Pitt Advocates—Talking Points

- The result of the current budget impasse is uncertainty for the University this year. It has also placed the future of Pitt as a state-related institution in jeopardy. The impasse must be resolved soon and procedures must be put in place to prevent this from occurring in the future.

- The decline in Commonwealth support has placed an undue burden on Pennsylvania students and their families.
  - Due to declining Commonwealth support, a greater share of the cost has had to be carried by Pennsylvania students and their families.
  - One major impact of the Commonwealth’s lack of adequate investment in the state-related universities is a dramatic increase in student debt. In the past 10 years, the average debt for Pennsylvania graduates ballooned by 70% from $19,556 in 2004 to $33,264 in 2014.1
  - Pennsylvania resident students pay about $10,000 per year less than out-of-state students, although current state funding only supports about half of that tuition discount.
  - Pennsylvania has risen to have the nation’s third highest average debt per graduate.2

- The University of Pittsburgh is a major economic driver for the region and the Commonwealth, and a major force in the economic resurgence of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania.
  - Pitt employs more than 13,000 people and supports more than 33,800 jobs locally.
  - Pitt students spent more than $389 million on local goods, services, and housing in 2014.
  - Pitt provides $187.8 million in state and local tax revenue.
  - Pitt generates an economic impact of $3.7 billion for Pennsylvania.
  - Pitt ranks among the top 10 of American universities in federal science, engineering research, and development support attracted by faculty.
  - The University annually attracts external research funding of approximately $700 million.
  - Pitt’s initiatives include its Innovation Institute, which is a focal point for the University’s growing activities in innovation, commercialization, and entrepreneurship.

- Support from the state has fallen to the same level as provided in 1995-96 with no adjustment for inflation. Pennsylvania needs to find a pathway to continuing, increasing, and predictable funding.
  - The steady erosion of state support has resulted in University budget reductions totaling $53 million over the past 7 years.
  - The University’s expenses have not remained flat over that extended period. Over those years the CPI has risen by nearly 55% and the Higher Education Price Index has risen by more than 75%.
  - Pennsylvania ranks near the bottom of all states in support for higher education. In 2015, the Commonwealth ranked 49th in the nation in support for higher education.3
  - The Commonwealth’s support of Pitt represents only 7% of the University’s budget, providing the state with a tremendous return on its investment in the University.
  - The uncertainty of funding from year to year restricts each institution’s ability to meet new challenges and take advantage of opportunities in the years ahead.

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2 http://fortune.com/2015/10/29/state-student-debt/
3 http://education.illinoisstate.edu/grapevine/
The most telling evidence of the value and quality which Pitt has to offer can be found in the ever growing numbers of high quality student applicants.

- First-year student applications grew by nearly 11% on the Pittsburgh campus over the past two years and by more than 14% on the regional campuses in this past year alone. Including first-year students and transfers, Pitt welcomed 4,885 new undergraduate students to Pittsburgh this year, nearly 70% of whom are PA residents.
- The average SAT score for the current first-year student class is 1297 and 50% were in the top 10% of their high school class.
- Pitt’s remarkable level of student achievement (students have claimed numerous Rhodes, Marshall, Goldwater, Fulbright Scholars, etc.) reflects exceptional levels of learning and growth at the University and is clear evidence that Pitt is advancing its vital mission effectively.
- At the University of Pittsburgh, undergraduate students have the opportunity to engage in research, scholarship, and creative experiences with faculty who are leaders in their field.

Pitt’s sustained progress despite the fiscal challenges it has faced has been recognized by outside entities.

- Pitt has been ranked as the top value among all Pennsylvania public colleges and universities for 11 consecutive years by Kiplinger’s.
- The Princeton Review once again included Pitt in its “Best Value Colleges.”
- The Carnegie Classifications of 2016 have named Pitt to a selective list of only 20 public universities that are included in both the “highest research” group and the “more selective/low transfer in” group.

The dual roles of providing educational opportunities for individual Pennsylvanians while functioning as a critical economic engine for Western Pennsylvania and the Commonwealth are at the heart of Pitt’s request for sustained and increasing support from the state.

An adequate and predictable annual appropriation is essential for Pitt to address the issue of affordability as it continues to offer the highest quality education.

In response to a challenging environment, it is clear that the University has focused on maximizing its resources, implementing efficiencies and cost-savings, and carrying out its three-part mission of education, research, and public service without sacrificing quality.

Pitt is evidence of the remarkable impact that a top research university can have on the lives of its students and its region.

Pitt has become a model of community engagement by making its expertise available to neighborhood groups, organizations, and state and local government. Recognitions for Pitt’s community efforts include three consecutive years as a United Way “Good Neighbor” award recipient and placement on the President’s 2013 & 2014 National Honor Roll for Community Service. This commitment to service is shared by Pitt community members at Greensburg, Bradford, Johnstown, and Titusville campuses.

The University continues to make dramatic progress in its drive for ever-higher quality in academic excellence, research, community outreach, and all other aspects of a major public research university. This has all been accomplished by controlling expenses, creating efficiencies, raising revenues from federal research grants, and private fundraising.