



Dean and President  
Seminary of the Southwest  
Austin, Texas

## THE OPPORTUNITY

Seminary of the Southwest (the Seminary or SSW) in Austin, Texas seeks a creative, inspiring, and faithful Episcopal leader to serve as its next Dean and President. As the only fully residential Episcopal seminary west of the Mississippi River, SSW attracts students from throughout the United States to pursue degrees and certificates in divinity, mental health counseling, religion, spiritual direction, and chaplaincy.

Guided by its mission to form people for vocations of ministry, service, and healing, Seminary of the Southwest responds with clarity and action to the needs of the church and all the communities it serves. By preparing both ordained and lay leaders, clinically trained counselors, chaplains, and spiritual directors – as well as providing broad resources for local theological formation nationwide – SSW stands at the edge of an exciting frontier where the Gospel meets the culture.

Appointed by the Board of Trustees, the Dean and President serves as the chief executive officer of the institution and is responsible for all aspects of seminary life, including academic affairs, alumni relations, financial management, fundraising, recruitment and admission of students, and interaction with the community, the broader church, and the world. The successful candidate will bring integrity, pastoral presence, strategic clarity, visionary imagination, strong fundraising aptitude, and mature executive competence to guide Seminary of the Southwest towards a bold and sustainable future.

The executive recruiting firm Isaacson, Miller has been retained to support the President and Dean search committee and the Seminary's board of trustees. Confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the firm as indicated at the conclusion of this document.

## SEMINARY OF THE SOUTHWEST

Established in 1952 by the Rt. Rev. John Elbridge Hines, the fourth Bishop of Texas and twenty-second Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church, [Seminary of the Southwest](#) was born from the need to educate more Episcopal priests during a period of rapid postwar growth in The Episcopal Church. Bishop Hines'

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vision was expansive: to create a seminary for “the whole church...centered around dialogue between the Christian faith and culture.”

As one of nine graduate theological institutions, and five residential seminaries, in The Episcopal Church, Seminary of the Southwest offers a three-year, residential Master of Divinity degree, and is made unique among its peers by its [Master of Clinical Mental Health Counseling](#) degree and commitment to local formation through the [Iona Collaborative](#). For more than four decades Seminary of the Southwest has also offered [Latinx studies](#) as part of its curriculum. All students who attend the Seminary engage in curricular and co-curricular experiences that ground their formation for ministry and/or counseling contextually in the unique communal, ethnic, and cultural realities of the individuals and communities they will serve, with particular attention to those historically marginalized or underserved.

SSW offers a tranquil campus with modern facilities in the heart of a vibrant city. Shaded by the huge, stately live oak trees that are an icon of Austin and situated on the north edge of the University of Texas campus, SSW provides both the advantages of a close, familiar community and those of a dynamic, world-class city.

Seminary of the Southwest stands boldly at the intersection of tradition and innovation. Rooted in the celebration of the theology, liturgy, and rich history of The Episcopal Church, SSW is a living laboratory for the powerful opportunities and creative solutions that will help the church thrive for generations.

To learn more about the history of Seminary of the Southwest, please follow this [link](#).

## Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Rooted in the reconciling ministry of Christ, the [mission](#) of Seminary of the Southwest is to form people for vocations of ministry, service, and healing.

### Vision

The insight and creativity with which Seminary of the Southwest engages the Christian tradition with the reality of the contemporary world makes it a leader among institutions of higher learning, both within and beyond The Episcopal Church. Sustained by innovative teaching and research, SSW forms servant leaders who minister in a diverse culture with confidence and humility. The Seminary has the financial and spiritual capacity to discern and develop new programs to advance God’s mission of healing and reconciliation.

### Core Values

The Seminary’s core values describe what the institution stands for and believes in:

- **Hospitality:** creating a common life that welcomes difference and ensures that all voices are heard.

- **Conversation:** listening to and critically engaging a variety of cultural and religious voices in order to commend the Christian tradition and discover fresh wisdom.
- **Mutuality:** nurturing a collaborative environment that promotes mutual inquiry and accountability.
- **Respect:** cultivating the virtues of patience, justice, and charity, so as to affirm the dignity of every member of the community.
- **Rootedness:** embodying the richness of the Episcopal and Anglican traditions in particular contexts, especially that of the American Southwest and its Hispanic cultures.
- **Celebration:** glorifying and enjoying God in worship, prayer, study, service, and fellowship, to create a community of gratitude and gift.

