

As a health care provider in independent practice of clinical psychology for more than 40 years in Pennsylvania, I am writing to ask your assistance as a legislator to recognize the value of the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford as it contributes to our rural economy, our families, and our way of life.

Locally we continue to see a steady and significant decline in population. As we lose population, we lose dentists, physicians, teachers, plumbers, bricklayers, electricians, carpenters, asphalt paving companies, and electronics manufacturing and distribution. We lose the opportunity for businesses to start, grow, and be successful when we lose people with critical skills.

In Pennsylvania, we lost a billion dollar industry (furniture manufacturing) to China which will never return in our lifetime. Locally we lost an Ethan Allen plant, where my mother worked. We lost Pensilco, a silicon crystal manufacturer that competed world-wide, manufacturing specialty silicon wafer crystal necessary for the computer chips. We lost the Corning Resistor Plant with high paying jobs that enabled people to earn a living to raise families, often with one family member able to spend the early years of the children's lives at home and then to return to the work force. Now these goods are made in Taiwan and China, putting our country in a precarious situation.

We are at a critical point in our rural area as research has proven there are no "do overs" or second chances when rural communities decline to the point where they are not viable. The decline is especially critical in Pennsylvania as such a wide swath of communities and livelihoods have been rural.

The University of Pittsburgh at Bradford has helped locally to slow the rate of decline and, in fact, may be a factor in our reemergence. I have had many relatives who have personally benefitted from being able to attend the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford both as high school students taking higher level math and science courses and as degree students:

A nephew who attended the first two years of college at UPB, followed by obtaining his doctorate in pharmacy at the University of Pittsburgh and who now lives with his wife and six children in Eldred and is a practicing hospital pharmacist.

A niece who graduated from UPB, works as director of accounting at Cutco Industries, and lives with her husband and two children in Duke Center. She was able to attend college locally and obtain an affordable education that is serving her and her community.

A niece who after graduating from University of Pittsburgh, attained her Master of Science as Physician Assistant at Duke University. She now works in an endocrinology clinic where she provides ongoing and preventative care for patients who suffer from diabetes, a condition that emerging as one the great contributors to early heart disease, stroke, blindness and dementia.

A great-nephew who is becoming a certified radiological technician in the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford's two year program that has 100% employment rate at completion of the program.

A son, who as a high school student attended University of Pittsburgh at Bradford completing higher level math courses. He has been able to successfully compete with students over a pathway that enabled him to obtain a Ph.D. in Robotics Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University, and now is working with artificial intelligence and autonomous vehicles and completed research for DARPA on drone navigation in dense urban environments. Without early exposure to challenging educational resources

as a high school student it is difficult to learn and compete in higher level academic fields. The University of Pittsburgh at Bradford offers such a resource.

A daughter, who also clearly benefitted from University of Pittsburgh at Bradford classes in math, physics and English during high school. Now as a doctoral student in Ecology and Evolution at the University of Pittsburgh she has been involved in research that helps landowners and farmers benefit from win/win environmental practices, keeping them economically viable.

A classmate of my daughter, whose high school education augmented by science and math classes in the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford, prepared her for the rigorous pathway to an NIH Fellowship and MD/Ph.D. program where she is researching important discoveries in neurological functioning and disorders.

The University of Pittsburgh at Bradford Army ROTC cadets make up the Bravo Company of the Seneca Battalion, where each year students are trained to become officers in the United States Army. UPB is recognized as a military friendly school.

The next generation of college students, now in high school, are benefitting from University of Pittsburgh at Bradford college in the classroom programs, that provide college education and credits that can reduce the amount of time to complete a degree, or offer the ability to complete early introductory courses that enable students to take more advanced courses at an undergraduate level. This program is very much appreciated by the parents in the local school districts.

The University of Pittsburgh at Bradford educates many nurses in a rigorous program, where every graduate is highly desired wherever they seek employment.

In a more recent development, the university is in the process of constructing an Engineering and Information Technology facility that will educate and prepare students for positions that are currently hard to fill and vitally necessary for local industries. Offering several pathways and levels of training, this program has generated a great deal of local business support. The expertise of locally trained engineers who have interned in local businesses will help to make local decisions that make sense.

I have not been as brief as I should be to a busy legislator such as yourself, but in defense of the length, it is sometimes necessary to tell more of the story to have better understanding. Perhaps as an influential legislator you can help tell the story to your colleagues.

Respectfully,

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