



UNITED

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE TWIN CITIES

President

United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities
St. Paul, Minnesota

THE SEARCH

United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities (United, UTS) seeks a visionary, relational, and theologically grounded leader to serve as its next President. This is an opportunity to lead one of the most distinctive institutions in theological education: a progressive seminary rooted in the Christian tradition and shaped by a deep commitment to justice and interreligious engagement. United has emerged as a place where students from a wide range of faith traditions, spiritual identities, and vocational callings come to be formed as leaders.

The next president is charged with guiding a seminary that has emerged from a period of significant transformation and now seeks to build on growing enrollment, renewed financial strength, and a distinctive identity within theological education. Over the past 6 years under the leadership of retiring president Dr. Molly T. Marshall, United has strengthened its finances, rebuilt donor confidence, and grown its reach well beyond the Twin Cities. A key element of UTS's enrollment growth has been the adaptation of a fully hybrid academic program model that offers both in-person and synchronous virtual courses drawing a diverse population of students from across the country. This combination of ecumenical foundation and institutional commitment to justice has positioned United within a distinct segment of theological education, one that has continued to attract students even as enrollment across the seminary sector has generally contracted. The institution enters its next chapter of leadership from a position of strength, building on a founding vision it has consistently reaffirmed. United is well-positioned to strengthen its reputation as a leading voice among progressive and interreligious seminaries, and to expand its influence as study and practice of spirituality, theology, leadership, and public life continues to evolve.

The seminary is also navigating questions that are reshaping theological education more broadly: how best to cultivate community and formation within a predominantly distributed student body, how to steward physical resources in an era increasingly defined by digital engagement, and how to prepare leaders whose callings extend beyond traditional congregational ministry. The next president will join a community committed to an adaptive and creative approach to theological education that is responsive to the changing environment while preserving the core values and sense of belonging that have set United apart.

Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the president serves as chief executive officer and provides leadership across the institution. The president is United's public voice and ambassador, deepening relationships with the seminary's many constituencies, and makes the case for its distinctive model of theological education for people who haven't yet encountered it. The successful candidate will bring a genuine appreciation for theological education and the role it plays in shaping spiritually-informed leaders for social transformation. United seeks a leader ready to build on a strong foundation and carry the seminary into its next stage of growth.

To assist in this important search, United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities has 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.

ABOUT UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE TWIN CITIES

United is a progressive, ecumenical seminary rooted in the liberal Protestant tradition and founded by the United Church of Christ (UCC), committed to interreligious engagement. United prepares leaders who are called to make a difference in the church, the public square, and the wider world. Through theological education, spiritual formation, and community engagement, United equips students to lead with courage, compassion, and a fundamental commitment to justice, all grounded in a global perspective.

The seminary understands the formation of religious leaders as inseparable from the work of justice, preparing graduates to bring theological and pastoral judgment to bear on questions of power, inequality, and structural harm. Its curriculum engages seriously with traditions beyond the seminary's own denominational roots, reflecting a commitment that leadership in a pluralistic religious landscape requires study alongside those of other faiths. United sees this formation as the building of beloved community: spaces capable of holding differences honestly while remaining oriented toward justice and peace.

History

United was founded in 1962 as an explicitly ecumenical institution, formed through the merger of Mission House Seminary (Plymouth, Wisconsin) and Yankton School of Theology (Yankton, South Dakota). From its founding charter, United was structured as independent and multi-denominational, and welcomed students and faculty across theological traditions. That founding tradition to openness across faith traditions has remained central to United's identity since. Today, that ecumenical foundation shapes

United's work: the seminary serves students from more than 30 denominations and world faith traditions, in addition to seekers and those who do not identify with a faith tradition.

Academic Programs

United offers a portfolio of graduate degree and certificate programs designed to prepare leaders for service in religious, nonprofit, educational, and community settings. Across all programs, United is committed to delivery models that expand access for students throughout the country. Through a combination of online learning, intensive residential experiences, and other forms of hybrid engagement, the seminary serves students whose professional, ministerial, or family commitments may make traditional residential education difficult while preserving opportunities for spiritual growth and relationship-building.

United's curriculum focuses on [four pillars](#): interreligious engagement, public theology, social transformation, and theology and the arts. Students can apply these concentrations to a wide range of areas, including congregational ministry, chaplaincy, nonprofit work, arts management, public policy, academia, social services, and more. The seminary's academic enterprise is supported by a [core faculty](#) of eight accomplished scholars, educators, and practitioners.

- **Master of Divinity (MDiv)**

The Master of Divinity is the seminary's primary professional degree for students preparing for ordained ministry, chaplaincy, and other forms of religious leadership. A distinctive feature of United's academic portfolio is its emphasis on interreligious chaplaincy, preparing leaders who can provide spiritual care and pastoral presence across diverse religious traditions, spiritual identities, and cultural contexts. The MDiv in Interreligious Chaplaincy has become United's largest academic program.

