Nancy Cantor is Chancellor of Rutgers University – Newark, a post she assumed in January 2014.

A distinguished leader in higher education, she is recognized nationally and internationally as an advocate for re-emphasizing its public mission. This entails a view of the university not as a traditional "ivory tower," but as a public good, an anchor institution that collaborates with partners from all sectors of the economy to fulfill higher education's promise as an engine of discovery, innovation, and social mobility. After leading a highly inclusive and democratic strategic visioning process at Rutgers University – Newark, in September 2014 Chancellor Cantor released the institution's first strategic plan, which is designed to leverage the institution's many strengths, particularly its role as an anchor institution in Greater Newark and its exceptional diversity.
Prior to her current position, Cantor was Chancellor and President of Syracuse University, where she led multi-faceted initiatives that built on the university's historical strengths, pursuing cross-sector collaborations in the City of Syracuse that simultaneously enriched scholarship and education, spurring transformation of that older industrial city. These local engagements in areas such as environmental sustainability; art, technology, and design; neighborhood and cultural entrepreneurship; and urban school reform demonstrated the impact and importance of engaged scholarship and the inter-connectedness of the pressing issues of our world.

The breadth, depth, and success of these efforts earned Chancellor Cantor the 2008 Carnegie Corporation Academic Leadership Award. They also earned Syracuse the distinction of being among the first institutions to earn the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's classification as a university committed to Community Engagement and annual distinction on the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.

Chancellor Cantor lectures and writes extensively on the role of universities as anchor institutions in their communities, along with other crucial issues in higher education such as rewarding public scholarship, sustainability, liberal education and the creative campus, the status of women in the academy, and racial justice and diversity. Her thought is informed by broad leadership experience at all levels within public and private universities. She has brought these combined experiences and domains of expertise to bear on her work as co-chair of the American Commonwealth Partnership's Presidents Council, a member of the Steering Committee of the Anchor Institutions Task Force, and former co-chair of the Central New York Regional Economic Development Council, a post to which she was appointed by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo.

Prior to her appointment at Syracuse, Cantor served as chancellor of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at the University of Michigan, after having served as dean of Michigan's Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies and vice provost for academic affairs; professor of psychology and senior research scientist

at the Institute for Social Research at Michigan; and chair of the department of psychology at Princeton University.

While at Michigan, she was closely involved in the university's defense of affirmative action in the cases Grutter and Gratz, decided by the Supreme Court in 2003. A leading voice on inclusion, diversity, and full participation, she speaks and writes frequently on these issues. She has served as Principal Investigator on a National Science Foundation ADVANCE Institutional Transformation grant, and on national bodies including The Century Foundation Task Force on Preventing Community Colleges from Becoming Separate and Unequal, the National Research Council Advisory Committee for the Office of Scientific and Engineering Personnel and as co-chair of its Committee on Women in Science and Engineering, the Congressional Commission on Military Training and Gender Related Issues, and the Steering Committee of the Ford Foundation project Building Knowledge for Social Justice.

In her role as a social psychologist, Chancellor Cantor is recognized for her scholarly contributions to the understanding of how individuals perceive and think about their social worlds, pursue personal goals, and how they regulate their behavior to adapt to life's most challenging social environments.

An author of numerous books, chapters, and scientific journal articles, Chancellor Cantor holds an A.B. from Sarah Lawrence College and a Ph.D. in Psychology from Stanford University. Her academic work has been supported by the National Science Foundation, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Ewing Marion Kaufmann Foundation, and Carnegie Corporation of New York, among many others.

She is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences. Among the boards of which Cantor currently is a member are the American Institutes for Research, the New York Academy of Sciences, the University of California at Davis Board of Advisers, and the Say Yes to Education Foundation. Among the awards that Cantor has received are the Distinguished Scientific Award for an Early Career Contribution to Psychology from the American Psychological Association, the Woman of Achievement Award from the Anti-Defamation League, the Making a Difference for Women Award from the National Council for Research on Women, the Reginald Wilson Diversity Leadership Award from the American Council on Education, and the Frank W. Hale, Jr. Diversity Leadership Award from the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education.