



Dean of Memorial Chapel
Colgate University
Hamilton, New York

THE SEARCH

[Colgate University](#), a thriving, highly selective liberal arts university located in Hamilton, New York, invites applications and nominations for the Dean of Memorial Chapel (Dean) position. In a newly established position, the Dean will support the diverse spiritual, religious, and pastoral needs of the Colgate University community and nurture the religious and spiritual traditions that make Colgate unique. This is an exciting opportunity for an experienced spiritual leader and religious life professional to set a vision that makes Colgate University a model of how religious and spiritual life creates a vibrant community for all, across faith and non-faith traditions.

The Dean will lead the [Office of the University Chaplains](#), an established and important religious and spiritual hub for campus support, spiritual exploration, community connection, and reflective conversations. The Dean also leads interfaith engagement and collaboration with all of Colgate's chaplains, student leaders, and faculty and staff. Members of Colgate's diverse religious groups reinforce their faith through campus experiences and daily or weekly practice. Through the Office of the University Chaplains, Colgate's students, faculty, and staff also gain insights into the values and practices of other traditions, spiritual practices, and secular reflections. These interactions, open to the local community as well as University community members, encourage dialogue and understanding.

Reporting directly to the President, the Dean will provide leadership and a vision for Colgate's diverse religious and spiritual life, demonstrate strong administrative leadership and management skills to effectively guide the Office of the Chaplains' operations and strategy, and collaborate across campus and with off-campus partners to support the religious and spiritual development of students, staff, and faculty. While the Dean of Memorial Chapel role is not permanently aligned with a specific religious tradition, the current staffing configuration of the Office of University Chaplains presents an opportunity for the Dean of Memorial Chapel to also occupy a role as a Christian or Jewish Chaplain to the University.

The ideal candidate will hold an accredited Master of Divinity (M.Div.) or comparable training with at least six years of full-time religious leadership experience. There is a strong preference for candidates with a terminal academic or professional degree and experience leading religious and/or spiritual life programs in a higher education context. The Dean will bring strong administrative and supervisory experience, compelling communication, public speaking, and oratory skills, demonstrated ability to build community and foster collaboration among diverse constituencies, an appreciation for multifaith understanding, and the ability to lead with equanimity, discretion, and integrity. The successful Dean candidate will work collegially in a highly collaborative environment with students, staff, and faculty, and bring experience developing and implementing short- and long-term plans in ecumenical and interfaith contexts.

Colgate University has retained the services of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in conducting this important search. All inquiries, applications, and nominations should be directed in confidence to the search firm, as indicated at the end of this document.

OFFICE OF THE UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINS

Colgate's [Office of the University Chaplains](#) is an established and important religious and spiritual hub for campus support, spiritual exploration, community connection, and reflective conversations. The chaplains and administrative staff are collectively and individually committed to nurturing communities of spiritual practice and to encouraging conversations with the community across faith traditions and with secular skeptics alike.

Members of Colgate's diverse religious communities reinforce their spirituality through campus experiences and daily or weekly practice. Through the Office of the University Chaplains, Colgate's students, faculty, and staff also gain insights into the values and practices of other traditions, spiritual practices, and secular reflections. These interactions, open to the local community as well as University community members, encourage dialogue and understanding.

Many religious traditions also have active independent student organizations at Colgate, providing a vibrant and diverse community with regular opportunities for worship and spiritual practice. Most of these organizations are advised by the chaplains, and through these connections, students meet for worship, prayer, discussions, learning, and the sharing of meals within Memorial Chapel. The chaplains routinely support these on-campus opportunities and many others in collaboration with local congregations. Memorial Chapel is also the home for Colgate's Secular Association of Skeptical Students and other programs such as the Heretics Club and Morning Reflections.

DEAN OF MEMORIAL CHAPEL

The Dean of Memorial Chapel is a full-time, year-round position dedicated to supporting the spiritual, religious, and pastoral needs of the Colgate University community. The dean provides leadership for all chaplains within the Office of the University Chaplains. The Dean also leads interfaith engagement and collaboration with all of Colgate's chaplains, student leaders, and faculty and staff.

