



President Graham B. Spanier

Biography



Graham Spanier was appointed Penn State’s 16th president in 1995. His prior positions include chancellor of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, provost and vice president for academic affairs at Oregon State University, and vice provost for undergraduate studies at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He previously

served Penn State from 1973-1982 as a member of the faculty and in three administrative positions in the College of Health and Human Development. He holds academic appointments as professor of human development and family studies, sociology, demography, and family and community medicine.

A distinguished researcher and scholar, he has more than 100 scholarly publications, including 10 books, and was the founding editor of the *Journal of Family Issues*. A family sociologist, demographer, and marriage and family therapist, he earned his Ph.D. in sociology from Northwestern University, where he was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Iowa State University, where he has been honored with the Distinguished Achievement Citation. Dr. Spanier is the recipient of three honorary doctorates.

A national leader in higher education, Dr. Spanier was the first university president to receive the Theodore M. Hesburgh Award for Leadership Excellence. He serves as chair of the National Security Higher Education Advisory Board, is a member of the National Counterintelligence Working Group, and serves on the Board of Advisors of the Naval Postgraduate School and the Naval War College. Dr. Spanier has been honored as one of the “Most Influential People in Security.” He is a member of the Board of Governors of Junior Achievement Worldwide and is chair of the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) Presidential Oversight Board.

He was given the American Institute of Architects Award for Contribution to the Profession by a Non-Architect.

Dr. Spanier has chaired the Association of American Universities, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, the Big Ten Conference Council of Presidents/Chancellors, and the NCAA Division I Board of Directors. He led the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, was a founding member of the Internet2 Board, and served on the Board of Trustees of the National 4-H Council. He was president of the National Council of Family Relations, chairman of the Board of Directors of Child Fund International, vice-chair of the Worldwide Universities Network, and co-chair of the Committee on Higher Education and the Entertainment Communities.

Dr. Spanier has been described as an unconventional university president. He loves spending time with students. He is a magician and has performed with Penn State’s Musical Theatre students, the Blue Band, the Glee Club, and the Chamber Orchestra. He occasionally substitutes for the Nittany Lion mascot. He has run with the bulls in Pamplona, has a commercial pilot’s license, and plays the washboard with the Deacons of Dixieland and other bands. He and his racquetball partner are the eleven-time Penn State co-ed intramural racquetball champions. He is the host of “To the Best of My Knowledge,” the live, call-in program on public television and radio, and “Expert Opinion,” the sports topic program on the Big Ten Network. But most of his time is spent overseeing one of the nation’s largest and most comprehensive universities, with 96,000 students on 24 campuses, an annual budget of \$4.3 billion, and a physical plant of 1,700 buildings. He has overseen \$3 billion in philanthropic contributions to Penn State.

His wife, Sandra, is an English professor specializing in 20th-century American literature and serves as the general editor of Hemingway’s letters. They have two children: Brian, a finance graduate of Penn State, and Hadley, a marketing graduate of Penn State.

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