
5 but a coal company. Well, maybe not nothing but a coal  
6 company, but they were focused on coal. That's not their main  
7 focus anymore. So what they've done is they've changed. And  
8 we don't have the ability to change that quickly with them  
9 unless they partner with us. And if we can't get into their  
10 companies, what we want is we want their experts to come into  
11 our schools and we want them to teach with our experts, and we  
12 want them to present units on what we do so that we educate our  
13 kids.

14           One of the questions that we always get is what  
15 holds us back from doing that? To be quite honest with you,  
16 there's a lot of testing that takes place in schools, and we're  
17 focused on what those schools' scores mean. Moon's a  
18 high-performing district. I'm proud of what we are able to  
19 accomplish. But what we do is we take the time to make sure  
20 that our scores in English, in math, in biology are great  
21 scores, and we don't take the time to get out to CONSOL and  
22 Williams and Chevron and NOVA and Michael Baker, who all sit in  
23 our backyard, to learn what it is that our kids need to know to  
24 be successful in the world. And they're experts, and we need  
25 to get them. If I was coming out of school and someone offered

1 me \$72,000, I probably wouldn't be an educator, but I want to  
2 make sure that our kids have that opportunity to be educated in  
3 that way.

4           And this job is tough, and I've heard a lot about  
5 frustration, but I'm going to be honest with you, I'm not  
6 frustrated, I'm gritty and I'm motivated. I'm motivated by  
7 what's out there, what's being offered. I ask you guys to open  
8 those doors for us. And to be quite honest, we're going to  
9 come knocking on your door. I'm going to tell my kids to come  
10 knocking on your door. And if we don't open your door, we're  
11 going to go knock on the next one. That's, I think, what we  
12 have to do with our kids if they truly, truly want to learn,  
13 because we have great companies around here. We want to make  
14 sure that we focus on those and that we market ourselves.  
15 Schools are not marketing themselves the way they should, and  
16 we need to get people to come in and visit our schools to see  
17 what we're doing so that we can help them. But we need the  
18 help of companies to come over and teach us what they need from  
19 us.

20           CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Barry, thank you for your  
21 testimony and your passion. I would love to bottle that up and  
22 give it away to, you know, principals in every single building  
23 in Pennsylvania. You're really an inspiration for all of us  
24 now to get out there and work to help you.

25           With your work ethic and how you preach the work

1 ethic and how important it is to your kids and in life, if I'm  
2 not meeting the expectations at whatever, let's just say golf,  
3 if I'm not meeting that expectation, I have to do it more hours  
4 a day, more days a year. With 11 to 12 days on average of  
5 testing a year that wasn't around when I was in school, but  
6 we're still on the 181-day calendar, do you believe that that  
7 system is antiquated, and if kids aren't at the level that we  
8 want them to be, and the best opportunity for them to learn is  
9 in the school environment, especially those that, you know,  
10 come from difficulty family backgrounds, we want them in school  
11 more hours a day, more days a year, do you believe that the  
12 180-day calendar has to go away?

13 MR. BALASKI: Well, I'm a proponent of give me an  
14 opportunity for our kids, and I'll find a way to make it work,  
15 whether that's a 180-day calendar or a 200-day calendar.  
16 That's not the most important thing to me, because I think  
17 there's ways to open the classroom 24 hours a day. One of the  
18 things that's been pushed out there for a long time, recently  
19 anyway, is the flip classroom, to where we do the instruction  
20 at night and allow the kids to do the projects during the day.  
21 I have several teachers that work a flip classroom. So the  
22 instruction or a lecture or the activity is done and the kid  
23 can watch that as many times as they want at night, and the  
24 activity or the product that they produce is done during the  
25 day, with the teacher's help. That's one way to do it.

1           We have a lot of technology at Moon. We're  
2 beneficial at Moon that we have some things that a lot of  
3 school districts don't have, so we're able to do some things  
4 that other school districts can't. We videotape some of our  
5 lessons so that our kids can watch it more and more. But I  
6 really look at opportunities. Do I need the depth that  
7 everyone talks about? I was a stats professor, so numbers are  
8 important to me and testing to know where your kids are and a  
9 form of assessment of some sort is important to know where  
10 you're going because --- you know, I always say, as a former  
11 math teacher, there's nothing worse than giving a quiz on  
12 Wednesday, and no matter how that quiz turns out, do you still  
13 give that test on Friday? We do have to adapt to what our kids  
14 need. But in the long run, we really need to move our schools  
15 forward by giving them opportunity.