Colgate University's religious and spiritual life staff includes four full-time chaplains—who represent a variety of traditions including Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, and Catholic faiths—and a talented and high-performing full-time program coordinator who serves as an important administrative coordinator for the office's programs and many student organizations that seek the office's advising and support.

The new Dean will lead the chaplains as a collective and will serve as the direct-line supervisor for each of the chaplains individually. Together, the Dean, chaplains, and program coordinator will work as a team to foster religious and spiritual education and community at Colgate.

The Dean will report to the Office of the President for University-wide initiatives, services, and events such as Convocation and Baccalaureate, as well as support for faculty and staff. At moments of celebration for the University, such as Commencement, and in times of crises and community loss, the Dean will work with the University President to provide spiritual support and leadership.

The Dean will collaborate closely with the Office of the Vice President and Dean of the College for weekly programs, student organization advising, and other activities that create a vibrant student life experience.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE DEAN OF MEMORIAL CHAPEL

As Colgate continues the ambitious pursuits outlined in its *Third Century Plan*, and following on a recently completed decennial review of the chaplains' programs, the University seeks a new Dean of Memorial Chapel to deepen its long-standing support for students, faculty, and staff in various religious traditions, and to strengthen its commitment to supporting interfaith and multifaith understanding within the academic community. The Dean of Memorial Chapel will have previous knowledge and experience to successfully address the following challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities:

Provide leadership and a vision for Colgate's diverse religious and spiritual life

Religion and spirituality are an important part of life at Colgate University, and the Dean of Memorial Chapel will set a vision that further supports Colgate's diverse community. The dean will lead the team of chaplains who support students' learning and religious and spiritual needs and serve the needs of faculty, staff, and the local community. The Dean of Memorial Chapel, along with the other chaplains and members of Colgate's faculty, will work to foster greater understanding among members of different religious faiths and those who do not practice a faith tradition but seek spiritual connection or multifaith understanding. The dean will identify, develop, and support learning that deepens an appreciation for religious diversity and cooperation between different religious traditions and communities. The successful dean will be a visible leader on campus and provide inspiration and compassion in times of celebration, tragedy, or change. Finally, the Dean of Memorial Chapel will serve as an advisor to the University President, Dean of the Faculty, and the Dean of the College during times of crisis or when addressing complex challenges.

Demonstrate strong administrative leadership and management skills to effectively guide the Office of the Chaplains' operations and strategy

The Dean of Memorial Chapel will provide administrative leadership, including budget oversight, space management, and strong supervision within the Office of the University Chaplains. The successful dean will bring experience in administrative and managerial leadership to ensure that programming is successfully carried out, and all chaplains are making progress towards the Office's goals. This includes developing programs such as retreats, service, or interfaith trips, and programming designed to create opportunities for students' development, self-awareness, and community contributions. Additionally, the dean will be an adept manager of people and provide professional management, mentorship, and development of the full team. Finally, the Office of the Chaplains will be in its first year in the Office of the President. The successful Dean will have the administrative acumen to lead the office through the practicalities of this transition and ensure a smooth and transparent process.

Collaborate across campus and with off-campus religious communities to support the religious and spiritual development of students, staff, and faculty

In partnership with other chaplains, students, faculty, and staff, the dean will identify and address Colgate's needs related to religious formation and community-building. The dean will also collaborate with non-religious leaders, such as the Dean of the College and the Dean of the Faculty, in their pursuit of shared student, faculty, and staff goals. These goals include supporting students in thinking strategically about outreach to underserved populations and growth in both depth and number. Additionally, the dean will oversee programming, including helping to lead the Chaplaincy's interfaith programs, travel, and other initiatives. While Colgate's religious and spiritual life is robust, the students, faculty, and staff may seek practices that are not available on campus. Thus, the dean will build relationships with off-campus religious communities to provide opportunities for deeper or different practice for those who seek it.

