

REP. BRIAN SMITH, SEN. JOE PITTMAN CONFIRM SECOND \$1 MILLION GRANT FOR IUP PUNXSUTAWNEY CULINARY ARTS NEW EDUCATIONAL FACILITY CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

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INDIANA, Pa. -- On April 22, Rep. Brian Smith (R-Jefferson/Indiana) and Sen. Joe Pittman (R-41) confirmed Indiana University of Pennsylvania will receive a second \$1 million grant from the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) for IUP's Academy of Culinary Arts building project.

"IUP's Academy of Culinary Arts has a solid, well established track record for offering numerous career and trade programs that many local high school graduates take advantage of to prepare for future occupations in the hospitality industry," said Smith. "Our region is always in need of more highly-skilled professionals and this second round of state funding will allow for the completion of this culinary trend-setting, state-of-the-art facility to properly train students for the well-paying, family-sustaining jobs that are waiting to be filled right now."

The grant funding will help complete the construction of a new, 45,000-square foot education and multipurpose commercial site anchored in downtown Punxsutawney, with the facility to serve as the main educational, retail and experiential hub for students and the surrounding community.

"The new technology-focused culinary kitchens and laboratories will provide critical spaces for optimal learning of students. Exceptional lab spaces and classrooms will meet workforce needs for highly skilled culinary arts chefs and bakers," said Pittman. "This brings the total RACP and federal funding commitment for this project to \$2.75 million. I commend Rep. Smith and Congressman GT Thompson for their partnership in bringing these funds to this project as a united legislative team. It will be transformative to IUP and the borough of Punxsutawney."

Smith and Pittman previously worked with IUP officials to secure an initial \$1 million RACP grant in December 2021. These funds join RACP funds of \$250,000 secured in 2019 by Senator Joe Scarnati.

The RACP funds will be specifically used for capital costs, including part of the demolition, construction, renovation of property and buildings where classes will be held, as well as the permits and equipment necessary to move forward with all aspects of the project.

RACP is administered by the Office of the Budget for the acquisition and construction of regional economic, cultural, civic, recreational, and historical improvement projects. RACP projects must have a regional or multi-jurisdictional impact and generate substantial increases or maintain current levels of employment, tax revenues or other measures of economic activity.

"We value and appreciate our legislative partners and local and regional stakeholders, who have supported both the Academy and IUP Punxsutawney for many, many years," IUP President Dr. Michael Driscoll said. "We could not be successful without them."

“Expanding enrollment at the Academy of Culinary Arts, including investing in new and state-of-the-art facilities for current and prospective students in this nationally recognized program is part of our strategic direction for the university,” Driscoll said.

The Academy of Culinary Arts project, once completed, is expected to allow for an additional 50 to 70 full-time students annually. Since its founding in 1989, more than 4,200 students have studied in Punxsutawney at the Academy of Culinary Arts, which has continued to meet and exceed its enrollment goals.

“IUP is fully committed to Punxsutawney and the region,” he said. “The Academy of Culinary Arts is often described as a ‘hidden jewel.’ This master plan, which includes the expansion and modernization of our culinary facilities right in the heart of downtown Punxsutawney will help to ensure that this jewel is no longer hidden,” Driscoll said.

“Graduates of this program continue to be in high demand, working in four-star resorts and facilities, featured in national publications and even in nationally televised cooking competitions,” he said. “We anticipate that expanding the facilities will add to our anticipated enrollment growth and visibility of the Academy, as well as complementing and stimulating further development in downtown Punxsutawney.”

ABOUT THE ACADEMY OF CULINARY ARTS LONG-RANGE BUILDING PLAN

IUP’s Council of Trustees formally endorsed an updated Academy of Culinary Arts master plan at its March 17 meeting. This plan is focused on providing state-of-the-art facilities and providing new opportunities for increased enrollment at the Academy.

Significant updates to the original 2014 master plan were endorsed by the Council of Trustees in February 2018. This 2018 revised master plan reflected the intention to locate all of the educational facilities for the Academy to new or renovated buildings in downtown Punxsutawney adjacent to the Academy’s Fairman Centre along West Mahoning Street.

The 2018 master plan, and the 2022 update, recognizes that the Academy has outgrown its original 36-year-old building on Gilpin Street both in size and in instructional needs for current and future students. The recommendation in the master plan is that this facility does not continue to be used by the Academy of Culinary Arts. Specific plans for this property, or a timeline for when instruction will no longer take place at that building for Academy students, has not yet been determined.

