



VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

Dean and President
Virginia Theological Seminary and The General Theological Seminary
Alexandria, Virginia

THE SEARCH

The General Theological Seminary (GTS, General), the oldest continually operating seminary in the Anglican Communion, and Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS, Virginia), the largest seminary of The Episcopal Church, seek a faithful, pastoral, and visionary leader to serve as their next Dean and President. Led by the Holy Spirit and grounded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, this role is centered on forming and educating lay and ordained leaders who proclaim the Gospel and participate in God's mission in the Church and the world.

Building on the momentum of the 2022 Affiliation Agreement between General and Virginia, the next Dean and President will be called to steward institutions that collectively represent The Episcopal Church's most significant center for the formation of priests, deacons, and lay leaders. The next Dean and President will be entrusted with leadership of two institutions on a strong financial footing, poised to meet the evolving needs of current and future students, The Episcopal Church, and the wider Anglican Communion.

At once pastor, teacher, theologian, and chief executive, the Dean and President will guide the VTS and GTS communities in sustaining and strengthening their shared mission: forming leaders for the Church who are prepared to serve with faithfulness, wisdom, and a deep engagement with the Anglican tradition. This leader will work with both communities to shape the next chapter of their common life, strengthening their impact as hubs for theological education and scholarship, ministerial formation, and Church leadership, and identifying new ways to further leverage their combined strengths by optimizing systems, processes, people, and program offerings.

Appointed by the Boards of Trustees, the Dean and President of GTS and VTS is the chief executive officer of both institutions and has oversight of all aspects of seminary life, including academic affairs, alumni relations, financial management, fundraising, recruitment and admission of students, and engagement with the community, the broader church, and the world. At the same time, the Dean and President is the standard-bearer for the spiritual life of the seminary communities and must model a life rooted in prayer, deeply committed to ministry (lay or ordained), imbued with pastoral concern, and faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. While the role is demanding and highly visible, the Boards are committed to supporting a

leadership model that is sustainable over time and relies on collaboration, delegation, and disciplined stewardship of energy, so that the Dean and President can lead effectively for the long term.

To assist in this important search, Virginia Theological Seminary and The General Theological Seminary have engaged Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

GTS & VTS AFFILIATION

In November of 2022, The General Theological Seminary, the longest continually operating seminary in the Anglican Communion, and Virginia Theological Seminary, the largest seminary of The Episcopal Church, formally entered into an Affiliation Agreement. Leveraging the theological, cultural, and historic strengths of both schools, GTS and VTS now provide seminarians a rich Anglican theological education, spiritual direction, and robust professional and ministerial formation through an innovative shared governance structure and a range of shared services.

Under the terms of the Agreement, the two seminaries operate as separate institutions with their own distinct identities, traditions, and ethos. They maintain independent governance, finances, and accreditation.

The two seminaries have separate Boards of Trustees, although their memberships are identical except for student, faculty, and alumni representatives. They share a senior management team, including a chief executive, chief financial officer, chief academic officer, and chief communications and advancement officer. In addition, shared services for VTS and GTS include library facilities, advancement and alumni support, admissions, and academic administrative support. Several faculty members also hold joint appointments at both institutions.

ABOUT THE GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The General Theological Seminary is dedicated to forming leaders for ministry in Christ's Church through theological education in the Anglican tradition. Rooted in The Episcopal Church and shaped by common prayer, sacramental life, and the reformed catholicism of the Anglican tradition, General brings together students from across the nation for contextual theological formation through online learning, residential intensives, and faculty-guided mentor groups. As part of its commitment to expanding access to theological education, General provides [full tuition support](#) for eligible students in its Hybrid Master of Divinity program through a combination of institutional and external scholarships.

In recent years, General has navigated a period of significant change across theological education and the broader higher education landscape. Through this period, the Seminary has sustained its mission while advancing several key institutional priorities, including the development of a hybrid model of theological education and the long-term stewardship of its historic campus.

In September 2024, General entered into a long-term agreement to lease the Close, its historic campus in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York City, to Vanderbilt University as part of a strategic effort to sustain and steward its campus. The arrangement supports significant investment in the facilities, addresses long-standing maintenance needs, and enables General to maintain a year-round presence on the Close and hold residential intensive courses there for six weeks a year. The Seminary retains ownership of all the land and buildings it currently owns on Chelsea Square and remains committed to its identity and presence in New York City.