## PROGRAMS

The programs at Seminary of the Southwest follow a path focused on three areas of formation: **being, knowing, and doing**. The Seminary's foundational attention to academic excellence (knowing) is complemented by attention to dispositions (being) and skills (doing). Each program seeks to produce well-rounded, thoughtful graduates who have become not only proficient in a field of study but wise and charitable practitioners.

### Theological Education and Formation (full-time, in-person/residential)

- Master of Divinity (MDiv)
- Master of Divinity, with concentration in Latinx Ministry
- Master of Divinity, with concentration in Chaplaincy
- Master of Arts in Religion (MAR)
- Master of Arts in Spiritual Direction (MSD)
- Diploma in Anglican Studies (DAS)

### Clinical Mental Health Counseling (part-time and full-time, evening/in-person)

- Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (MACMHC)
- Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, with concentration in Latinx Counseling

### Iona Collaborative (Lay and Ordained Theological Formation and Continuing Education)

- Certificate in Theological Studies

## ROLE OF DEAN AND PRESIDENT

The Dean and President of Seminary of the Southwest is the chief executive officer of the institution and is responsible for all aspects of seminary life, including academic affairs, alumni relations, financial management, fundraising, recruitment and admission of students, and interaction with the community, the broader church, and the world. The Dean and President oversees a \$10 million budget and leads a student body of 119, a faculty of 22 (17 full-time), and an administrative staff of 44 (30 full-time). The

Dean and President also works closely with the seminary’s board of trustees, which establishes policies and ensures the institution’s alignment with its mission.

In addition to the core administrative and academic duties of the role, the Dean and President also leads the Seminary’s engagement in the work of realizing the beloved community locally and acting for justice and human dignity beyond campus. The Dean and President models integrity, visionary leadership for theological education in the Episcopal Church, and a passionate commitment to institutional innovation, sustainability, and thriving.

### Key Relationships

**Reports to** Board of Trustees, Seminary of the Southwest

**Direct Reports** Executive Vice President and CFO  
 Dean for Academic Affairs  
 Vice President of Advancement and Communications  
 Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Services  
 Dean’s Office Administrative Assistant  
 Director of Community Worship  
 Director of Assessment

**Chaired Committees** President’s Cabinet  
 Dean’s Council  
 Faculty and Administrative Council  
 Worship Committee  
 Chapel Assessment Committee

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

As Seminary of the Southwest looks to its future, the Dean and President will address the following interrelated opportunities and challenges as key priorities.

### **Serve as a standard-bearer for SSW’s core values and founding vision as a “seminary for the whole church.”**

Seminary of the Southwest is a strong and resilient community united in a shared mission. Warmth, kindness, hospitality, connection, a spirit of mutual support, and abiding commitments to anti-racism, inclusion, belonging, and justice are core to the Seminary’s identity. The next Dean and President will proactively build trust internally and externally across all constituent groups and prioritize institutional stability, spiritual and communal vitality, and a welcoming and nurturing institutional culture.

### **Develop a compelling and imaginative vision for the future of Seminary of the Southwest.**

Bishop Hines’s founding vision has never been more relevant. As contemporary culture and the needs of the church and society evolve rapidly, the next Dean and President will oversee the spiritual health and

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wellness of SSW and lead the Seminary in preparing graduates to be advocates for justice and hope in the communities they will be called to serve. Through the Seminary's Master of Divinity program and the Iona Collaborative, SSW remains deeply committed to its core mission of theological formation for current and future clergy and lay leaders in the Episcopal Church. The Seminary's program in clinical mental health counseling, which has experienced rapid growth, reflects the Seminary's commitment to the spiritually informed work of healing and justice in the world more broadly. The Dean and President will carefully attend to the distinctive natures of these unique programs as well as opportunities for mutually enriching collaborations. The successful candidate will build on the Seminary's tradition of innovation to lead the development of a new strategic plan that conveys a cohesive, forward-looking vision for the next chapter of the Seminary.

### **Lead strategic fundraising efforts and ensure the ongoing financial strength of SSW.**

The Dean and President must embrace the role of lead catalyst for the Seminary's strategic fundraising, including inspiring and empowering the collaborative efforts of key stakeholders across the institution. The Dean and President must be an effective communicator and savvy relationship builder committed to actively engaging and cultivating alumni, individual and institutional donors, diocesan leaders, and other existing and potential partners as supporters of the institution. With the growth of the Seminary, needs for student housing and scholarship support have increased. The fundraising strategy must also be informed by the unique needs of the Counseling Program and Iona Collaborative in addition to the Seminary's core operations and the signature MDiv program. The successful candidate will have the executive acumen necessary to work closely with the EVP and CFO, VP for Advancement, and others to attend closely to key institutional priorities including building the endowment, increasing ongoing philanthropic support, and preparing for the next capital campaign.