In addition to addressing the opportunities and challenges, the successful candidate may also serve as a Christian or Jewish Chaplain to the University, per the current configuration of the Office of the Chaplains. In accordance, the responsibilities of the Dean of Memorial Chapel will also include the following:

- Develop and implement programs that nurture a vibrant Christian/Jewish community.
- Provide expertise and pastoral leadership on campus within a Christian or Jewish tradition.
- Serve as a resource on Christian traditions or Jewish traditions to the wider campus.
- Offer counsel to faculty and staff in their own efforts to support students from all faith backgrounds, or no faith background, in and outside of the classroom.
- Coordinate and lead weekly worship services, in accordance with their background and credentials, during the academic year, as well as holiday and seasonal observances.

- Offer liturgical and sacramental leadership, in accordance with their background and credentials, including baptisms and weddings.
- Supervise student worship leaders, church musicians, and worship bands.
- Plan and lead religious services (e.g., regular Shabbat/Eucharist) that speak to the breadth of Christian or Jewish expressions.
- Provide pastoral counseling and spiritual direction to members of the university community.
- Engage students, faculty, and staff in thoughtful reflection on how religious faith integrates with intellectual pursuits, civic engagement, and moral development.
- Collaborate with other chaplaincy staff and campus leaders to sustain and articulate a vision for spiritual life and interfaith practices on campus.
- Foster unity, cooperation, and collaboration among diverse student organizations and faculty.

Colgate currently has vacancies in its Director of Jewish Life and Director of Protestant Life roles. Following the successful appointment to this position, a director of Jewish Life and/or a director of Protestant Life will be appointed to ensure both Protestant and Jewish communities are supported. These colleagues will join the Campus Imam and the Chaplain and Director of Catholic Life to provide faith-based and interfaith support and services.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The following qualifications and characteristics represent a broad set of skills and attributes deemed important for success as the Dean of Memorial Chapel. While no candidate will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional and personal assets:

Required Qualifications

- An accredited Master of Divinity (M.Div.) or comparable academic credentials or training; an academic or professional doctoral degree preferred.
- At least six years of full-time religious leadership experience.
- Strong administrative and supervisory experience.
- Strong communication, public speaking, and oratory skills.
- Demonstrated ability to build community and foster collaboration among diverse constituencies and an appreciation for multifaith understanding.

- Proven experience developing and implementing short- and long-term plans in ecumenical and interfaith contexts.
- Ability to work collegially in a highly collaborative environment with students, staff, and faculty.
- Ability to lead with equanimity, discretion, and integrity.

Preferred Qualifications

- Prior campus ministry experience or experience working in a college or university setting is strongly preferred.
- Ordination and/or authorization to preside over ceremonies and rituals in one's tradition.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. For best consideration, full applications (resume, cover letter, and a sample written pastoral reflection or sermon) should be submitted by July 1. The salary range for this position is \$135,000 - \$160,000. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/colgate-university/dean-memorial-chapel>.

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Colgate University recognizes that equal employment opportunity can only be achieved through demonstrated leadership. It is the policy of the university to recruit, employ, retain, promote, and train employees on the basis of skills and experience, capacity to do the job, and valid job qualifications without regard to any characteristics protected by applicable local, state, or federal laws.

APPENDIX

COLGATE UNIVERSITY

Colgate University stands among the nation's most distinguished small universities, leading a new era of higher education. Rooted in the liberal arts, intellectual seriousness, global outlook, and enduring traditions, Colgate takes pride in preparing students for lives of consequence. Colgate University is renowned for its academic rigor, the beauty and vitality of its campus, and the contributions of its alumni across a variety of fields and endeavors, who are exceptionally engaged with the institution.

Colgate boasts substantial academic offerings, small classes, a strong emphasis on faculty-student interaction, and a residential community valuing all forms of intellectual curiosity. Colgate's faculty members are leading teachers and scholars committed to intellectual engagement in all its forms. Colgate's approximately 3,100 highly motivated students achieve academically, athletically, and artistically, and are actively engaged in the world around them. Colgate is committed to attracting and retaining a diverse faculty, staff, and student population and fostering an inclusive community that embraces academic freedom and freedom of expression, which are central to its academic mission.

The university's academic program is grounded in its [Liberal Arts Core Curriculum](#), which exposes students to diverse fields of study and models intellectual and creative inquiry across the curriculum while furthering Colgate's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Undergraduates may choose from 57 majors and more than 40 additional minors. Classes are small, averaging 17 students, and are taught by more than 300 full-time faculty members, 95% of whom have received a Ph.D. or terminal degree in their field. Students are encouraged to collaborate with faculty members in research efforts, and Colgate undergraduates have co-authored articles in professional publications for more than 30 years.

