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PASSHE Board of Governors sets 2012-13 tuition rates

Increase matches inflation rate for fifth time in eight years, honors commitment to Legislature and Governor

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Harrisburg – The Board of Governors of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) today approved a 3 percent tuition increase for the 2012-13 academic year, honoring its commitment to the Legislature and the governor, and marking the fifth time in eight years the increase has been either at or below the rate of inflation.

The \$188 increase – \$94 per semester – ensures PASSHE will remain the lowest-cost option among all four-year colleges and universities in the Commonwealth. The total cost of attendance – including tuition, fees, room and board – also likely will remain below the national average, and significantly below the average in the Middle States region, which comprises Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.

“This action demonstrates our ongoing commitment to our students and their families, and to the Commonwealth,” said PASSHE Board of Governors Chairman Guido M. Pichini. “PASSHE universities will continue to offer high-quality education at the most affordable cost possible.”

The decision also honors PASSHE’s commitment to hold its tuition increase to within the rate of inflation in return for level state funding. The new state budget will provide PASSHE nearly \$420 million, the same amount it received last year.

“We are grateful to the Legislature and Governor Corbett for their support in the recently passed state budget, which enabled us to make this decision,” Mr. Pichini said. “To consistently keep tuition increases to a minimum, as PASSHE has, requires both state support as well as tremendous efforts on behalf of the universities to control their costs through what have been extremely challenging fiscal times.”

The new annual tuition rate for full-time, resident undergraduate students attending any of the 14 PASSHE universities beginning this fall will be \$6,428. Nearly 90 percent of PASSHE students are Pennsylvania residents; about 85 percent attend full time.

“A PASSHE education represents a tremendous educational value,” said Chancellor Dr. John C. Cavanaugh. “The affordable cost combined with the outstanding quality of academic programs our universities offer – many of which are nationally ranked – produce an overall experience that is unique in the Commonwealth.”

PASSHE universities have taken significant steps in recent years to control their costs, generating savings of more than \$220 million over the last decade. Specific initiatives have included the joint purchasing of goods and services and the installation of more energy-efficient systems on virtually every campus. A retirement incentive program offered two years ago is saving the System more than \$10 million annually and changes in health care payments and work rules included in contracts negotiated over the last year with several of PASSHE’s labor unions will produce additional long-term savings.

The universities have hired fewer adjunct faculty, eliminated or held vacant more than 900 positions on the campuses, postponed investments in new equipment and technology, delayed or canceled some maintenance and renovation projects and consolidated business and IT operations.

While keeping costs under control, the universities have continued to enhance the quality of programming they offer, with the vast majority of academic programs earning or maintaining accreditation from professional organizations nationally.

The universities also regularly review their programs to ensure they remain relevant to the changing workforce. Over the last four years, more than 130 academic programs have been placed into moratorium or discontinued, primarily because of low student demand. Over that same time, more than 60 programs have been reorganized to better respond to market demands, and approximately 25 new programs have been introduced. All of the new programs have been designed to address the specific needs of employers, including those in shale exploration and production, pharmaceuticals, computer security and the allied health professions.

The Board also approved new tuition rates for resident graduate students and all nonresident students. The resident graduate tuition rate in 2012-13 will be \$429 per credit, an increase of \$13. Nonresident graduate tuition will increase by \$20 per credit to \$644. Full-time, undergraduate tuition for nonresident students will range from \$9,642 to \$16,070, depending on a variety of factors, including the university and program in which a student enrolls. All of the increases average approximately 3 percent.

The tuition technology fee will increase by \$10 to \$358 for the full academic year for full-time resident students and by \$16 to \$542 for full-time nonresident students. All funds raised by the technology fee are used to directly benefit student learning. Universities have used the funds to install new computer labs and to design multi-media classrooms, among other projects.

The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education is the largest provider of higher education in the Commonwealth, with nearly 120,000 students. The 14 PASSHE universities offer degree and certificate programs in more than 120 areas of study. About 500,000 PASSHE alumni live and work in Pennsylvania.

The state-owned universities are Bloomsburg, California, Cheyney, Clarion, East Stroudsburg, Edinboro, Indiana, Kutztown, Lock Haven, Mansfield, Millersville, Shippensburg, Slippery Rock and West Chester Universities of Pennsylvania. PASSHE also operates branch campuses in Clearfield, Freeport, Oil City and Punxsutawney and several regional centers, including the Dixon University Center in Harrisburg.