ABOUT PENN STATE

Mission
The Pennsylvania State University is a multi-campus, land-grant, public
research University that educates students from around the world, and
supports individuals and communities through integrated programs of
teaching, research, and service.

Our instructional mission includes undergraduate, graduate, professional,
continuing, and extension education, offered through both resident
instruction and distance learning. Our educational programs are enriched
by the talent, knowledge, diversity, creativity, and teaching and research
acumen of our faculty, students, and staff.

Our discovery-oriented, collaborative, and interdisciplinary research
and scholarship promote human and economic development, global
understanding, and advancement in professional practice through the
expansion of knowledge and its applications in the natural and applied
sciences, social and behavioral sciences, engineering, technology, arts
and humanities, and myriad professions.

As Pennsylvania’s land-grant university, we provide unparalleled
access to education and public service to support the citizens of the
Commonwealth and beyond. We engage in collaborative activities with
private sector, educational, and governmental partners worldwide to
generate, integrate, apply, and disseminate knowledge that is valuable to
society.

History
As Pennsylvania’s only land-grant university, Penn State has a broad
mission of teaching, research, and public service. But that mission was
not so grandly conceived in 1855, when the Commonwealth chartered it
as one of the nation’s first colleges of agricultural science, with a goal to
apply scientific principles to farming.

Centre County became the site of the new college in response to a
gift of 200 acres from gentleman farmer and ironmaster James Irvin
of Bellefonte. Founding President Evan Pugh drew on the scientific
education he had received in Europe to plan a curriculum that combined
theoretical studies with practical applications.

Pugh and similar visionaries in other states championed Congressional
passage of the Morrill Land-Grant Act in 1862. The act enabled states
to sell federal land, invest the proceeds, and use the income to support
colleges “where the leading object shall be, without excluding scientific
and classical studies ... to teach agriculture and the mechanic arts
[engineering] ... in order to promote the liberal and practical education
of the industrial classes in all the pursuits and professions of life.” The
state legislature designated Penn State the land-grant institution of
Pennsylvania.

But not until the 1880s, under the leadership of President George W.
Atherton, did the college expand its curriculum to match the Land-Grant
Act’s broad mandate. From that time onward, curricula in engineering, the
sciences, the liberal arts, and more began to flourish. In the early 1900s,
Penn State introduced cooperative extension and additional outreach
programming, extending the reach of its academic mission.

An even greater segment of the Commonwealth’s population had
opportunities for engagement in the 1930s when Penn State established
a series of undergraduate branch campuses, primarily to meet the needs
of students who were location-bound during the Great Depression.

Those campuses were predecessors of today’s system of 24 Penn State
campuses located throughout the Commonwealth.

Penn State began offering systematic advanced-degree work in 1922 with
the formation of the Graduate School. Graduate education and research
evolved hand in hand. By 1950 the University had won international
distinction for investigations in dairy science, building insulation, diesel
engines, and acoustics, and other specialized fields.

A college of medicine and teaching hospital were established in 1967
with a $50 million gift from the charitable trusts of renowned chocolate
magnate Milton S. Hershey. In 1989 the Pennsylvania College of
Technology in Williamsport became an affiliate of the University. Penn
State’s online World Campus graduated its first students in 2000 and now
enrolls more than 12,000. Also in 2000, Penn State and the Dickinson
School of Law merged. In 2015, two Penn State law schools, Dickinson
Law (in Carlisle, Pennsylvania) and Penn State Law (on University Park
campus) were established.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT UNIVERSITY HISTORY (https://
www.psu.edu/this-is-penn-state/history/)