

PA Chamber Higher Education Summit

Presented in Partnership with

SJ STEPTOE & JOHNSON
PLLC

September 10, 2026 | 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. | Rock Lititz Campus

AGENDA

- 9:00 A.M.** **Registration, Breakfast & Networking**
- 9:30 A.M.** **Welcome Remarks**
- Luke Bernstein, President and CEO, PA Chamber
- 9:35 A.M.** **Opening Presentation: How Rock Lititz Is Revolutionizing Workforce Development**
- Andrea Shirk, President and CEO, Rock Lititz
- 9:45 A.M.** **Fireside Chat: *Lessons from the Live Entertainment Talent Pipeline***
- 10:05 A.M.** **Panel: *Aligning Higher Education with Workforce Needs***
- Explore how higher education institutions, employers, and state government can collaborate to close skills gaps, expand experiential learning opportunities, and ensure students graduate with workforce-ready skills. This session will also examine the role of artificial intelligence and how demographic shifts are reshaping higher education's role as an economic driver in the Commonwealth.
- 11:05 A.M.** **Refreshment Break**
- 11:15 A.M.** **Panel: *Navigating State and Federal Policy Impacts***
- Higher education institutions are operating in an increasingly complex policy environment shaped by federal and state decisions on funding, immigration, regulation, and campus governance. At the same time, institutions face growing pressure to control costs, maintain access and affordability, and foster environments that welcome diverse viewpoints. This panel will examine the policy forces impacting higher education today and what institutional leaders should be preparing for next.
- 12:15 P.M.** **Fireside Chat: *Degrees That Deliver – Accountability Through Outcomes***
- This fireside chat between Kelly McManus, Executive Vice President of Education at Arnold Ventures, and Penn State President Neeli Bendapudi will explore how higher education can better align academic programs with the evolving needs of today's workforce. The conversation will focus on improving student outcomes, strengthening accountability, and ensuring institutions deliver real value to students, employers, and the broader economy.
- 1:00 P.M.** **Lunch & Networking**
- 1:30 P.M.** **Adjourn**

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS



Kelly McManus, Executive Vice President of Education, Arnold Ventures

Kelly McManus leads Arnold Ventures' education team, driving efforts to increase the return on investment in the education system for both students and taxpayers. Under Kelly's leadership, the team manages a portfolio of research, policy, advocacy, and litigation investments to create lasting policy change. She has grown Arnold Ventures' education portfolio with a strong focus on accountability, value, and return on investment in education, while building support for evidence-based policies at both the state and federal levels.

Kelly's work spans two decades of experience across K-12 and higher education, including initiatives that connect education and workforce development to economic mobility and stability. She is engaged in career pathways work, ensuring multiple routes to economic security. Her expertise also extends to exploring how K-12 education and workforce policies can drive opportunity and equity nationwide.

Prior to joining Arnold Ventures, Kelly served as the director of government affairs for EdTrust, directing strategy and legislative advocacy across early childhood, K-12 education, higher education, and appropriations issues. Before coming to Washington, D.C., she worked extensively in state-level education policy and advocacy in Arizona and served as a middle school English teacher with Teach For America in Philadelphia.

Kelly earned a master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania and a bachelor's degree in political science from Wake Forest University.



Neeli Bendapudi, President, Penn State

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 proud advocate for public higher education and the power it holds to transform lives.