### **Sustain and build upon academic excellence.**

Seminary of the Southwest is distinctive in its approach to theological and counselor education and formation. Exceptional faculty and staff lead curricula rooted in practical ministry to form ordained and lay leaders grounded in Episcopal sacramental life while addressing contemporary questions in their home communities and across the church. Similarly, the Seminary's clinical mental health counseling program is unique in its spiritually informed and justice-centered framework. The next Dean and President will continue to prioritize the recruitment and retention of the most talented, committed, and values-aligned faculty and staff across its programs.

Technology has significantly increased the Seminary's reach, particularly through the integration of the Iona Collaborative, which now partners with 32 Episcopal dioceses across the United States to offer non-degree continuing theological education and spiritual formation for clergy and lay leaders. The next Dean and President will continue to expand these investments and lead the Iona Collaborative to address the needs of local formation and small churches throughout The Episcopal Church.

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## **Champion a culture of innovation, strategic growth, and constructive collaboration across the Seminary and its portfolio of programs.**

The Seminary's increased national visibility and reach, the growth and popularity of the Counseling Program, expanded and renewed facilities, and the integration of the Iona Collaborative's local formation programs reflect SSW's culture of innovation and commitment to strategic, mission-aligned growth in scope and impact. The Dean and President will lead the SSW's healthy continued growth consistent with the Seminary's mission. The successful candidate will work with the board, faculty, and staff to support a cohesive institutional identity that honors the distinctiveness of the Seminary's program offerings while also facilitating and encouraging mutually enriching interactions across program areas. Undergirding these efforts must be a compelling marketing, recruitment and enrollment strategy that excites potential students and clearly differentiates the Seminary's positions as a leader in theological and counselor education as well as local formation for ministry and continuing education.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The successful candidate will embody most, if not all, of the following professional qualifications and personal qualities:

- Experience as a leader in the Episcopal Church with a demonstrated commitment to the church's mission and theological tradition; a commitment to and alignment with the Seminary's mission and core values.
- A commitment to excellence in scholarship and quality graduate-level education and formation of the highest caliber.
- Demonstrated experience leading academic, financial, and operational functions within a shared governance model; including experience reporting to a board of trustees.
- Demonstrated ability to guide the development and execution of a compelling and comprehensive strategic plan for the Seminary.
- Exceptional written and oral communication, and interpersonal skills; the ability to inspire and engage diverse constituents, facilitate buy-in, and represent the Seminary effectively in various settings.
- An unwavering commitment to and demonstrated leadership expertise with issues related to diversity, equity, access, inclusion, and justice institutionally and in the broader society.
- Enthusiasm for and quantifiable success as a fundraiser; a willingness to be actively involved in donor cultivation, and the aptitude to develop and sustain durable relationships with donors and other stakeholders for the benefit of the institution.
- An appreciation for counselor education and the importance of spiritually informed mental health providers and resources in the communities served by our graduates.
- Demonstrated experience recruiting, motivating, supporting, and retaining talented staff and faculty.
- Approachable, self-aware, collaborative, courageous, empathetic leadership style combined with the ability to make and communicate decisions clearly and confidently.
- Integrity, patience, creativity, determination, energy; sense of humor and optimism.
- A terminal degree in a relevant field from an accredited institution is strongly preferred.

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## COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

This is a full-time, on-site position located in Austin, Texas. A generous and competitive compensation and benefits package will be offered to the successful candidate.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. **Applications and nominations received by March 31, 2026, will receive priority consideration.** Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be submitted via the Isaacson, Miller website at: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/seminary-southwest/dean-and-president>

Ernest Brooks, Claire Hennessey, Henry Nickerson  
Isaacson, Miller

*It is the policy of Seminary of the Southwest to provide equal opportunity in employment; to prohibit discrimination in employment because of race, color, gender, religious affiliation, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, age, national origin, or disability; and to promote the full realization of equal employment opportunity through a positive and continuing program of affirmative action.*

*This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Seminary of the Southwest. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by Seminary of the Southwest would supersede any conflicting information in this document.*