



Charge Letter

Guiding Principle 3: Design Relevant and Responsive Programs

The vision for *One Penn State 2025* builds on our strong traditions of working as one university to provide world-class education and drives us to be a more integrated, flexible, and responsive institution. By 2025, seamless online access to curricula and processes will be embedded in every part of Penn State across the Commonwealth, enabling us to become a 24/7/365, diverse and inclusive institution. *One Penn State 2025* represents a fluid, personalized, and collaborative environment that enables students, faculty, and staff to achieve their goals regardless of their location in the world.

This vision is supported by five guiding principles. You are invited to serve on a University committee that will begin the work related to Guiding Principle 3 Design Relevant and Responsive Programs. Underlying this principle is the goal that, in 2025, Penn State will offer degrees and programs with learning outcomes defined by disciplinary communities and contemporary needs while also offering flexibility in achieving these outcomes via multiple pathways.

As Penn State evolves to meet 21st century expectations for offering degree programs, attention must be paid to providing core content that will be defined by the disciplinary faculty, as well as elements that must respond to professional and societal needs in a time-critical fashion. Not only will Penn State need to incorporate a more flexible way of providing the professional content, we will also need to allow for accelerated pace and phased courses in order to provide relevant delivery modes as well as content knowledge. Alternative curriculum structures and student support offerings will enable accelerated or self-paced learning, concentrated learning, or learning enhancements so that a student can plan both the time to degree and the degree enhancements that define it. In addition to the curricular structures, the development of common content that supports acquisition of professional skills can be made available across multiple majors and locations.

Technology plays an ever-increasing role in all realms of society, including necessary job and employment skills; even the most traditional of careers (e.g. teaching, marketing) are being impacted by technological advances more quickly than ever. A fundamental challenge is that job skills now evolve faster than higher education has traditionally been prepared to react. To maintain its status as a premiere postsecondary educational institution, Penn State must engage its constituents and use its resources to gather information to ensure relevance and to evolve the professional skills curriculum to match the pace and needs in the industry, government, and education sectors it supports. And in some settings, shorter and more easily digestible units that reflect the increasing rate of change in the employment market may be more appropriate

depending on the specific circumstance. This could include certificates, workshops, and potentially individual courses or parts of courses that augment the degree program. As with traditional degree-granting curricula, meeting this need will require close relationships with industry and government to quickly identify emerging needs and opportunities.

We are asking this leadership team to undertake this work by creating taskforces and/or launching pilot projects to explore the viability of approaches. For example, you may choose

- to create a curriculum taskforce that may
 - meet with various industry advisory or government boards to identify professional skills for the entry-level and experienced positions,
 - meet with academic units to identify emerging skills and knowledge areas that reflect global societal needs,
 - meet with continuing education units to identify emerging workforce needs,
 - conduct a review of content already developed and available across Penn State to identify strengths and gaps, and processes for ensuring agility in creating and making available timely content that supplements the formal degree programs,
 - recommend an agile process for developing content, and making it available to incorporate into curricula,
 - recommend expedited program approval processes,
 - recommend strategies for sharing digital content across academic units;
- to create an alternative access taskforce that may
 - launch a series pilot projects to design and offer self-paced or with accelerated paths, that could include bootcamps, camp-style programs, apprenticeships, condensed course length, etc., and ensure that student access to financial aid is preserved in each model,
 - create a process to test and evaluate the alternative paths, and
 - recommend policies, procedures, and protocols to support the effective approaches.

In addition to providing coordination across the parallel taskforces, the leadership team will develop a timeline and establish milestones so that by 2025 we will establish approaches to evaluate the appropriateness of, and establish paths to, segments of curricula that are self-paced and accelerated, and the University will have an understanding of the effective constructs of these paths and pace enhancements. We will also enable and incorporate a variety of professional skills content that will be shared across disciplines and that will be easily and regularly accessible to all students.

Finally, each guiding principle leadership team will incorporate as part of their work the identification of infrastructure requirements that are needed to support the achievement of the guiding principle. In this context, infrastructure refers to administrative policies and practices, facilities, budget models, and technology platforms to facilitate faculty and staff collaboration, student access to university resources, and student success. Coordination of infrastructure needs will occur through the joint assignment of leadership team members with the Guiding Principle 5 leadership team.