



# 2026 PASSHE Summit

October 28-29, 2026

**Meeting the Moment Together:**  
*Transformation Through Resilience, Access, and Innovation*

HYBRID SUMMIT:

In-person events at Kutztown University with online, virtual options



## CALL FOR PROPOSALS - 2026 PASSHE Summit

“Meeting the Moment Together:  
Transformation through Resilience, Access, and Innovation”

October 28-29, 2026

Kutztown University

Deadline for submissions: **Thursday, September 10, 2026**

### I. Overview:

Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) is pleased to announce that the 2026 PASSHE Summit will take place on **October 28 & 29, 2026**. The Summit will be a **hybrid** conference, with in-person sessions at **Kutztown University** and virtual/hybrid sessions on Zoom.

The PASSHE Summit provides a unique opportunity for faculty, staff, students, and administrators from across the State System to gather, share their work and research, and build connections and capacity within and across institutions. The Summit is a collaboration of the Offices of Academic Affairs, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and Student Affairs to advance PASSHE's mission-driven priorities. It aligns with Board-approved [student success metrics](#), including, but not limited to, improving graduation rates, persistence rates, credit completion ratios, and participation in [high-impact practices](#). The Summit aims to [reaffirm](#) the State System's steadfast commitment to advancing the success and well-being of all students, staff, and faculty, while honoring the inherent dignity and worth of every individual. Through dialogue that challenges assumptions, expands knowledge, and fosters innovation, the Summit strengthens our collective capacity to build more accessible, inclusive, and responsive institutions.

Lastly, in celebrating and reflecting on the [250th anniversary](#) of the United States, we recognize that progress and freedom have been realized through resilience, collective responsibility, and a willingness to confront change—values that continue to guide higher education today.

***Please review this entire document/Call for Proposals prior to submitting your proposal! Then:***

**[Submit your proposals by clicking here!](#)**

**Virtual Information/Q&A Sessions:** If you want to learn more about the proposal process or are unsure whether to submit a proposal, we invite you to a drop-in Q&A session!

- Thursday, May 21, 2026, 10-11 am – [register here](#)
- Wednesday, August 26, 2026, 12-1 pm – [register here](#)
- Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 12-1 pm – [register here](#)

If you have **questions**, please contact the PASSHE Summit co-chairs: Christa Cobb ([ccobb@passhe.edu](mailto:ccobb@passhe.edu)), Emily Howe ([ehowe@passhe.edu](mailto:ehowe@passhe.edu)), Jerry Schearer ([schearer@kutztown.edu](mailto:schearer@kutztown.edu)), and Angelica Mishra ([mishra@kutztown.edu](mailto:mishra@kutztown.edu))

## II. Theme:

### The theme for the 2026 PASSHE Summit is "***Meeting the Moment Together: Transformation through Resilience, Access, and Innovation***"

There are many shifts and challenges occurring in higher education and society, more broadly. These include [new technologies](#), [changing student demographics](#), [dynamic political landscapes](#), funding challenges [locally](#) and [nationally](#), the [declining affordability of college](#) and [basic needs](#), among many others. This conference will explore how we can meet the moment and engage with these changes and uncertainties as opportunities for transformation.

This year's theme for the PASSHE Summit, ***Meeting the Moment Together: Transformation through Resilience, Access, and Innovation***, encourages us to reflect on and see the opportunities for transformation and collective action that the changing landscape creates. Structures, systems, and practices within higher education are ripe for reimagining to better serve students, staff, faculty, and administrators. We can seize this moment to lessen barriers to student success and create more supportive work environments.

Yet, change alone does not guarantee that conditions and outcomes will improve. Creating positive changes and transformation requires us to be intentional and to iterate and refine our approaches. This year's theme is to explore how promoting resilience, access, and innovation can contribute to positive changes and transformation within and across our universities.

- **Resilience** speaks to the capacity to respond to adversities, as well as to overcome and emerge stronger from them. Resilience is a dynamic process of positive adaptation where there is an interaction between internal and external factors that allows difficulties to be overcome constructively ([Riquelme et al., 2022](#)). Resilience is a skill that can be developed not only by individuals, but also by teams and institutions. [Institutional resilience](#) is "the ability to anticipate, respond to, and adapt to rapidly changing circumstances in ways that maximize opportunities while minimizing the impacts of unforeseen events."
- **Access** in higher education is multi-faceted and includes reducing barriers to student success, such as a lack of affordability, ableism, administrative burdens, and insufficient student supports. Many of these barriers can also reduce access and opportunities for employees. Presenters are encouraged to share how practices like [inclusive design](#) can be used to imagine and create new structures, systems, and practices that foster community and supportive learning and working environments.
- **Innovation** is not simply the adoption of new tools, but reconfiguring [how we work](#) and think. Universities have the opportunity to design new frameworks, ways of organizing, and approaches to problem-solving to better meet students where they are and support the needs of their employees. We are curious to explore how relationships, collaboration, and iterative processes can spark and sustain innovative practices at the institutional and individual levels. Presentations can also highlight examples of intentional [use](#) and [non-use](#) of different tools and technologies.