History

The General Theological Seminary was founded in 1817, when the General Convention of The Episcopal Church established a national seminary intended to serve the entire Church. In 1819, Clement Clarke Moore donated land on Manhattan's west side, then an apple orchard, on the condition that a seminary be built there. GTS is the oldest seminary of The Episcopal Church and the oldest continually operating seminary in the Anglican Communion.

The Seminary's first building opened in 1827, followed by a second in 1836 as enrollment grew. Over time, the campus developed into the distinctive "Close," a quadrangle of residences, classrooms, and chapels modeled after the colleges of Oxford University.

Throughout its history, General has followed its mandate to be a seminary of the whole church and has long been committed to the full inclusion of all persons called to ministry. Since 1822, General has graduated more than 7,000 individuals, and worldwide alumni total approximately 2,400.

Academic Programs

Hybrid Master of Divinity (MDiv)

The MDiv curriculum at General educates and forms students for the vocation of ordained ministry. The hybrid program is a rigorous, spiritually-formative, and context-affirming theological education that is taught in synchronous and asynchronous courses and includes three intensives in August, January, and May, two of which are held at the Close in Manhattan. GTS has embraced its hybrid program and has seen growing enrollment, engaged cohorts, and outstanding General Ordination Examination results.

ABOUT VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Virginia Theological Seminary is dedicated to forming and educating leaders who proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and participate in God's mission in the world. The Seminary prepares lay and ordained leaders for faithful and effective ministry across a wide range of contexts. At the heart of VTS is a shared commitment to common life shaped by love, justice, peace, and respect for every child of God. Through its [Seminary Covenant](#), the community affirms a calling to seek and serve Christ in all persons, to love neighbors as themselves, and to foster a life together that values every member and engages difference with humility and care. The core of the VTS experience is living on campus and fully engaging with the

diverse community of students and faculty. VTS offers a comprehensive financial aid program: all admitted full-time, residential students are eligible for a scholarship package that covers tuition, on-campus housing, and a meal plan.

In recent years, Virginia has undertaken efforts to more fully reckon with its history, including the use of enslaved labor in the construction of its campus and the labor of Black people during Reconstruction and the Jim Crow era. In 2019, VTS established a dedicated [reparations endowment fund](#) to research, uncover, and recognize those who labored on its campus, and to support their descendants. VTS does not believe that there is any amount of money that can compensate for the suffering that took place, but the Seminary does affirm the principle that a form of cash reparations is appropriate for the descendants of people exploited on campus.

History

Virginia Theological Seminary was founded in 1823, beginning in a single room in St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Alexandria, VA. Founded by clergy and lay leaders, Virginia responded to the need for educated leadership in the early Episcopal Church.

By 1827, the Seminary relocated to a permanent hilltop campus in Alexandria, where its earliest buildings began to take shape and where it remains today. During the Civil War, the campus was repurposed as a hospital for Union soldiers, and the Seminary temporarily relocated before returning to Alexandria after the war. In the decades that followed, VTS continued to expand its academic programs and institutional reach, educating generations of leaders for ministry in the United States and across the Anglican Communion. Today, there are more than 3,300 VTS alumni serving in 54 countries.

Academic Programs

- **Master of Divinity (MDiv)**

The Master of Divinity degree is a three-year residential degree program that focuses on the preparation of persons for ordained ministry. The MDiv program aims to promote knowledge and growth in religious heritage, ministerial and public leadership, personal and spiritual formation, liturgical formation and leadership, and an understanding of cultural context. VTS offers four concentrations: New Mission Practices, Christian Spirituality, Intercultural Ministry, and Faith and Justice.

- **Master of Arts (MA)**

The Master of Arts degree program aims to prepare students academically for advanced research and/or professionally for service to the Church. In the equivalent of 2 years of full-time study, students pursue a program that emphasizes disciplined focus and supports cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary engagement through cross-cultural programs and electives. The MA program is

specialized in three disciplinary areas, biblical studies, church and witness, or Christian formation, and can be earned through part-time study, full-time residency, or a combination of the two.

