University of Pittsburgh-Pitt Advocates  
Talking Points for FY 2014-2015 Proposed State Budget

Priorities

The University has been guided by five Strategic Priorities approved by the Board of Trustees in the mid-1990s:
• Aggressively pursuing excellence in undergraduate education.
• Maintaining excellence in research.
• Partnering in community development.
• Securing an adequate resource base.
• Ensuring operational efficiency and effectiveness.
• Within this strategic framework, we have set and achieved ambitious goals, making remarkable progress on every front.

Advocacy

• It is important for Pitt advocates to express thanks to Senate and House members for their successful efforts to restore recent proposed cuts to Pitt’s funding for the current (2012-13) fiscal year. This enabled Pitt to keep tuition increases around the level of inflation and continue to provide all Pennsylvania students with a tuition reduction of approximately $10,000.

• Pitt has shouldered more than its fair share of cutbacks in state funding (with reductions to our appropriation in four of the past six years). In fact, the Commonwealth invests less state dollars in Pitt today than it did in 1995, 19 years ago.

• The Governor’s Advisory Commission on Post-Secondary Education recommended that the FY 2013 funding levels should be the absolute minimum level of support, noting that “it is imperative to the health and vitality of our postsecondary system that funding not fall below this level.”

• The University provides an approximate $10,000 tuition discount for its in-state students. However, Pitt’s FY 2013 state funding provides just over $5,000 of that discount, further illustrating the return-on-investment the University provides for the Commonwealth and Pitt’s outstanding stewardship of Commonwealth dollars.

Rankings and Awards Reflect Dramatic Progress

• The strength of Pitt’s research program can best be appreciated in the context of the company we keep. With about $760 million in external research funding in FY 2013, Pitt is among the top U.S. universities in total federal grant support.
• Pitt received a long-term bond rating upgrade: from AA/stable to AA/positive from Standard & Poor’s, despite concerns expressed by rating agencies about the fiscal health of the higher education sector in general. Among the factors cited to support that upgrade were fundamental credit strengths; a strong and proactive management team; the successful completion of a facilities plan; stable enrollment, strong student demand and high student quality; good revenue diversity; and impressive fundraising successes.

• The University is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, and in the summer of 2012, the reaccreditation team praised Pitt as “an outstanding university—widely recognized as a “world class research university” driven by “an unwavering commitment to excellence.”

• However, the Middle States team also highlighted a recurring cause for concern: steep reductions in state support. Middle States recognized the University’s response to these fiscal challenges—making “operational efficiency a priority”, undertaking deep internal budget reductions, redesigning employee benefits, efficiencies, productivity increases and the imposition of multiple university-wide salary freezes, all while maintaining the momentum that has elevated Pitt to elite status amongst public research institutions. Pitt’s current funding from the Commonwealth is about equal to the level of support the University received in FY 1995, without considering inflation.

• The University of Pittsburgh is the only Pennsylvania public college or university included in The Princeton Review’s annual “Best Value Colleges” list released January 28, 2014. This is the fourth consecutive year The Princeton Review has included Pitt among its “Best Value Colleges.”

• Pitt is one of the nation’s best institutions for undergraduate education, according to The Princeton Review’s 2014 edition of its annual college guide, The Best 378 Colleges.

• For the ninth year in a row, Pitt ranks as Kiplinger’s top value among all public colleges and universities in Pennsylvania. The nationwide ranking of four-year schools that combine outstanding education with economic value is included in the February 2014 issue of Kiplinger’s Personal Finance.

• Pitt was the top-ranked public university in the most recent edition of Saviors of Our Cities: Survey of Best College & University Civic Partnerships.

• The University is ranked among the top six national universities in terms of the percentage of graduates who benefitted from an internship experience.

• Science magazine ranked the University one of the top four academic settings to work in the United States.
• Pitt is attracting Pennsylvania’s high-achieving students. University-wide full-time-equivalent enrollment grew from 27,002 in 1995 to 32,781 this academic year, an increase of more than 21 percent, and more than 137,000 Pitt degrees were awarded. Also in this same period: the University received 7,825 applications for admission to the programs on its Oakland campus for the fall of 1995; 24,871 for the fall of 2012; and 27,634 for the fall of 2013. This past fall’s applicant pool, then, was 253 percent larger than the pool for 1995 and 11 percent larger than the pool for 2012, which had been Pitt’s record-setting year. The average SAT score of students has risen 185 points since 1995.

• Since 1995, Pitt undergraduates have claimed four Rhodes Scholarships, five Truman Scholarships, six Marshall Scholarships, seven Udall Scholarships, and 41 Goldwater Scholarships. We also are among the nation's leading producers of Fulbright scholars, Boren scholars, Whitaker International Program fellows, National Science Foundation fellows, Critical Language scholars, and Humanity in Action fellows.

• There are more than 315,000 living Pitt alumni residing in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, four U.S. territories, and 160 foreign countries.

Research

• Since 1995, Pitt’s employee base has risen from 9,671 to 13,372. Most of that employment gain is attributable to the dramatic growth in the University’s research expenditures—from $240 million in 1995, to more than $800 million in 2012 (when the federal stimulus program was in place), to about $760 million last year.

• Over the last two decades, Pitt has attracted more than $9 billion in sponsored research support into the region.

• Over the past 18 years, Pitt has become a model of community engagement--making its expertise available to neighborhood groups, state and local government and other public agencies in ways that are consistent with the University’s teaching and research missions, while contributing to the social, intellectual and economic development of the region.

• The nearly $760 million in sponsored research that the University brings to Western Pennsylvania annually supports more than 28,000 jobs, directly and indirectly. The $760 million represents a return of more than $5 for each $1 received by the Commonwealth in FY 2014.

• Pitt is a driving force in making the Pittsburgh region’s education and health services sector the largest and fastest-growing employment super-sector, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. Pitt’s vibrant regional campuses in Bradford, Greensburg, Johnstown, and Titusville are vital economic anchors in their home communities.
Innovation & Economic Impact

• This University is where virologist Jonas Salk developed the first successful polio vaccine, where surgeon Thomas Starzl made dramatic advances in the field of human organ transplantation, where artificial insulin was synthesized, and where Andrew B. Schwartz and Michael Boninger recently created a brain-computer interface enabling a robotic arm to be controlled by the thoughts of the user.

• FY 2013 ended with the University issuing 155 licenses or options to industry for technologies developed at Pitt, nine start-up companies based on Pitt technology, and 254 invention disclosures. Since Pitt’s Office of Technology Management was created in 1996, there have been **98 new start-up companies formed based on Pitt innovations**.

• Pitt has increasingly become one of the region’s most important economic anchors. The University of Pittsburgh has established itself as one of the most productive and respected research institutions in the country.

• Despite declining funding and limited resources, Pitt has been able to maintain its position at the forefront of educational innovation, discovery, and progress through a continued commitment to incorporating technology and entrepreneurial thinking into teaching, learning, and research.