

An Overview from Past and Present

Lehigh University is independent, nondenominational, and coeducational. Founded in 1865 as a predominantly technical four-year school, the university now has approximately 7,200 undergraduate and graduate students. There are five colleges: the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Business, the P. C. Rossin College of Engineering and Applied Science, the College of Education (graduate), and the newest, the College of Health, which welcomed its inaugural class during the 2020-21 academic year. Lehigh students come from nearly every state and U.S. territory and more than 40 foreign nations.

The university is primarily situated on the Asa Packer Campus on the north slope of South Mountain overlooking Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Sayre Park, the wooded refuge located toward the top of the mountain, is the setting for many living groups. The residences are reached via winding private roads. Many residential units on campus command a panoramic view of the Lehigh Valley. The Appalachians are visible to the west, with an especially good view from The Lookout on the Packer Campus. Both the tower and dining room in Iacocca Hall on the Mountaintop Campus afford panoramic views of the Lehigh Valley. The campus at its highest point is 971 feet above sea level.

A substantial portion of the upper level of Lehigh's campus is maintained as a nature preserve. The preserve supports deer, squirrels, chipmunks, raccoons, wild turkeys, and other birds.

Besides the Asa Packer Campus, the university has extensive athletic fields and facilities on the Murray H. Goodman Campus, two miles to the south in Saucon Valley. The university acquired the Mountaintop Campus in 1986; it links the Packer and Goodman campuses. In 2012, the university received a gift from the Donald B. and Dorothy L. Stabler Foundation: 755 acres in nearby Upper Saucon Township. That brought total land holdings to 2,358 acres, making Lehigh one of the largest private universities in the country.

The board of trustees and university officers have established and enforce policies designed to preserve Lehigh's natural beauty. It is their contention that the environment in which the young adult university student pursues knowledge can make the total educational experience more meaningful, and that the ideal environment is separate and unique from the distractions of the nonacademic community.

There are approximately 540 full-time members of the faculty, teaching a total of more than 2,000 course titles (not all of which are offered every semester). Among faculty members who are tenured and to whom the university has a permanent commitment, nearly all hold the doctorate degree (typically Ph.D. or Sc.D.).

In total, there are more than 2,000 employees of the university, making it the second-largest employer in the community.