Dean, Helen Way Klingler College of Arts and Sciences
Marquette University
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

THE SEARCH

Marquette University (Marquette), a private, coeducational, Catholic, Jesuit institution in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, seeks a visible and strategic leader to serve as the next dean of the Helen Way Klingler College of Arts and Sciences (the College). As dean, this individual will build on Marquette's rich tradition of Catholic, Jesuit liberal arts education and lead the College into the future.

Marquette is committed to excellence, faith, leadership, and service. Marquette's mission is the search for truth, the discovery and sharing of knowledge, the fostering of personal and professional excellence, the promotion of a life of faith, and the development of leadership expressed in service to others. The university aims to graduate students who are transformed by their education and who, in turn, will transform the world.

The university enjoys strong enrollment with approximately 11,500 students: 7,800 undergraduates and 3,720 graduate and professional students. Students typically enroll from all 50 states and more than 60 countries. Founded in 1881, Marquette is one of 27 Catholic, Jesuit universities in the United States and is the largest private university in Wisconsin. Marquette's attractive 90-plus-acre campus on the edge of Milwaukee's downtown is home to a highly collegial community with more than 1,200 faculty members.

The Helen Way Klingler College of Arts and Sciences is the largest and most academically diverse unit at Marquette and is home to 3,500 students, fourteen academic departments, the School of Education, and seven centers. Its faculty bring exceptional strengths in research, scholarship, teaching, service, and community engagement, alongside a deep commitment to students. The College also takes pride in playing a central role in Marquette's Core Curriculum, ensuring that all students, regardless of their college affiliation, experience the disciplinary depth and interdisciplinary innovation required to move forward into successful lives and careers.

The incoming dean will be joining the Marquette community at a critical moment. In 2025, Dr. Kimo Ah Yun was inaugurated as the 25th president of Marquette University and in 2026, Dr. Debbie Tahmassebi

began her tenure as provost. With this new leadership team in place, the next dean will have an opportunity to build on the College's strong foundation and shape an ambitious vision for its future. In partnership with the president, provost, other senior leaders, and the extended College community, the dean will advance the centrality of arts and sciences to Marquette's Jesuit mission and broader aspirations.

The university is currently advancing a campuswide strategic plan, *2031: Guided by Mission, Inspired to Change*, which calls the Marquette community to build upon its strong foundation and collective strengths in teaching, research, and innovation, as the university continues to adapt and evolve. In concert with the strategic plan, the *Securing Our Future* initiative is focusing on Marquette's operational and financial health so that the university is better positioned to deliver on its strategic plan and thrive for generations to come.

As part of its campus master planning, Marquette aims to develop a sciences district in the heart of campus that integrates the physical, life, and health sciences through a combination of new construction and the modernization of existing spaces. The next dean will play an important role in shaping and advancing this effort, contributing to planning, implementation, and fundraising while capitalizing on opportunities to strengthen collaboration across disciplines.

Reporting to the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs, the next dean will translate university priorities into a clear and compelling vision for the Klingler College of Arts and Sciences. The dean will advance the College's teacher-scholar model by fostering excellence in teaching and research and strengthening the connections between faculty scholarship and student learning. An inspiring, collaborative, and strategic leader, the dean will build on the College's disciplinary breadth to deepen collaborations and elevate its reach and impact locally and nationally.

The dean will address several opportunities and challenges, which are outlined in greater detail beginning on page six of this document:

- ***Develop and implement a strategic vision that clearly articulates the distinctive identity of the Klingler College of Arts and Sciences;***
- ***Serve as a passionate and effective champion for the College both across campus and externally;***
- ***Effectively manage and grow the College's resources and actively lead fundraising efforts;***
- ***Advance Marquette's teacher-scholar model to connect discovery, creativity, and student success;***
- ***Strengthen the conditions for research excellence and scholarly impact;***
- ***Advance student success and outcomes through a holistic educational experience;***
- ***Recruit, develop, retain, and inspire an exceptional faculty and staff;***
- ***Communicate openly, make decisions with fortitude, and explain those decisions clearly to the College community.***

A complete list of the desired qualifications and characteristics of the dean can be found at the conclusion of this document, which was prepared with the assistance of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm. All confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the parties listed at the conclusion of this document.