16           Does a student have to be in my school from 7:30 to  
17 2:15? I don't believe so. If they come in and I give them the  
18 math, the science, the social studies and the English, can't I  
19 get them out to CONSOL Energy or Chevron to spend some elective  
20 time learning what the real world is really about? Because,  
21 going back to the college issue, why do some of these kids drop  
22 out? They're generally just not interested in what they're  
23 taking. They thought they were, but they've had no experience  
24 in it. They had no opportunity in it to really learn that  
25 that's what they want. They see dollar signs, quite frankly, a

1 lot of times. They become engineers because they think  
2 engineers make money. So I think you can open the classrooms a  
3 lot of different ways.

4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Chairman Conklin?

5 CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: Just very quickly. And first  
6 off, I don't know where you're going, but I'm motivated, I'm  
7 going with you. I mean, I'm ready. What's the --- and I know  
8 it's off topic, what's the --- in your particular district,  
9 what's the reduced lunch program percentage of your students?

10 MR. BALASKI: Our district's a lower percentage. I  
11 think it's around 15 or 16 percent.

12 CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: It's real low. That's good.

13 MR. BALASKI: So it's low.

14 CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: Yeah.

15 MR. BALASKI: So we are bene --- we benefit from a  
16 community that would be considered to be quite wealthy as a  
17 whole. But we still have some of the same struggles because  
18 it's still about retention of not only the students that do  
19 struggle, you're still responsible for a hundred percent of  
20 them, it's teachers, too.

21 CHAIRMAN CONKLIN:

22 What's actually a --- I had a follow-up question for  
23 it, which isn't affected much by the numbers, but it is. You,  
24 early on when you talked about steam and you --- and you did  
25 something I very much like, because I believe that the arts are

1 as vital as any other program because it keeps a lot of kids in  
2 school who normally wouldn't be in school and it helps, what  
3 the employers are saying, with intercommunication with other  
4 students, has them work together. In your particular district,  
5 do you find that having those art programs, those music  
6 programs, those other programs, beneficial to those students to  
7 help them out not only academically but within the interacting  
8 of the other students?

9 MR. BALASKI: Absolutely. I believe that that's one  
10 of the main reasons we are a high-performing district is  
11 because of the amount of arts and the amount of sports that we  
12 offer. There's no doubt in my mind that some kids come to  
13 school because they play in the band, and then we get them to  
14 learn some English and some social studies and some math while  
15 they're playing in the band. Plus, it also builds that  
16 camaraderie between students, and it also gives us a sense of  
17 community. Our most active boosters are our band boosters. So  
18 they're the ones that pull everybody together, work together,  
19 and quite honestly, we wouldn't be able to do the things we do  
20 without them. And we're privileged that way because I would  
21 honestly tell you that our band boosters probably raises as  
22 much money as we give the band itself out of own budgets  
23 through going through communities and asking for donations of  
24 what we do.

25 CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: I'm on your team. Let's go. I'm

1 ready.

2 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Representative Mustio?

3 REPRESENTATIVE MUSTIO: Thank you. And thank you  
4 for being here, Barry. And I appreciate and my children  
5 appreciate you adding the A for the arts. My son's an  
6 architect and my daughter's a painter and a photographer, so  
7 --- both Moon graduates. And I think that we sometimes  
8 shortchange the thinking and creative ability of those  
9 particular students in the short term to the detriment of where  
10 they --- a lot of them end up in the long term, which is,  
11 because of their creative abilities, end up running companies,  
12 because they do think outside of the box. So I'll agree with  
13 Representative Conklin. We don't do that often, but we do on  
14 that.

