

MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Regular Meeting
February 19, 2026

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the State Board of Higher Education (Board) was convened virtually via MS Teams on Thursday, February 19, 2026. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Act. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Dr. Cynthia Shapira, Chair.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Lubna Mian, Chief of Staff, performed roll call. A quorum of members was present as follows:

Ms. Diane Acri (for Hon. Jesse Topper)	Dr. Cheryl McConnell
Dr. Ann Bieber	Hon. Dr. Pedro A. Rivera
Ms. Hayley Butler	Dr. Cynthia Shapira
Hon. Jay Costa	Ms. Andrea Shirk
Ms. Angela Fitterer (for Hon. Dr. Carrie Rowe)	Hon. Paul Takac
Ms. Marylouise Esten	Ms. Vicki Wilken (for Hon. Wayne Langerholc)
Dr. Christa Heyward	Mr. Kevin Washo
Dr. Kara Laskowski	Ms. Bobbie Jo Zapor
Hon. Nancy Walker	

Absent: Mr. Kenneth Long, Dr. Brenda Allen, Dr. Michael Wade Smith, Mr. Michael G. Warfel

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

IV. WELCOME REMARKS BY THE CHAIR

After welcoming the Board members to the meeting, Dr. Shapira congratulated Mr. Kevin Washo for being honored by the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh as part of its Righteous Among the Neighbors Initiative, for his support of Jewish students at the University of Pittsburgh and his leadership of the university's antisemitism working group.

V. Approval of Consent Agenda Item (Minutes from January 14, 2026, meeting)

Dr. Shapira requested a motion to approve the consent agenda.

A motion was made by Mr. Washo and seconded by Dr. McConnell.

VOTE: All were in favor as indicated by unanimous voice vote.

VI. Executive Director Update

Dr. Kate Shaw, Executive Director, provided updates on the following federal legislation:

- The Workforce Pell Act of 2025: Dr. Lynette Kuhn, Deputy Secretary and Commissioner for Postsecondary and Higher Education, is on track to launch the PA Workforce Pell initiative well ahead of the July 1, 2026, due date. The proposed occupation list will be presented to the State Workforce Development Board on February 27, and once approved, information and relevant materials will be available on the PDE website.
- Ensuring Transparency in Higher Education Admissions Act: This act places additional reporting requirements on higher education institutions that receive any form of federal funding, including financial aid. Reporting requirements include data disaggregated by race and sex for each undergraduate applicant pool, admitted cohort, and enrolled cohort.

She also updated the Board on the Governor's 2026-27 budget proposal for postsecondary and higher education:

- Flat funding for community colleges
- Flat funding for PASSHE institutions
- \$1.1 million for Lincoln University
- \$30 million for state-related institutions that will be distributed on the basis of the new Performance-Based Funding formula
- Flat funding for institutional assistance grants, which are distributed to independent colleges and universities based on the number of Act 101 students they enroll.
- \$5 million to PHEAA to increase the state grant fund

VII. Vote to Approve the SBHE Strategic Plan

Dr. Shapira thanked the members of the Strategic Planning Committee for all their contributions to the development and delivery of the plan. The committee will continue as a standing committee to oversee updates and revisions. She also noted the numerous letters of support for the plan received from across all sectors.

Dr. Shaw then reviewed the planning process and the plan's goals, reiterating the focus on transparency and accountability throughout the process and embedded within the plan.

After inviting comments and questions, Dr. Shapira then requested a motion to approve the plan.

A motion was made by Dr. Pedro Rivera and seconded by Ms. Marylouise Esten.

VOTE: All were in favor as indicated by unanimous voice vote.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Dr. Shapira adjourned the meeting at 1:35 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: March 19, 2026