- **Master of Arts (MA)**

The Master of Arts is designed for students seeking a deeper academic engagement with religion and theology. The program provides advanced study in religious traditions, theological thought, and contemporary issues while developing the analytical and research skills necessary for further graduate study, writing, and leadership.

- **Master of Arts in Leadership (MAL)**

The Master of Arts in Leadership combines theological reflection with practical leadership development for students seeking to lead organizations, communities, and movements for change. Intended for individuals who desire a strong foundation in leadership without pursuing ordination, the program emphasizes organizational leadership, social impact, and the ability to navigate increasingly complex institutional and community environments. Graduates serve in

nonprofit organizations, congregations, advocacy organizations, and other mission-driven settings.

- **Master of Arts in Ministry (MAM)**

The Master of Arts in Ministry is a focused academic and practical ministry preparation program designed for flexibility and efficiency. Offering foundational education in theology, ministry, pastoral care, and leadership, the degree provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary for service in congregational and other ministry settings. The MAM offers an accessible pathway for those preparing for ministry who do not require or desire the broader scope of the MDiv.

- **Doctor of Ministry (DMin)**

The Doctor of Ministry is an advanced professional degree designed for experienced religious leaders seeking to deepen their practice and expand their capacity for leadership. Through focused study, applied research, and engagement with emerging issues in ministry, students strengthen their ability to lead in an increasingly multifaith context.

- **Certificate Programs**

United also offers certificate programs in Spiritual Direction, Applied Ethics and Justice, and Theological Studies. These programs provide focused opportunities for professional development, vocational exploration, ministry preparation, and personal enrichment. Each certificate combines academic study with practical application and engagement with contemporary ethical, spiritual, and social questions.

Student Body

Across its degree and certificate offerings, United serves an increasingly diverse and geographically distributed student body. The seminary expects approximately 270 degree-seeking students in Fall 2026, with students representing 36 states, several countries, and 36 religious traditions. While UTS remains rooted in the Christian tradition and the United Church of Christ, its largest religious constituencies include Unitarian Universalists, members of the UCC, and students who identify broadly as spiritual. Approximately three-quarters of students reside outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

United's students bring a remarkable range of experiences, identities, and vocational aspirations. The student body includes individuals from a wide variety of racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. With an average age of 45 and students ranging in age from 25 to 77, the seminary serves emerging leaders, mid-career professionals, second-career ministers, chaplains, nonprofit leaders, and lifelong learners.

ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT

The President of UTS is the chief executive officer and exercises oversight of all aspects of seminary life, including academic affairs, alum relations, financial management, fundraising, recruitment and admission of students, spiritual life, and interaction with the community. Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the President provides strategic leadership across all facets of the institution and serves as the seminary's primary ambassador, chief storyteller, and lead fundraiser. The President oversees a projected FY2026-27 operating budget of \$4.2 million and provides leadership for an institution serving approximately 270 degree-seeking students. The President works closely with an eight-member core faculty, dedicated staff, and directly supervises the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean, Vice President for Advancement, Vice President for Finance and Administration, and Executive Assistant to the President and Dean.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE PRESIDENT

Affirming and amplifying United's progressive and multifaith identity.

United occupies a distinctive place within theological education. Rooted in its Christian and United Church of Christ heritage, the seminary has embraced a vibrant and increasingly diverse community that welcomes students seeking deep spiritual exploration and meaningful engagement across religious traditions. United brings individuals together from a remarkable range of faith backgrounds, perspectives, and vocational aspirations, becoming a home for Christians of varying denominational affiliations, Unitarian Universalists, Pagans, Buddhists, Muslims, seekers, and those who do not identify with a particular religious tradition. This commitment to openness, curiosity, and dialogue is central to United's identity and one of its greatest strengths. The next president will be called to affirm this identity with confidence and articulate why a multifaith, progressive theological education matters at this moment.

As United continues to evolve, the next president will have the opportunity to help further define and communicate what makes the seminary so distinctive. Doing so will require thoughtfully navigating the creative tensions between denominational heritage and emerging expressions of spiritual leadership, ensuring that United remains connected to the communities that have historically supported it, while continuing to expand its circle of welcome.

Cultivating a robust sense of relationality, communal life, and formation in a hybrid and increasingly distributed seminary community.

United has emerged as a leader in accessible and innovative models of theological education, extending its reach well beyond the Twin Cities and attracting students from across the country and around the world. The seminary's growth has been fueled in large part by its embrace of online and hybrid learning, enabling students to engage in theological education while remaining rooted in their communities, professions, and ministries. As enrollment has grown and the student body has become more dispersed, the seminary faces important questions about how community, formation, and belonging are cultivated in a model where most students participate remotely. The next president will help lead conversations

about the future of theological education at United, including the role of the campus, the importance and value of in-person experiences, and how students build meaningful relationships with one another, with faculty, and with the institution.