15 CHAIRMAN CONKLIN: You and I always agree.

16 REPRESENTATIVE MUSTIO: We do on that. But I do  
17 want to let you know, sitting to your right, there's  
18 representatives from the Chamber of Commerce here, the  
19 Pittsburgh Airport and the Chamber. And I could see Bernie  
20 smiling and Michelle smiling as you were talking about  
21 partnerships. And I know that they're --- have always been  
22 very proactive and creative. And I suspect before you leave  
23 they'll probably say, you know what, let's start talking about  
24 how we can help Moon, Montour and West Allegheny and get into  
25 some of these companies as well. But thank you. And I'm going

1 to buy a bottle of that energy, too, from Jim, once he gets it  
2 marketed.

3 MR. BALASKI: Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Representative Longietti?

5 REPRESENTATIVE LONGIETTI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
6 It's been talked about a fair amount this morning about getting  
7 to the parents, letting parents know that there are technical  
8 hands-on jobs that are very --- that require skills, that pay  
9 well, that are rewarding. And I just want to get your  
10 perspective, how do we get to the parents? Because, you know,  
11 I think their mindset is, in some cases, outdated. One of the  
12 benefits of our jobs is that we actually have some  
13 opportunities to tour facilities and realize, wow,  
14 manufacturing has really changed from 20 years ago. And I just  
15 want to get your perspective on how do we reach parents with  
16 that message.

17 MR. BALASKI: Well, that is the difficult part  
18 because, as in education, we know that all parents will attend  
19 open houses of their elementary children. And as they move up  
20 through high school, it becomes less and less. And we hear a  
21 lot of times that parents will say, well, we wanted to give  
22 them space. And I always believe, if you're going to give them  
23 space, give them space when they're a little younger, and then  
24 stay with them when they get older, when they're making the big  
25 decisions. But a lot of it is inviting them in as much as you

1 can, even when there is a low turnout. You may say something  
2 that is important enough for them to say something to someone  
3 else. They don't come out unless they're passionate about  
4 something. So I think that part of it is, is you have to show  
5 some passion to the parents to get them excited about what  
6 we're doing in the schools. But in the long run, you have to  
7 excite their kids enough so that they go home and speak about  
8 what they're doing at school. And you have to excite them  
9 enough about the opportunities that we give them. If I send a  
10 kid home that's been out at CONSOL all day long, I guarantee  
11 you they're going to go home and tell their parents about what  
12 they've done.

13           We send --- we partner with a lot of groups. You  
14 know, if I send a kid out to watch an open-heart surgery at  
15 Allegheny General Hospital, they're going to go home and  
16 they're going to tell their parents. So although we might not  
17 necessarily get them into the school, we get the message out.  
18 And then we're relentless. I think that you have to be  
19 relentless. It goes back to what I was saying before. If they  
20 knock you down 100 times, get up 101 times, until that person  
21 listens to you. So it's a relentless message that we have to  
22 send. We'll never reach 100 percent of them. But if we try to  
23 reach 90, I know I'm not reaching 100 percent. So we have to  
24 keep attempting to reach 100 percent of them.

25           REPRESENTATIVE LONGIETTI: Thank you.

1           CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: And Barry, thank you. Just  
2 one final point. Oftentimes, the education establishment and  
3 government are always struggling to control costs and what is  
4 adequate funding. And you know, part of the --- the majority  
5 of the topic today was on higher education. While we struggle  
6 with you almost every day to control costs, we're looking at,  
7 you know, some colleges and universities that are upwards of  
8 almost \$50,000 a year. And it's --- we don't have that same  
9 battle to control costs, yet we continue every year to make  
10 those funding decisions and, as we heard today, not necessarily  
11 getting the kids across the finish line that we would hope.  
12 Could you provide maybe a couple suggestions for us as to ways  
13 that we could strengthen the link between K-12 and higher  
14 education, ways that maybe we can get rid of some of the  
15 redundancy, whether it's the academic catalogues and what we  
16 could do better? Do you have some suggestions?

