February 20, 2019

The Honorable Tom Wolf
Office of the Governor
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf,

I am writing on behalf of the Lancaster Chamber to request that capital funds be utilized to construct a combined dining hall and dormitory at Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology. The appropriation of $25 million will allow the College to increase its capacity to provide the educational opportunity to more deserving residents of the Commonwealth and to better meet the skilled employee needs of Pennsylvania's companies and address the skills gap that exists.

As a chamber representing nearly 1,600 businesses, we most often hear from them about their workforce challenges. As part of our 2019 Pro-Business Agenda we have one of our three top priorities focused on supporting legislation or policy that helps to meet the workforce demands of our employers.

Stevens is a critical resource in our community and for employers across Pennsylvania. Last year, over 1,400 employers sought graduates for over 3,000 jobs. Unfortunately, enrollment at Stevens is stymied due to the size of its dining hall and number of dormitory rooms. The current dining hall was built in the 1970's and holds 150 students. Current enrollment is over 1,200 students and campus housing is currently maxed out at 600. The College's request for a $25 million capital project will construct a combined 650 seat dining hall and 250 bed dormitory to address this capacity limiting issue.

If these options were in place, the College could easily lease space to expand existing programs and start new technical programs, allowing for enrollment to increase, if its appropriation was significantly increased and capacity was not limited.

We hope you will sincerely consider appropriating $25 million to increase capacity at Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology and, in doing so, meet the workforce needs of employers.

Sincerely,

Craig Kauffman
Chair, Board of Trustees
Lancaster Chamber