ABOUT MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY

Marquette University was founded in 1881 through the vision of Milwaukee's first archbishop, Rev. John Martin Henni, who named the institution after Rev. Jacques Marquette, S.J., a 17th-century missionary and explorer.

In the ensuing decades, the university has expanded to encompass 10 academic divisions: Helen Way Klingler College of Arts and Sciences; College of Business Administration; J. William and Mary Diederich College of Communication; Opus College of Engineering; College of Health Sciences; College of Nursing; Graduate School; Graduate School of Management; School of Dentistry; and Law School. As an institution committed to both teaching and research, Marquette offers undergraduate programs in more than 80 majors and 80 minors, in addition to more than 100 doctoral, master's, and certificate degree programs. Marquette is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and underwent its decennial reaffirmation of accreditation visit in late 2023.

Marquette is ranked in the top 20% among national universities at No. 90 in the 2026 U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges rankings. Marquette is also ranked on the peer-nominated list for Best Undergraduate Teaching at #25. Visit Marquette's Rankings and Recognition website for a comprehensive list of accolades. In its mission to foster men and women for and with others, Marquette asks students to be agents of change where they see disparities. As an engaged, mission-based community, Marquette has a responsibility to engage in dialogue to confront injustices on its campus, in the city, in the U.S. and throughout the world. By getting involved in their communities, students help others lead better lives. Ninety-three percent of Marquette students report participating in community service efforts, and The Princeton Review ranked Marquette University 1st in the nation for students engaged in community service (2026).

Through personal relationships and professional connections, backed by an alumni network of support, Marquette graduates secure job opportunities quickly after graduation and continue to build successful, fulfilling careers. Marquette has nationally recognized outcomes in graduation rates and job preparation and placement. Based on Department of Education College Scorecard data, Marquette was ranked the 6th best college nationally and the best college in Wisconsin for job placement. Marquette's employment rate 10 years after graduation is 95.55%. According to the latest results of the Undergraduate Alumni Survey, 96% of alumni one year after graduation, 98% of alumni five years after graduation and 100% of alumni 10 years after graduation were engaged in an activity full time or were not seeking full-time employment.

Marquette prioritizes student success: The university desires to provide every student the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive — to truly feel they are home. Its mission as a Catholic, Jesuit university calls the community to ensure all students flourish from their first day on campus to their first destination beyond Marquette as they become men and women for and with others. Marquette's strong focus on student retention and graduation is reflected in rates amongst the highest of nationally ranked institutions in the country. The university has a goal to increase the six-year graduation rate to 90% and year 1-2 retention rate to 94%. Consistent with its mission to transform lives through education, Marquette is included by U.S. News & World Report as an A+ School for B Students, a distinction that honors how they provide opportunities for more kinds of students to stay, succeed and graduate. Marquette's Catholic, Jesuit approach to student success and personalized learning encourages students to think critically and engage with the world around them. When students graduate with a Marquette degree, they are truly prepared and called to Be The Difference.

Strategic Plan

In early 2024, Marquette University unveiled *"2031: Guided by Mission, Inspired to Change*," its aspirational, actionable strategic plan which aims to advance the campus' strategic priorities, positioning the University to flourish as it seeks to be one of the most innovative and accomplished Catholic and Jesuit universities in the world. Rooted in Marquette's Catholic faith and spirit of innovation, the plan reflects the campus' commitment to forming students capable of responding to the needs of a diverse, dynamic world. The strategic plan outlines three foundational themes and goals:

Thriving Students

Marquette will be the nationally recognized leader in the integration of student wellness, transformation, and success.

Healthy Campus

Marquette will identify as thriving in its culture of belongingness, care for the whole person (*cura personalis*), and be adaptable to ensure the health of the institution (*cura apostolica*).

Care for the World

Marquette will focus its talent to address the world's challenges as identified in the Society of Jesus' Universal Apostolic Preferences through its faith-inspired service and by growing its cutting-edge research in partnership with the Milwaukee community and beyond.

