

Karen A. Thole, Ph.D.

**Department Head and Distinguished Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering,
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Karen A. Thole serves as the head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Pennsylvania State University and also holds the title of Distinguished Professor. At Penn State, Dr. Thole founded and directs the Steady Thermal Aero Research Turbine (START) Lab. Her area of expertise is turbine cooling and using additive manufacturing to develop innovative cooling technologies. She has published over 220 archival papers and advised 70 dissertations and theses. She and her students have been recognized numerous times by ASME with best paper and best presentation awards.

Dr. Thole has provided service leadership to numerous organizations including being a member of ASME's Board of Governors. She has also served as the Chair of the Board of Directors for the ASME's International Gas Turbine Institute in which she led a number of initiatives to promote communities of women engineers and students. In her roles as an educator, researcher, and mentor, Dr. Thole has received numerous awards. The most notable awards include, being recognized by the United States White House as a Champion of Change for STEM. She has been recognized by Penn State's Rosemary Schraer Mentoring Award and Howard B. Palmer Faculty Mentoring Award. She was recognized in 2014 by the Society of Women Engineers' Distinguished Engineering Educator Award and in 2016 by ASME's Edwin F. Church Medal ASME's George Westinghouse Medal. In 2017, she received ABET's Claire L. Felbinger Award for her work in diversifying engineering.

Dr. Thole holds two degrees in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a PhD from the University of Texas at Austin.