Master plan updates also address full utilization of the properties in downtown Punxsutawney acquired or gifted to IUP in August 2018 and March 2021 along West Mahoning Street, all with a focus on improving the student educational experience. These buildings -- located at 105, 115, 117, 119 and 131 West Mahoning Street, will be razed as part of the master plan. The tentative timeline for demolition of these buildings has been set for 2023-2024.

The 2022 revisions to the master plan also include recommendations for enhanced use and increased impact of the Fairman Centre, more efficient planned space use within the culinary building (dual use kitchens), improved delivery vehicle access and vehicular traffic flow.

The new facility, as proposed in the master plan, would offer between 32,836 and 36,644 square feet of instructional space for Academy students.

A timeline for completion of the new facility has not yet been finalized.

ABOUT THE ACADEMY OF CULINARY ARTS FACILITIES

Students at the Academy of Culinary Arts have classes at the 36-year-old facility on Gilpin Street and at The Fairman Centre (the former J.B. Eberhart building) in downtown Punxsutawney, located at the corner of Mahoning and West Findley streets. Students also use classroom facilities at IUP Punxsutawney Living-Learning Center on Winslow Street.

The Fairman Centre was gifted to the Foundation for IUP by the Punxsutawney Regional Development Corporation and the Punxsutawney Chamber of Commerce in November 2006. After a year-long, \$4.7 million renovation, the building was repurposed with classrooms and teaching kitchens for the Academy of Culinary Arts and has been in use by the Academy since 2009. The first floor of the building is retail space.

The original Fairman Centre gift was made possible through a \$1.9 million gift from the Alan and Roy Fairman families, and the building is named in honor of the late Alan Fairman and the late Roy Fairman.

In 2018, the Foundation for IUP gifted buildings at 105, 115, 117 and 119 West Mahoning Street to IUP for the Academy of Culinary Arts building project. Buildings at 131 and 133 West Mahoning Street (the Dorothy Miller property) were acquired and gifted in part by building owners Jesse J. Miller and Duane A. Miller in 2021. All of these buildings are adjacent to the Fairman Centre.

PROJECT FUNDING

Funding for the overall project will come from state and federal funding, the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Capital Spending Plan, and private donations. Total cost for the project is estimated at \$20 million.

With the funding announcement made April 22, total funding received to date for the project totals \$6.11 million, which includes:

- Government funds of \$4.75 million
 - \$2.25 million from the Pennsylvania Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) program
 - \$2 million in demolition funds from the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Capital Spending plan
 - \$500,000 from the Fiscal Year 2022 Appropriations Bill, secured by Congressman Glenn “G.T.” Thompson (R-15), announced April 15
- Gifts in kind (buildings) of \$650,000
- Corporate and Foundation Gifts of \$450,000 from the Punxsutawney Area College Trust (PACT), the Fairman Family Foundation, the Hardy Family Trust in honor of 2002 Academy of Culinary Arts graduate Kristin Butterworth; and Symmco
- Individual gifts of \$260,000

Over the years, in total, PACT has provided more than \$1.2 million for IUP Punxsutawney and the IUP Academy of Culinary Arts.

The Academy of Culinary Arts educational building project was part of the university's Imagine Unlimited comprehensive campaign, which concluded in February 2021, raising \$81.4 million, more than \$6 million over its \$75 million goal, six months ahead of schedule. Private fundraising for the project is ongoing.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The 16-month program offered at the Academy of Culinary Arts is nationally recognized and accredited by the American Culinary Federation. After completing a final semester at a paid externship, graduates earn a certificate in culinary arts and can also complete a separate baking and pastry program through the Academy.

The Baking and Pastry Arts program became a stand-alone program in 2019 to allow for additional growth in this program. Academy of Culinary Arts graduates of either the Culinary Arts program or the Baking and Pastry program are eligible to complete an associate degree in Culinary Arts with an additional semester of study at IUP Punxsutawney. Students who successfully complete the Culinary Arts or the Baking and Pastry program also have the option to apply up to 38 credits toward a Bachelor of Science degree in hospitality management at IUP or 32 credits toward a Bachelor of Science degree in nutrition. Admission into the nutrition track is guaranteed for culinary graduates.

Graduates can also apply 21 credits toward a Bachelor of Science degree in education with a major in K–12 family and consumer sciences. Graduates of the program can choose to take advantage of applying their credits toward any of these bachelor's degree option any time within 10 years after culinary graduation.