

Dr. Rai Kathuria is a visionary higher education leader with more than two decades of experience guiding public university systems and comprehensive institutions across the Midwest and Northeast. Currently serving as Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at Empire State University, he provides strategic leadership that advances academic excellence, operational sustainability, and innovation in teaching and learning. His career spans leadership roles in some of the nation's largest public higher education systems, where he has led organizational renewal, championed shared governance, and built collaborative cultures rooted in integrity, inclusion, and student success.

Dr. Kathuria holds a Ph.D. in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry and executive training from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. A national peer reviewer for quality assurance and accreditation, he brings both scholarly depth and strategic executive acumen. Throughout his career, he has guided major externally funded initiatives and built partnerships linking K–12 education, healthcare, industry, and state agencies to expand opportunity in high-demand fields. Recognized for equity-driven leadership grounded in deep respect for students and communities, Dr. Kathuria leads with the conviction that higher education's greatest promise lies in expanding opportunity and transforming lives.