



Penn State President Neeli Bendapudi

Biographical information

Brief Biography

Neeli Bendapudi, an accomplished scholar, imaginative problem solver and leader known for her student-centric approach, began her tenure as the 19th president of the Pennsylvania State University on May 9, 2022. Previously, Bendapudi served as president of the University of Louisville.

Bendapudi is a dedicated educator, researcher and business executive with a nearly 30-year career spanning higher education and the corporate sector. She leads Penn State's 24-campus network and top-ranked online World Campus with a focus on advancing excellence and creating opportunities for students, faculty and staff to thrive.

Among her leadership experiences, Bendapudi has served as provost and executive vice chancellor at the University of Kansas, dean of the School of Business at the University of Kansas and as founding director of the Initiative for Managing Services at the Ohio State University (OSU). In addition to consulting for some of the world's largest companies and organizations, she was the executive vice president and chief customer officer for Huntington National Bank.

With a background in the study of consumer behavior in service contexts, her research focuses on customers' willingness to maintain long-term relationships with firms and with the brands and employees that represent them. Bendapudi has been recognized for contributions in her field and has been honored at the national and university levels. She has taught marketing at the University of Louisville, University of Kansas, Texas A&M University and OSU.

Bendapudi earned her bachelor's degree in English and MBA from Andhra University in India and her doctorate in marketing from the University of Kansas.

Full Biography

Neeli Bendapudi has served as the 19th president of the Pennsylvania State University since May 9, 2022. With a nearly 30-year career in academia, President Bendapudi is committed to student success, fostering inclusive excellence, and creating opportunities for students, faculty and staff to thrive.

Raised in India, Bendapudi moved to the United States to pursue her doctoral studies at the University of Kansas and to launch her career as an academic leader and educator.

Prior to coming to Penn State, where she leads the University's 24-campus network and top-ranked online World Campus, Bendapudi was president of the University of Louisville from May 2018 to December 2021. During this time, she oversaw a series of transformative efforts spanning academics; finance; the health enterprise; philanthropy; athletics; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and more. Under her leadership, the university recruited its largest and most diverse freshman class, reached record enrollment levels, improved four-year graduation rates, increased annual sponsored research, improved the university's financial stability and stabilized the health system.

Among her professional achievements, Bendapudi has served as provost and executive vice chancellor at the University of Kansas from 2016 to 2018, dean of the School of Business at the University of Kansas from 2011 to 2016, and as founding director of the Initiative for Managing Services at the Ohio State University (OSU) from 2005 to 2011. As an educator, she has taught marketing at the University of Louisville, University of Kansas, Texas A&M University and OSU.

In addition to her higher education leadership experience, Bendapudi previously served as executive vice president and chief customer officer for Huntington National Bank and has consulted for some of the world's largest companies and organizations, including AIG, Proctor & Gamble and the U.S. Army.

With a background in the study of consumer behavior in service contexts, her research focuses on customers' willingness to maintain long-term relationships with firms and with the brands and employees that represent them. Her work has been published in the Journal of Academic Medicine, Harvard Business Review, Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of Retailing and Journal of Service Research.

Bendapudi has been recognized for contributions in her field and has been honored at the national and university levels, including with the Academy of Marketing Science Outstanding Marketing Teacher Award. In 2014, she was inducted into the University of Kansas' Womens Hall of Fame, which recognizes individuals for significant contributions and achievements, overall impact, and outstanding character.

In addition, Diverse Issues in Higher Education referenced Bendapudi as one of 25 women "who have made a difference in the academy" (2021), Enterprising Women recognized her among a select group of women who "are making a difference in business and in the community" (2021), and Louisville Business First highlighted Bendapudi among 25 local leaders named to the publication's annual list of "Most Admired CEOs" for strong leadership exhibited during a year of unprecedented challenges (2020).

Along with her professional endeavors, Bendapudi is a Leadership Foundation Fellow, member of the International Women's Forum, and serves on the boards of the American Council on Education and Internet2.0.

Bendapudi earned her bachelor's degree in English and MBA from Andhra University in India and her doctorate in marketing from the University of Kansas.