

**Neeli Bendapudi**  
**President, The Pennsylvania State University**  
**Biographical information**

## **Brief Biography**

Neeli Bendapudi has served as the nineteenth president of Penn State since May 2022, leading one of the nation's largest and most comprehensive universities with energy, clarity, and a deep commitment to student success. A nationally respected academic leader and former business executive, she brings more than thirty years of experience across higher education and industry.

Under her leadership, Penn State has achieved a balanced budget a year ahead of schedule, completed its most successful fundraising year ever in 2024-25, and reached new heights in research, intellectual property, and external engagement. She has accelerated interdisciplinary research, continued to build Penn State as a national leader in public impact and innovation, and initiated a multi-year reimagining of the Commonwealth Campus structure.

President Bendapudi previously served as president of the University of Louisville and held senior academic roles at the University of Kansas and The Ohio State University. She holds a Ph.D. in marketing from the University of Kansas, and her research on consumer behavior has appeared in top academic and professional journals.

Widely recognized for her visionary leadership and people-centered approach, she is a board member of the American Council on Education and Internet2, and a proud advocate for public higher education and the power it holds to transform lives.

## **Full Biography**

Neeli Bendapudi became Penn State's nineteenth president in May 2022, bringing a deep commitment to student success and a bold vision for operational excellence, interdisciplinary research leadership, and inclusive academic achievement. An accomplished scholar and leader, she oversees a dynamic institution with campuses across the commonwealth and a top-ranked online World Campus, advancing the University's land-grant mission of teaching, research, and public service.

Since her arrival, President Bendapudi has led one of the most transformational periods in Penn State's modern history. In just over three years, President Bendapudi has:

- **Balanced the University's budget** one year ahead of schedule, completing one of the most significant financial turnarounds.
- **Oversaw the most successful fundraising year ever** for the University in 2024-25, securing more than \$560 million in philanthropic commitments—including a record seventeen principal gifts of \$5 million or more.

- **Advanced Penn State’s research enterprise**, with record-breaking expenditures in 2023-24, top-ten rankings across disciplines, and a nationally recognized commitment to public impact research, innovation, and corporate engagement. She currently co-chairs The Pew Charitable Trusts’ Presidents and Chancellors Council on Public Impact Research.
- **Initiated a multi-year reimagining of the Commonwealth Campus structure.**

President Bendapudi brings deep experience across higher education and business. Prior to joining Penn State, she served as president of the University of Louisville, where she led record enrollment gains, increased research activity, improved graduation rates, stabilized the university’s finances and health system, and expanded its reputation nationally. She has also served as provost and executive vice chancellor and as dean of the School of Business at the University of Kansas, and held faculty and leadership roles at Texas A&M, The Ohio State University, and the University of Kansas.

Outside higher education, she served as executive vice president and chief customer officer for Huntington National Bank and has consulted for some of the world’s largest companies, including AIG, Procter & Gamble, and the U.S. Army.

Her academic research focuses on consumer behavior in service contexts, with an emphasis on customer relationships with brands, employees, and institutions. Her work has been published in premier journals, including the *Journal of Marketing*, *Harvard Business Review*, and the *Journal of Academic Medicine*.

President Bendapudi earned her bachelor’s degree in English and her MBA from Andhra University in India, and her Ph.D. in marketing from the University of Kansas. She is a member of the International Women’s Forum, a board member of the American Council on Education and Internet2, and a former Leadership Foundation Fellow.

She has been widely recognized for her leadership and contributions to higher education and business, including:

- Induction into the University of Kansas Women’s Hall of Fame
- Academy of Marketing Science Outstanding Marketing Teacher Award
- Named among “25 Women Who Are Making a Difference in the Academy” by *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*
- Recognized as one of *Enterprising Women’s* leaders making an impact in business and community
- Named among Louisville Business First’s “Most Admired CEOs”

President Bendapudi is known for her energy, optimism, and clarity of purpose. She leads with empathy, discipline, and resolve—and is deeply committed to the students and communities Penn State serves.