17           MR. BALASKI: Absolutely. In fact, I'm excited that  
18 you asked that question. Because one of the things that we've  
19 done at Moon, and I know Montour offers the same program, is we  
20 started last year with a partnership with Robert Morris  
21 University, where we offer the first semester of college in our  
22 high school. Robert Morris University professors come to my  
23 school to teach our students on Saturday mornings. And when  
24 our students are done --- they go through as juniors and  
25 seniors, and when they're done, they have a semester of school

1 finished. And that partnership comes from knocking on their  
2 doors until they answer. And what they've done is they  
3 provided that to us at a 70-percent discount over their  
4 tuition.

5           And we do the same thing with dual enrollment. We  
6 do the same thing with college in the high school, where our  
7 teachers are a professor for specific schools. We use Pitt.  
8 We use Robert Morris, where they pick up college credits. So  
9 when our seniors are done, if they take those type of courses,  
10 they literally can be a year-and-a-half through school. But  
11 there's a lot of opportunities that way. I guess what it  
12 really comes down to is --- Representative Mustio said it, you  
13 have to ask. And you have to keep asking until someone says  
14 yes. It was kind of funny, someone asked me one time why don't  
15 more people ask. And I really think the answer is, is because  
16 when you ask, what you're most afraid of is that the company  
17 says yes, and then you have to do some work to follow up  
18 through that.

19           CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Do you have the same level of  
20 partnerships with the community college or with the trades in  
21 their training facilities?

22           MR. BALASKI: Absolutely. And what we've done there  
23 is I sit on the board at the Parkway West, where what we've  
24 done is through our Parkway West and our career students and  
25 our vo-tech students, they actually have the opportunity to go

1 to CCAC, and they do that through a grant. So they can go to  
2 CCAC and pick up courses for free.

3           We've also partnershiped with the local  
4 contractors. And there's the Contractors' Union that sits  
5 right on 60 that we've partnered with. And our students  
6 actually get to go over there, and they're accepting some of  
7 our students from the Parkway West Career and Technical Center,  
8 where they go right into their apprenticeship programs. And  
9 whether they're over there working with the construction area  
10 there or the welders across the City of Pittsburgh or some of  
11 those other groups, they've opened their doors, knowing that  
12 these are people that can go out and make a great living.

13           One of the things I heard earlier, too, is that the  
14 number of kids we send to college --- and quite frankly,  
15 sometimes I think they're right. I think sometimes we send too  
16 many kids to college, because there are careers out there where  
17 they can make a great living, and we keep telling them what to  
18 do instead of finding out what they're interested in.

19           CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Clearly, you would say that  
20 your guidance counselors pose as a career counselor, not just  
21 --- so often we hear got to go to college, and they're pushing  
22 that college agenda and that academic agenda rather than take  
23 an individual, look at what's best for that individual and try  
24 to help them land on their feet with a job as quickly as  
25 possible. Do your guidance counselors really take it as their

1 responsibility to be career counselors for ---?

2           MR. BALASKI: They do. Our guidance counselors take  
3 the career aspect very serious. We bring in career fairs and  
4 we bring in local representatives, we bring in local companies,  
5 and we try to bring in some high-powered companies, and we  
6 bring in some companies that a student can go to work right  
7 after high school. We bring them in for career fairs to do  
8 that. We do a lot of that. One of the things that we fight in  
9 education, quite honestly, Moon graduates about 1,200 students.  
10 I have three high school counselors, which means I have one  
11 counselor for every 400 students. It's hard to drive every one  
12 of them in a direction. And we truly do fight the ideals of  
13 parents who believe that that student has to go to college to  
14 be successful. And we have a lot of people with one or two or  
15 three degrees that aren't in the jobs that they really want to  
16 be in. And had we put them into a marketplace where they could  
17 be successful, they would be surely further ahead in the game.

18           CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANA: Barry, I think it's a  
19 wonderful way for this committee to adjourn this hearing. I  
20 want to thank Chairman Conklin for coming out, my colleagues,  
21 and once again, NOVA for hosting us at a great facility. So  
22 thank you very much. Have a safe trip home.

23                           HEARING ADJOURNED AT 12:00 P.M.

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## CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings,  
hearing held before Honorable James Christiana was  
reported by me on 5/28/2014 and I Juliette Hoffman read  
this transcript and that I attest that this transcript is a  
true and accurate record of the proceeding.

  
Court Reporter