Leveraging momentum to build long-term sustainability.

United enters this leadership transition with significant momentum, including enrollment growth, improved financial health, a successful comprehensive campaign, and renewed confidence among donors and alums. The institution has moved beyond a period when immediate survival shaped many decisions and is now positioned to make deliberate choices about its future. This progress provides a strong foundation, but it does not eliminate the financial and operational pressures facing theological schools. United remains tuition-dependent, and recent enrollment gains must be supported by careful planning rather than by an assumption of continued growth.

The next president will work with the Board, faculty, and staff to determine the enrollment, programmatic, and organizational model that can sustain the seminary over time while preserving the quality and distinctiveness of the United experience. This calls for a leader who understands how enrollment, tuition, financial aid, philanthropy, and the endowment work together, and who thoughtfully invests in people and systems. There is also considerable opportunity to strengthen the seminary's national visibility and build mission-aligned partnerships, extending United's reach without overtaxing its capacity.

Strengthen philanthropy and expand United's circle of support.

The next president will inherit renewed confidence among donors and alums, as well as a stronger culture of giving. Maintaining this momentum will require sustained presidential attention and a genuine interest in building relationships with those who care about the future of theological education. The president must be able to communicate United's mission with clarity, connect its academic work to its broader impact, and invite others to participate meaningfully in its future. An important priority will be deepening relationships with longtime supporters while engaging a new generation of donors, alums, foundations, faith communities, and mission-aligned partners. This broader base of support should reflect the increasingly national, progressive, and multi-faith community that United serves.

Build institutional capacity.

United's recent growth has created new demands across the institution; enrollment has grown while the faculty and staff responsible for supporting students, delivering programs, and managing operations remain relatively lean. The next president will need to ensure that staffing, systems, and resources keep pace with the size and changing needs of the student body without creating an organizational structure that the seminary cannot sustain.

United's faculty and staff share a rare and genuine collegiality, working across departmental lines with mutual respect and a shared sense of mission. Preserving that culture will be essential for the next

president. They will be expected to support and develop strong teams and create systems that reduce unnecessary strain. Equally important will be maintaining close and constructive relationships with faculty and staff and respecting the expertise they bring to United's academic mission and daily operations.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will possess the following required qualifications:

- Graduate degree required; academic or professional doctorate in a field relevant to the academic program of the seminary strongly preferred
- Deep knowledge of theological education and the role of the seminary including the ability to engage and lead faculty credibly
- Demonstrated success in executive leadership within theological education, higher education, a faith-based organization, nonprofit institution, or similarly mission-driven environment
- A commitment to United's mission as a progressive seminary rooted in the Christian tradition and an appreciation for its robust interreligious community
- Commitment to equity, inclusion, and social justice, and an understanding of how those commitments can be expressed through theological education and institutional leadership

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

- Demonstrated understanding of online, hybrid, and distributed models of education and the opportunities and challenges they present for learning, formation, and community building
- Experience leading through growth or organizational change while maintaining trust and community engagement; skilled in balancing preservation of mission with innovation and adaptation
- Proven track record leading significant organizational units, programs, or institutions, including responsibility for strategy, resource allocation, personnel, and outcomes
- Familiarity with academic governance, faculty culture, curriculum formation, and an understanding of evolving models of formation
- Proven capability in advancement, donor relations, and institutional fundraising; skilled at building partnerships and representing an institution publicly
- Ecumenical and interfaith engagement; experience fostering dialogue and relationships across traditions and faiths
- Anticipates downstream impacts of decisions and engages appropriate stakeholders
- Deeply relational, collaborative leader who is an intentional listener and values respectful dialogue across differing perspectives
- Emotionally intelligent and self-aware; not driven by approval and willing to make difficult or unpopular decisions

- An entrepreneurial mindset and the ability to identify opportunities that advance mission and long-term sustainability

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

The target salary range is \$175,000 to \$225,000 and will be commensurate with experience. 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
Annah Wells, Senior Associate
Lisa Landis, Senior Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

United is committed to the principle of equal employment opportunity. It is the seminary's policy to make employment decisions in a manner that will further this principle and comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Therefore, as required by applicable federal, state or local laws, the seminary's decisions about recruiting, hiring, training, promotions, compensation, benefits and all similar employment decisions will be made without regard to race, creed, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, status with regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, or any other class status protected by applicable local, state or federal laws.

Isaacson, Miller and United 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 United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. 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 United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities would supersede any conflicting information in this document.