- **Diploma in Anglican Studies**

The Post-Graduate Diploma in Anglican Studies program typically serves those who have received a graduate degree from another seminary and are preparing for ordination in The Episcopal Church. Students can pursue this program on a full- or part-time basis, and if full-time, it can be completed in one year.

- **Diploma in Theology**

The Post-Graduate Diploma in Theology allows flexibility in the design of a program of theological study that will meet students' goals for study and academic interests. It can be pursued on either a full- or part-time basis.

- **Pathway to Ministry**

A one-year residential program for students who have not yet entered a discernment process but wish to pursue a formal theological education at VTS. Students receive a well-rounded foundation of theological knowledge and participate in a structured program of discernment. At the end of the year, they are eligible to receive the Post-Graduate Diploma in Theology or apply to continue for a second year to earn a Master of Arts degree, or for a third year to earn the Master of Divinity.

- **Doctor of Ministry (DMin) and Doctor of Educational Ministry (DEdMin)**

The DMin and DEdMin are low-residency degree programs designed to equip experienced Christian leaders for advanced ministerial practice and leadership. Both programs integrate academic study, ministry context, and theological reflection through hybrid coursework and summer residencies.

The DMin is completed over four years, while the DEdMin, designed for those without an MDiv, typically requires five years. In both programs, students engage in seminar and online integrative courses that connect theology and the social sciences with their work in ministry settings. The culminating thesis is a substantial work of action-reflected scholarship grounded in rigorous analysis of a ministry context. Students in both programs pursue one of four tracks: Ministry Development, Educational Leadership, Christian Spirituality, or Christian Formation.

ROLE OF THE DEAN AND PRESIDENT

The Dean and President of The General Theological Seminary and Virginia Theological Seminary is the chief executive officer of both institutions and exercises oversight of all aspects of seminary life, including academic affairs, alumni relations, financial management, fundraising, recruitment and admission of

students, worship and spiritual life, and interaction with the community, the broader church, and the world. The Dean and President oversees a combined annual operating budget of the affiliated institutions of approximately \$30 million; leads a combined student body of around 150 residential master's-level students and 50 hybrid doctoral students at VTS, and 60 hybrid MDiv students at GTS; a full-time faculty of 19 at VTS, and 10 at GTS, including six dual appointments) and more than 100 administrative staff across both institutions. The Dean and President also works closely with the Boards of Trustees of GTS and VTS, which establish policies and ensure both institutions' alignment with their missions.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN AND PRESIDENT

Develop a clear, compelling vision and strategy for two distinct yet affiliated institutions united by their shared missions to form leaders rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ

GTS and VTS are each strong, resilient, and mission-driven institutions committed to the education and formation of leaders for the Church. The seminaries, now joined in an innovative but still evolving affiliation, have distinct histories, cultures, and constituencies. There is strong commitment to the affiliation among the Boards and institutional leadership as the path forward for strengthening theological education and formation in the years ahead. There remains opportunity to further articulate the affiliation's ultimate shape, strategic direction, and defining features as it continues to mature.

The next Dean and President must articulate a compelling vision that honors the distinctiveness of each seminary while advancing a shared purpose, clarifying how they will complement rather than compete with one another. This will require thoughtful and prayerful navigation of institutional identities, governance complexity, and stakeholder expectations—including alumni, faculty, and church leaders—some of whom hold differing views about the future. With the current strategic plan concluding in 2026 and the affiliation still nascent in its full expression, the next leader will be charged with leading an inclusive strategic planning process that defines priorities, aligns resources, and positions both institutions for long-term vitality and impact.

Navigate rapidly changing realities for the Church and theological education that require faithful, prayerful, and innovative retooling of models of formation for ministry.

The landscape of theological education is undergoing a profound transformation, with declining enrollments in traditional full-time residential programs, shifting vocational pathways, and growing demand for flexible, hybrid, and context-based formation. Both seminaries are already responding—VTS through innovations in its residential master's, hybrid doctoral, and online continuing education programs, and GTS through its groundbreaking hybrid MDiv program—but questions remain regarding modalities, pedagogy, and the rhythms of worship and communal life that have long been defining features of both institutions. At the same time, demographic changes across the United States are reshaping the Church and the student body it serves. As the nation becomes more racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse, VTS and GTS must be prepared to educate and form leaders for a Church that looks different from past generations.

