



Wyatt Massey <wmassey@spotlightpa.org>

Penn State academic spending analysis (Deadline: March 12)

8 messages

Wyatt Massey <wmassey@spotlightpa.org>

Fri, Mar 7, 2025 at 12:46 PM

To: Mediarelations <mediarelations@psu.edu>, "Pell, Rachel A" <rpell@psu.edu>, "DuBois, Wyatt" <wed112@psu.edu>, wbm5266@psu.edu

Good afternoon,

We are looking to publish an analysis of Penn State's spending and budget since the budget deficit was announced in the summer 2022.

For this analysis, we took Stairs Report actual budget expenditures (typically Volume II) for fiscal years 2022, 2023, and 2024, adjusting years 2022 and 2023 for inflation using data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. For fiscal year 2025, we used the budgeted projections Penn State submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education in its most recent Stairs Report.

Please see the attached pdf of the figures for reference. Based on this information, I'm seeking comment from Penn State on the following:

- The analysis for University Park colleges shows deep cuts to the engineering college (12.4% since FY22). How do these cuts fit into President Bendapudi's vision for the future of Penn State and the types of students and faculty the university is hoping to attract to University Park? If there's additional context for these cuts, please let me know. Feel free to offer comments on the other colleges, too.
- The analysis for University Park colleges shows increased spending on the university's nursing, health and human development, and arts and architecture colleges. How do these changes fit into President Bendapudi's vision for the future of Penn State and the types of students and faculty the university is hoping to attract to University Park? If there's additional context for these cuts, please let me know. Feel free to offer comments on the other colleges, too.
- The analysis for Penn State's academic support units shows deep cuts to the graduate school (46.5% since FY22), Millennium Scholars Program (76.7% since FY22), and Schreyer Honors College (54% since FY22). How do these cuts fit into President Bendapudi's priorities for Penn State's future? Given the honors college and scholars program works with a certain type of student, what should current members or alumni or these programs take away from these cuts? If there's additional context for these cuts, please let me know. Feel free to offer comments on the other units, too.
- Also, the analysis for Penn State's academic support units shows a really steep cut to Undergraduate Education. Given how steep the cut was, I wanted to be sure the money was allocated to a different unit with similar priorities or something along those lines. Please let me know if there's context missing that should be noted.
- The analysis for Penn State's commonwealth campuses shows cuts to all of the locations. As shown in the analysis, the deepest cuts (as a percentage of its budget) were to Behrend, Hazleton, and Mont Alto since fiscal year 2022. As the university is making major changes to its statewide system, how is it deciding which units to cut and to what degree? Given that one of the steepest cuts was to Behrend, a campus Penn State said would not close, how is the university changing operations there? Feel free to offer comments on the other campuses, too.

I realize these are large questions and this data may require additional context. I'd be happy to speak to a university official for an on-the-record interview to better understand how the university's spending priorities have changed in recent years.


Please let me know what is possible. My deadline is March 12, 2025 at 4 p.m. ET.

Thank you.

Wyatt

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Wyatt Massey
Spotlight PA - Investigative Reporter
Cell/Signal: 445-236-0562

 **Actual expenditures by fiscal year - Inflation adjusted.pdf**

71K

Wyatt Massey <wmassey@spotlightpa.org>

Wed, Mar 12, 2025 at 8:16 PM

To: Mediarelations <mediarelations@psu.edu>, "Pell, Rachel A" <rpell@psu.edu>, "DuBois, Wyatt" <wed112@psu.edu>, wbm5266@psu.edu

Good evening,

I wanted to check in about this request. Will the university be able to offer a response to any of the questions?

Thank you.

Wyatt

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DuBois, Wyatt <wed112@psu.edu>

Thu, Mar 13, 2025 at 4:31 PM

To: Wyatt Massey <wmassey@spotlightpa.org>

I'm sorry. This one completely slipped off my radar. Let me see what I can get by tomorrow afternoon.

Wyatt

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DuBois, Wyatt <wed112@psu.edu>
To: Wyatt Massey <wmassey@spotlightpa.org>

Fri, Mar 14, 2025 at 3:10 PM

Wyatt,

Being that it's spring break, I haven't had much luck reaching the people we need to reach to answer this inquiry. I will do my best to get back to you on Monday. Again, my apologies. I was traveling through Wednesday, and it seems others are out of the office as well.

Wyatt

From: Wyatt Massey <wmassey@spotlightpa.org>
Date: Friday, March 7, 2025 at 12:46 PM
To: Mediarelations <mediarelations@psu.edu>, Pell, Rachel A <rpell@psu.edu>, DuBois, Wyatt <wed112@psu.edu>, Medina, Wilson <wbm5266@psu.edu>

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Wyatt Massey <wmassey@spotlightpa.org>
To: "DuBois, Wyatt" <wed112@psu.edu>

Fri, Mar 14, 2025 at 3:28 PM

Okay. Sounds good. Thank you for letting me know.

Wyatt

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Wyatt Massey <wmassey@spotlightpa.org>
To: "DuBois, Wyatt" <wed112@psu.edu>

Mon, Mar 17, 2025 at 11:20 AM

The story is expected to be published tomorrow, fyi.

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Mediarelations <mediarelations@psu.edu>
To: Wyatt Massey <wmassey@spotlightpa.org>
Cc: Mediarelations <mediarelations@psu.edu>

Mon, Mar 17, 2025 at 4:06 PM

Wyatt,

Thank you for extending your deadline. The staff in the University Budget Office are at capacity working on the FY27 budget and are unable to do a deep analysis of unit budgets at this time. As you note, significant efforts have been underway since the summer of 2022 to reduce the University's budget deficit and set Penn State up for a successful, sustainable future. The University's new budget allocation model, which was put in place beginning in FY24 was designed to right-size unit budgets. Other initiatives, including unit reorganizations and optimized service teams, also are leading to changes in expenditures and the shifting of dollars from one unit's budget to another. A combination of these factors — all designed to more efficiently utilize the University's limited resources — has caused some unit budgets to increase, while others decrease.

From: Wyatt Massey <wmassey@spotlightpa.org>
Sent: Friday, March 7, 2025 12:46 PM
To: Mediarelations <mediarelations@psu.edu>; Pell, Rachel A <rpell@psu.edu>; DuBois, Wyatt <wed112@psu.edu>; Medina, Wilson <wbm5266@psu.edu>
Subject: Penn State academic spending analysis (Deadline: March 12)

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Mediarelations <mediarelations@psu.edu>
To: Wyatt Massey <wmassey@spotlightpa.org>
Cc: Mediarelations <mediarelations@psu.edu>

Tue, Mar 18, 2025 at 1:56 PM

Wyatt,

Can you please tell us why you decided not to include this line from our statement in your story?

Other initiatives, including unit reorganizations and optimized service teams, also are leading to changes in expenditures and the shifting of dollars from one unit's budget to another.

That is a significant piece of information for your readers.

For instance, the budget difference you note for Schreyer Honors College is almost entirely attributable to moving the approximately \$3.5 million Academic Excellence Scholarship fund to a newly established business area — Central Student Aid. While the funds are still earmarked to support Schreyer students, they no longer appear in Schreyer's budget.

Similarly, the budget adjustment for the Fox Graduate School is primarily due to the reallocation of funds to Central Student Aid, and they remain designated to support graduate students.

We would appreciate you clarifying these facts in your story.

From: Mediarelations <mediarelations@psu.edu>
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2025 4:06 PM
To: Wyatt Massey <wmassey@spotlightpa.org>
Cc: Mediarelations <mediarelations@psu.edu>
Subject: Re: Penn State academic spending analysis (Deadline: March 12)

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