Finally, the scale of the challenges and opportunities we face means that sustainable change and improvement will require us to work **together**. The late Jesse Jackson highlighted the importance of leadership to meet the moral challenge of its day. Part of this challenge is developing the capacity to work together and understand our futures are intertwined: "we choose not a false sense of independence, and our capacity to survive and endure...[instead] we choose interdependency, and our capacity to act and unite for the greater good." In higher education, we can break down silos within and between universities by developing relationships and understanding our interdependence. Collaboration and collective action are key components to meeting the challenges and opportunities of this moment.

***We encourage students, faculty, staff, administrators, Board members, trustees, and other PASSHE stakeholders to submit proposals with these ideas in mind. We encourage collaboration between these groups and within/between universities. We also welcome proposals that address the theme from various perspectives, life experiences, and academic disciplines.***

### **III. Proposal Tracks:**

When submitting a proposal, you have two tracks to choose from. The main difference between the tracks is the **desired audience**.

- The **General Track** is for presentations oriented towards faculty, staff, and/or administrators.
- The **Student Track** is for presentations oriented towards a student audience. This track also encourages students to share their work and research.

**Any person can submit a proposal to either track.** You should select your track based on your **desired audience** or who would benefit most from your presentation. You can submit proposals to both tracks, but not the same proposal. There is a limit of three proposals per author.

Both tracks are competitive, so due to limited space, we cannot guarantee that all high-quality proposals will be accepted.

#### **What do General Track proposals look like?**

The **primary audience** for general track presentations is **staff, faculty, and/or administrators**. They should cover topics of interest to one or more of these groups.

**Anyone** (including students) can submit and attend General Track Presentations.

Potential topics for the General Track include, but are **not** limited to:

- Professional learning communities and cross-departmental/cross-unit/interuniversity collaborations
- Frameworks and practices to support organizational learning
- Designing and implementing initiatives using [high-impact practices](#) to promote student success
- Use of data to improve systems and campus climates
- Structures and policies to support mental health and well-being for students and employees
- Inclusive pedagogy
- Inclusive design and digital accessibility
- Learning for democracy and civic engagement
- Coalition building

#### **What do Student Track proposals look like?**

The **primary audience** for student track presentations is **undergraduate and/or graduate students**. The Student Track also encourages students to share their work and research.

**Anyone** can submit and attend Student Track Presentations. We will prioritize sessions that include student presenters in our selection process.

Potential topics for the Student Track include, but are **not** limited to:

- Starting and sustaining student clubs and organizations
- Student-focused affinity spaces/caucus spaces
- Building healthy relationships in college and/or grad school
- Student leadership and advocacy skill sessions
- Supporting student mental health, self-care, and community care
- Student internships and career development
- Student research projects and creative projects
- Respectful communication: transforming debate to dialogue

## IV. Proposal Submissions Process and Requirements:

### I. Identify Your Track

The first step is to select your proposal track. The main difference is the **desired audience** for your presentation.

- **General Track** is for presentations oriented towards faculty, staff, and/or administrators.
- **Student Track** is for presentations oriented towards a student audience. This track also encourages students to share their work and research.

Any person can submit a proposal to either track. Select your track based on who you think would benefit most from your presentation. You can submit proposals to both tracks, **but not the same proposal**.

### II. Select a Session Type

There are six session types to which you can submit a proposal. Review the descriptions below to determine which session category best suits your work. For each proposal, you must select your desired session type.

1. **Best Practices Session** (*25-45 minutes; maximum of four presenters*): Best Practices Sessions should highlight practical insights and knowledge from a practice-focused inquiry project. Proposals should also provide thoughtful engagement with the project's context, history, and motivations to help the audience understand the ways this project and its insights are relevant and applicable to other contexts. Presenters should plan to allot at least 10 minutes for audience discussion.
2. **Research Talk** (*25-45 minutes; maximum of four presenters*): Research Talks should focus on a particular empirical or conceptual research project (its context, questions, methodology, and results). Research studies do not have to be complete but should be far enough along to present preliminary results. Presenters should plan to allot at least 10 minutes for audience discussion.
3. **Panel Discussion** (*60 minutes; maximum of five presenters and one facilitator*): Panel Discussions should be a themed session with multiple presenters (but no more than 5) discussing relevant research, theory, and/or practice related to that theme. Panels will be assessed on the timeliness of the topic and the range of perspectives they bring to bear. Presenters should give at least 15 minutes for audience discussion.
4. **Interactive Workshop** (*60 minutes; maximum of five presenters*): Workshops should create a structured and engaging space for attendees to interact with specific ideas and practices. We also encourage structured discussions to help the audience connect with each other. These proposals should be explicit about their topic, how the session will be interactive for the audience, and what workshop takeaways will be.
5. **PechaKucha** (*7 minutes; maximum of two presenters*): New to this year's Summit! [PechaKucha](#) means "chit chat" in Japanese and is a specific 20x20 presentation format with a slideshow of 20 images that auto-advance after 20 seconds. You have 400 seconds total (a little less than 7 minutes) to share your story and ideas to connect with others visually, concisely, and memorably. There are [tutorials](#) and [example presentations](#) online. We will hold a hybrid PechaKucha session where multiple accepted PechaKucha proposals will be presented.
6. **Poster & Multimedia Session** (*45 minutes; Student Track and in-person only*): Projects for this session can include research posters, visual art, videos, or other multimedia content. Research posters should highlight the research context, questions, methodology, and (preliminary) results. Visual and multimedia art projects should include captions or explanations of the work's process and meaning. Presenters must be able to attend in person.

