



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

March 18, 2025

Dr. Neeli Bendapudi
President, The Pennsylvania State University
201 Old Main
University Park, PA 16802

Dear Dr. Bendapudi:

As you lead Penn State through the upcoming restructuring of the Commonwealth Campus system, I write today to share the importance of Penn State DuBois as an integral part of the surrounding region and the entire Penn State University system. This campus serves not only as an educational institution but also a vital community asset that directly impacts the local economy, culture, and future workforce of the surrounding area.

The programs offered at Penn State DuBois provide immense value to the region, and their impact is essential for Penn State to fulfill its land-grant mission in North Central Pennsylvania. Specifically, the campus offers degrees in fields such as business, engineering, criminal justice, information sciences and technology, and occupational therapy. These programs align with local workforce needs and provide students with practical, in-demand skills that strengthen our local economy. For example, the Wildlife Technology Program – a unique and popular program offered on campus – is a perfect fit for outdoor enthusiasts in my area. Penn State DuBois also offers robust training and certification programs that are tailored to workforce needs in our community. Some of these trainings create proficiency in multiple programs including AutoCAD, CNC, Cyber Security, Die Setter, AI, leadership, and more. Penn State DuBois is in constant communication with our local businesses to provide in-demand training and programs to address their workforce needs.

Furthermore, Penn State DuBois plays a crucial role in local economic and workforce development. With the North Central region as a focal point for the carbon industry, Penn State DuBois has built a strong relationship with powdered metal manufacturers and their workforce as the carbon industry stands on the brink of innovative change. The campus is also home to two key economic initiatives: the Penn State DuBois LaunchBox and the EDA Tech Hub, in collaboration with the North Central Regional Planning and Development Commission. These programs foster entrepreneurship, support small business growth, and drive innovations in advanced manufacturing. At a time when we need to invest in our rural communities more than ever, the loss of these initiatives would significantly hinder rural Pennsylvania's ability to compete for federal funding, attract investment, and ensure long-term economic sustainability.

Penn State DuBois is uniquely positioned that it attracts students from the North Central region of Pennsylvania, including Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, and McKean Counties.

While Pennsylvania has more post-secondary institutions per capita than most other states, without Penn State DuBois there would be a vacuum of higher education in this region, and these counties in my congressional district would be left behind. My constituents need access to the high-quality educational programs that Penn State DuBois offers to continue building out a robust rural economy.

Finally, I am proud of the success Penn State DuBois has had despite recent challenges in higher education. For example, the latest information from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System at the Department of Education shows Penn State DuBois has a 79 percent retention rate while enrolling a high percentage – nearly 30 percent – of Pell Grant recipients. Additionally, many students at Penn State DuBois are nontraditional, balancing family and work responsibilities, making commuting a barrier that could derail their pursuit of higher education. These are just a few key data points that further illustrate the unique position of this campus in the region.

I urge you to carefully consider the impact of Penn State DuBois before making a final recommendation on the Commonwealth Campus ecosystem. Its closure would have a significant negative impact on local students, the workforce, and the broader community. The programs it offers are critical to strengthening the local economy and preparing the next generation of leaders. I sincerely hope that you will consider the long-term benefits of maintaining this campus, not just for the students, but for the entire region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glenn Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Glenn" written in a more stylized, looped manner and the last name "Thompson" in a more standard cursive script.

Glenn "GT" Thompson
Member of Congress

GT/av