The next Dean and President must lead with deep understanding of theological education and the evolving needs of The Episcopal Church, discerning how best to balance residential and hybrid formation, curricular and co-curricular innovation, and lifelong learning. This includes confronting fundamental questions about the role of the seminary—as both a graduate academic institution and center of clergy and lay ministry formation for church leadership—and ensuring that graduates are prepared for a dramatically changing church marked by declining clergy pipelines, new ministry contexts, and broader vocational diversity. Critically, the next leader should have demonstrated success leading in multiethnic, multiracial, and multicultural or ecclesial environments, with the ability to shape institutional culture to serve an increasingly diverse Church. The successful candidate will embrace experimentation and adaptation while preserving the seminaries’ core commitments to spiritual formation, community life, and preparation for ordained and lay leadership.

Evaluate and strengthen systems, processes, and organizational effectiveness across both institutions.

The affiliation has created opportunities for shared services and administrative efficiency, but it has also introduced complexity, uneven systems, and gaps in clarity and accountability. Across both institutions, stakeholders identified challenges related to inconsistent processes, unclear decision-making, administrative strain, and infrastructure that has not kept pace with growth—particularly in areas such as student services, finance, registration, and communication. There is an opportunity for the next Dean and President to undertake a comprehensive review of operations and systems, bringing greater coherence, transparency, and sustainability to the organizational “underbelly.” This includes reassessing legacy programs and cost centers, improving alignment between strategy and resource allocation, and ensuring that policies and practices are intentional rather than reactive. With strong financial resources at VTS and ongoing stabilization at GTS, the leader must steward assets responsibly while investing in systems that support institutional effectiveness, equity, and a high-quality student and employee experience.

Strengthen the seminaries’ substantive contributions to thought leadership and formation in The Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion.

Both GTS and VTS are deeply committed to serving The Episcopal Church, and there is a growing call to expand their impact beyond their campuses—to engage more intentionally with dioceses, congregations, and the global Anglican Communion. The next Dean and President will need to balance institutional priorities with a broad, outward-facing vision, positioning the seminaries as responsive partners to bishops, clergy, and lay leaders navigating complex and diverse ministry contexts. This includes addressing the relationship between seminary formation and real-world ministry, deepening relationships across the church, and exploring opportunities for greater international engagement in ways that are collaborative rather than paternalistic. The affiliation itself represents a model of innovation that is being closely watched across the church, and the next leader will have the opportunity to shape how these seminaries contribute to the future of theological education—expanding access, strengthening pathways into ministry, and ensuring that formation is relevant, rigorous, and rooted in the needs of a changing church and society.

Recruit, retain, and develop a high-performing, mission-aligned faculty and staff community.

Both seminaries benefit from dedicated and accomplished faculty and staff and have a strong foundation on which to build. As the institutions look to the future, they will need to thoughtfully plan for anticipated retirements, leadership succession, and evolving institutional needs. The next Dean and President will have an opportunity to lead the seminaries through a period of substantial talent strategy, including the recruitment of diverse and forward-thinking educators and practitioners, investing in the development and success of current faculty and staff, supporting faculty in delivering exceptional teaching, scholarship, and formation across multiple educational modalities, and fostering collaboration across the two faculties.

At the same time, the leader must address issues of workload, morale, and performance management, while fostering a culture of collaboration across two faculties that have had limited integration to date. Developing clear expectations, investing in professional development, and building a cohesive, high-performing community will be essential to sustaining academic excellence and advancing institutional priorities in a time of ongoing change.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will possess the following required qualifications:

- Must be a member of The Episcopal Church or another church of the worldwide Anglican Communion, lay or ordained, with a demonstrated commitment to the life of the Church and a nuanced understanding of congregational realities and ministerial formation.
- Deeply faithful to Jesus Christ with ingrained spiritual practices and visible humanity that are reflected in theologically-grounded leadership, compassionate and confident preaching, and sensitive pastoral oversight of all those committed to their care.
- Graduate degree required; academic or professional doctorate in a field relevant to the academic programs of the seminaries strongly preferred.
- Deep knowledge of theological education and the role of the seminary including the ability to engage and lead faculty credibly; ideally a recognized scholar or theological thinker.