**Please note:**

- Session types 1-5 are for both the General and Student Track proposals.
- The Poster & Multimedia Session is a *Student-Track only session* and is for *in-person* presenters.
- Best Practices sessions and Research Talks may be scheduled for *either* a 25-minute time slot or a 45-minute time slot at the discretion of the Planning Committee.
- Each person can submit a maximum of three proposals.

### **III. Submit Your Proposal Online**

- After reading the submission procedure and requirements, please submit your proposals through the [Whova submission portal](#).
- All proposals must be completed and submitted on or before **Thursday, September 10, 2026**, to be reviewed and considered.

**Proposal Requirements:** Below are the **requirements for the proposal**.

- **Title** (200 characters or less)
- **Select a track:** General or Student track (see page 3 for more information)
- **Presenter(s) Information:** Name, title, institution/organization, email address, biography, and photo for all presenters in the proposal (*This information will not be provided to reviewers for a double-blind review*)
- **Select a session type\*** (see page 4 for more information)
- **Proposal Summary** (3000 characters/~500 words or less) – Please make sure to respond to all of the bullet points below.
  - Explain the topic, context, and purpose of your session
  - Provide specific learning outcomes for your session
  - Provide an overview of content to be presented – *please ensure it is aligned with your chosen session type!*
- **Audience engagement** (500 characters/~75 words or less)
  - Who is/are your target audience(s)?
  - What is your plan for audience engagement?
- **3-5 topic keywords**
- **Modality preferences** on whether your session will be **in-person, hybrid, or virtual\***
- **Preferred session times\***

***\*Please note:** Preferences related to session type and modality (in-person, hybrid, virtual) are considered in the review of your proposal. If your proposal is accepted, we consider these preferences and your time preferences in scheduling, but **we cannot guarantee** that you will be scheduled for the session type, modality, or times that you select.*

### **V. Review & Selection Process**

- Due to a limited number of sessions in the schedule, we cannot guarantee that every proposal will be accepted.
- All proposals will be reviewed by 2-3 members of the Systemwide Planning Committee or the Student Conference Committee. Committee members will engage in a double-blind review process and will score proposals using a rubric based on the session type and proposal requirements.
- Reviewer scores are the primary determinant of proposal acceptance. Topic variety within the program and session type availability will also be considered in the selection process.
- **Decisions will be communicated to all applicants on or before Monday, October 5, 2026.**

## 2026 PASSHE Summit Systemwide Planning Committee

- [Nichole Book](#), Commonwealth University – Mansfield, Assistant Director of DEIB and Student Success
- [Keshia Booker](#), Slippery Rock University, Executive Director for Campus Climate, Culture, and Compliance
- [Roger Briscoe II](#), Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Executive Director of Student Inclusion
- [Sheleta Camarda-Webb](#), PennWest University, Assistant Vice President for CORE Strategic Initiatives
- [Christa Cobb](#) (co-chair), Office of the Chancellor, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- [Camille Dempsey](#), PennWest University, Executive Director of the PennWest Center for Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies
- [Christopher Dubbs](#), East Stroudsburg University, Associate Professor of Mathematics
- [L. Fleming](#), East Stroudsburg University, Director of Center for Student Engagement & Belonging
- [Ralph Godbolt](#), Commonwealth University – Bloomsburg, Executive Director Center for Access and Engagement/Act 101
- [John Hearn](#), Millersville University, Senior Director of Operations, Student Memorial Center
- [Sharnine Herbert](#), Shippensburg University, Associate Professor
- [emily howe](#) (co-chair), Office of the Chancellor, Manager of Special Projects & Research
- [Jennifer Joseph](#), Cheyney University, Director of Employee and Labor Relations, Belonging and Inclusion, and Title IX
- [Angelica Mishra](#) (co-chair), Kutztown University, Assistant to CDO and Office Manager of the Multicultural Center
- [Christine Pease-Hernandez](#), Slippery Rock University, Associate Professor
- [Aries Overdiep-Powell](#), West Chester University, Associate Director, Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy
- [Amy Salsgiver](#), PennWest University, Executive Director of Compliance and Title IX
- [Jerry Schearer](#) (co-chair), Kutztown University, Senior Associate Dean/Chief Diversity Officer; AVP & Dean of Students
- [Mandy Xu](#), Kutztown University, Assistant Director of Admissions

## 2026 PASSHE Summit Student Conference Committee

- [Alena Clark](#), PennWest Clarion, Assistant Director of CORE Initiatives
- [Savannah Dorsey](#), PennWest California, Assistant Director of CORE Initiatives
- [Christine Price](#), Kutztown University, Director, LGBTQ+ Resource Center
- [Melinda Quiñones](#), Kutztown University, Director, Multicultural Services