Colgate was first founded in 1817 as The Baptist Education Society of the State of New York by 13 men with \$13 and 13 prayers. The number 13 is still Colgate's lucky number; Friday the 13th is always designated Colgate Day. New York State granted the school a formal charter in 1819, and the Baptists in New York City — soap maker William Colgate among them — consolidated their seminary with the Hamilton school to form the Hamilton Literary and Theological Institution in 1823. A state charter issued in 1846 changed the name to Madison University and established the right to grant degrees. Madison was changed to Colgate in 1890, in honor of the Colgate family's enduring support.

Today, Colgate is a thriving, highly selective liberal arts university located in the geographic center of New York State. Colgate's campus in Hamilton, New York, boasts carefully preserved architecture, immaculate grounds, and a hillside setting, consisting of 88 buildings and sitting on 575 acres of land. It is consistently named one of the most beautiful in the nation. It is a close-knit community where students develop lifelong bonds with the institution, with each other, and with faculty and staff members.

With its endowment valued at more than \$1.341 billion, and an annual operating budget in FY 2024 of more than \$260 million, Colgate holds an AA credit rating with S&P, which was reaffirmed in March 2025.

In addition, Moody's Investment Service affirmed Colgate's Aa3 rating in April 2002 based on the university's underlying financial strength and successful management.

THE THIRD-CENTURY PLAN

Colgate University looks towards its third century with both pride and a sense of possibility. The [Third-Century Plan](#) is the university's long-term plan that represents the largest and most important transformation in the history of Colgate, completing the physical campus and fully realizing the university's potential to become one of the great institutions in the nation and one of the most important small universities in the country.

The [Third-Century Plan](#) sets forth long-term goals and aspirations in four fundamental areas of the university:

- Attracting and Supporting Outstanding Students and Faculty
- Strengthening the University's Academic Enterprise
- Enriching the Student Experience
- Improving the Campus and the Environment

LEADERSHIP

Brian W. Casey was inaugurated as Colgate's 17th President in 2016. After starting a career in law, President Casey transitioned to higher education after earning a Ph.D. from Harvard University in the history of American civilization. President Casey spent four years as assistant provost at Brown University, and in 2005 he returned to Harvard as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. He served in that capacity until he was appointed president of DePauw University in 2008 serving as that school's 19th president. Casey was then appointed Colgate University's president on July 1, 2016.

President Casey has accomplished much at Colgate, including the construction of several major new buildings: two 100-bed residence halls, Jane Pinchin Hall and Burke Hall; a new center for careers and postgraduate study, Benton Hall; an academic building that houses film and media studies, music, and computer science, Bernstein Hall; and a new downtown apartment building for faculty and staff. Through the Colgate Commitment, launched during Casey's tenure, federal student loans have been eliminated from most students' financial aid packages. Fifteen new endowed faculty chairs have been raised, and the university has launched two major academic initiatives – one in Mind, Brain, Behavior and the other in Arts, Creativity, and Innovation.

Applications have nearly tripled since Casey's arrival, and the university is more than two-thirds of the way through completing a \$1 billion fundraising campaign, the largest such campaign among the nation's liberal arts colleges.

HAMILTON, NEW YORK

Founded in 1795, the Village of Hamilton, named one of the friendliest towns in the United States by Forbes magazine, has a population of roughly 4,000. The Hamilton Village Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 and is home to an eclectic mix of shops, restaurants, and the iconic Colgate Inn. The area is ideal for outdoor recreation, including biking, hiking, trail running, and skiing. Colgate's golf course, Seven Oaks, was designed by Robert Trent Jones and has been repeatedly recognized as one of the best college golf courses in the country. The university's location provides easy access for summer hikes and winter ski trips. It is less than a one-hour drive from Syracuse and the Syracuse International Airport, four hours away from New York City, and five hours from Boston. A train to New York City departs several times daily from nearby Utica, New York.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Colgate University. 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 Colgate University would supersede any conflicting information in this document.