While no person will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional and personal qualifications:

Professional Experience

- Demonstrated executive leadership with a proven track record leading complex organizations or institutions and experience managing multiple constituencies, competing priorities, and governance structures.

- Experience in theological education and/or higher education including a familiarity with academic governance, faculty culture, curriculum formation, and an understanding of evolving models of formation (residential, hybrid, online).
- Strong operational skills, including systems integration, decision-making processes, and execution; the ability to manage complexity across two institutions and multiple boards; and experience building sustainable leadership structures and delegating effectively.
- Ability to define and articulate a clear institutional vision; experience leading organizational transformation and culture change; and skilled in balancing preservation of mission with innovation and adaptation.
- Demonstrated success in hiring, developing, and evaluating high-performing teams alongside the ability to set clear expectations and ensure accountability and expertise in addressing workforce structure, workload, and performance challenges.
- Proven capability in advancement, donor relations, and institutional fundraising; skilled at building partnerships and representing the institution publicly.
- Understands interdependencies within complex organizations and anticipates downstream impacts of decisions and engages appropriate stakeholders.
- Experience navigating institutional conflict and guiding organizations through creative tension.
- Commitment to diversity and experience leading increasingly diverse communities; ability to attract and support non-traditional and emerging student populations.
- Financial and operational acumen with an understanding of budgeting, resource allocation, and institutional sustainability.
- Ecumenical and interfaith engagement and experience fostering dialogue and relationships across traditions and faiths.
- Brings a global perspective and engagement with the worldwide church and an awareness of global religious dynamics.

Personal Qualities

- Deeply relational leader who is an intentional listener; present and accessible across constituencies and who builds trust across diverse and sometimes competing stakeholder groups.
- Clear, transparent, and consistent communicator internally and externally; compelling storyteller who can articulate institutional identity, mission, and future; and comfortable serving as both internal leader and external “face” of the institution.

- Emotionally intelligent and self-aware; confident yet humble; understands strengths and gaps; not driven by approval; willing to make difficult or unpopular decisions; possesses integrity, authenticity, and follow-through.
- Courageous and decisive leader who is willing to “lean into” complexity and ambiguity; able to say no gracefully and set priorities; and demonstrates tenacity and accountability in execution.
- Conflict-engaged (not conflict-avoidant); skilled at navigating, mediating, and resolving conflict constructively; brings issues into open, healthy dialogue rather than allowing dysfunction.
- Open-minded, adaptive, and future-oriented, and balances tradition with innovation (“one foot in history, one in the future”) and comfortable leading through rapid cultural, ecclesial, and educational change.
- Moves beyond “leader-centric” models to empower teams and shared leadership; develops, mentors, and elevates others’ gifts; and fosters a culture of accountability, clarity, and shared ownership.
- Demonstrates commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; engages effectively across cultures, identities, and theological perspectives; and brings awareness of the global Anglican Communion and broader church.
- Amiable, approachable, and able to build relationships across varied contexts; possesses a sense of humor and humanity.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The VTS and GTS trustees are seeking an exceptionally qualified candidate and have high aspirations for the next Dean and President. As leader of a residential seminary community, the Dean and President is expected to maintain primary full-time residence at the deanery on the campus of Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, VA.

The Dean and President will be afforded a competitive and comprehensive compensation package including housing, benefits, and salary. Specific terms will be negotiated directly with the selected candidate. The target salary range is \$215,000 to \$285,000 and will be commensurate with experience.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Review of candidates will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Inquiries, nominations, and applications, including a CV and letter of interest, should be sent via the [Isaacson, Miller website](#).

Ernest Brooks, Partner
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Isaacson, Miller

Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) and The General Theological Seminary (GTS) are committed to equal employment opportunity and prohibit unlawful discrimination in hiring, employment, or academic practices on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, age, or disability. VTS is also governed by a comprehensive Seminary Covenant that explicitly prohibits discrimination and harassment based on gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, and religion, among other characteristics.

Isaacson, Miller, General Theological Seminary, and Virginia Theological Seminary are committed to creating an inclusive environment and welcome applications from candidates with disabilities. If you have any accommodation or access needs, we are happy to provide reasonable accommodations.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Virginia Theological Seminary and The General Theological Seminary. 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 Virginia Theological Seminary and The General Theological Seminary would supersede any conflicting information in this document.