

Sent on behalf of Nick Jones, Executive Vice President and Provost, and Lorraine Goffe, Vice President for Human Resources and Chief Human Resources Officer

Good morning,

Thank you for serving in an advisory role in support of the success of the two Penn State managed childcare centers, the Childcare Center at Hort Woods (Hort Woods), and the Bennett Family Center (BFC). The closures of these centers necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the work of reopening safely once the state orders for closure were lifted and public health safety measures were accounted for, has had an impact on every aspect of early childhood education at Penn State. Your guidance on the measures taken to ensure the safe reopening of the centers as well as your insights into the curriculum and classrooms experience during this unique time have been invaluable to our efforts to return to normal operations.

The primary charge of this committee continues to be the safe operation and stabilization of the centers. Now that the centers are in the stabilization phase, we must consider the future of early childhood education at Penn State. We face three important questions: (1) How can we best provide early childhood education in centers that are connected to a public university in a manner that is safe, effective, and compliant and (2) can, and how can, the expertise of the University benefit these centers; and (3) can, and how can, the centers support the University's education and research mission with respect to early childhood education and development? We also need to understand if the extent to which the options that best address each of these are complementary or exclusionary.

To begin addressing this overarching question, we are engaging a consultant to perform an environmental scan of the university-based centers and compile a report within the context of other higher education childcare models. This committee will then review the report and provide thoughts and opinions on the future of our centers, considering the three questions above. We appreciate that this committee has already begun work in this direction and want to both honor that and help direct those efforts with this decision. Any previous efforts performed within this committee will be foundational to this charge, and we hope the committee will partner with the consultant over the course of this work. Your expertise in our academic and research mission will be critical as we shape our centers' curriculum.

As executive co-sponsors for this effort, we would like to meet with you to review this charge and address any questions or concerns. Our offices will reach out to you this week to schedule a time to meet.

Thank you again for your dedication to the future of early childhood education here at Penn State.

Best regards,
Nick Jones and Lorraine Goffe