Leadership

President Kimo Ah Yun

Dr. Kimo Ah Yun was unanimously elected the 25th President of Marquette University by the Marquette Board of Trustees on Nov. 20, 2024, and inaugurated in April 2025. He joined Marquette in 2016 as Dean of the Diederich College of Communication, was named acting Provost in 2018 and then permanent Provost and executive vice president for academic affairs in 2019. Prior to joining Marquette University, he was Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Letters at California State University, Sacramento, where he also served as chair of the Department of Communication Studies, director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, and professor of Communication Studies. Learn more about President Ah Yun here.

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Debbie Tahmassebi

Dr. Debbie Tahmassebi has been serving as provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at Marquette since March 2026. Prior to joining Marquette, she served as provost at Westminster University in Utah, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Santa Clara University, and professor of chemistry at the University of San Diego.

While dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Santa Clara, Tahmassebi expanded the college's Center for Arts and Humanities, promoted the digital humanities and initiated the artist-in-residence program, and launched a state-of-the-art lab for virtual and augmented reality to serve as a pedagogical and creative resource for disciplines across the college. Tahmassebi also promoted research activity and partnerships in the college, including the provision of funded opportunities for undergraduate research and creative endeavors.

An organic chemist, Dr. Tahmassebi has received more than $1 million in funding for her DNA research and related programs. Learn more about Provost Tahmassebi here.

ABOUT THE HELEN WAY KLINGLER COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

The mission of the Helen Way Klingler College of Arts and Sciences, guided by Catholic, Jesuit values, is to provide students with a transformative educational experience based on academic excellence, social justice, faith, and service. The College explores and advances the understanding of human meaning and value, the structures and dynamics of human societies, and the composition and function of the natural world.

As the academic heart of Marquette, the Klingler College of Arts and Sciences plays a central role in the education of students across the university through its contributions to the Marquette Core Curriculum. Its courses in the humanities, social sciences, and natural, computational, and mathematical sciences provide a shared foundation for students pursuing degrees across Marquette's schools and colleges.

Home to approximately 2,500 undergraduate students and 1,000 graduate students, the College offers nearly 50 majors, 22 master's and 11 Ph.D. programs spanning fourteen academic departments. In 2026, the College welcomed the School of Education and the Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology following the reorganization of Marquette's College of Education. The transition builds on longstanding connections between education and the arts and sciences, creating opportunities for deeper collaboration in teaching, scholarship, and community engagement. The Klingler College of Arts and Sciences' students make up more than one-third of the enrollment in the University Honors Program, and the College collaborates with Honors to offer a variety of Disciplinary Honors Programs. The College represents a vibrant, academically diverse, and engaged community of faculty and student scholars. The College is home to internationally recognized scholars whose research advances knowledge, shapes their fields, and enriches both their teaching and the student learning experience. In fiscal year 2026, the College's faculty secured more than $7.8 million in new research grants.

The Helen Way Klingler College of Arts and Sciences is home to a number of centers and institutes of academic excellence, such as the Les Aspin Center for Government, the Center for Data Ethics, the Center for Urban Research, Teaching, and Outreach, and the Center for Peacemaking. These make significant contributions to the teaching and research missions of the university and underpin faculty and student affinity groups across disciplines.

ROLE OF THE DEAN

The dean of the Helen Way Klingler College of Arts and Sciences reports to the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs and is the chief academic and operating officer for the College. The dean manages an annual budget of approximately $38 million for a College of approximately 3,500 students, 191 tenured and tenure-track faculty, and 100 non-tenure-track faculty. Personnel reporting to the dean include the College's department chairs and center/institute directors, the commanding officers of the ROTC units, three associate deans, a manager for academic business affairs, and operational leaders who support the Office of the Dean.

The dean is a member of the broad-based University Leadership Council and regularly convenes the Dean's Advisory Council, a body that provides counsel on affairs related to academic and administrative operations within the College. The dean also serves on the University Academic Senate, whose responsibilities include academic planning, review, and evaluation of academic programs, and formulation and appraisal of initiatives and policies relevant to the faculty and the academic mission of Marquette.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN

Develop and implement a shared strategic vision that clearly articulates the distinctive identity of the Klingler College of Arts and Sciences

As the largest unit at Marquette University, the Klingler College of Arts and Sciences has already established itself as an integral component of the university's teaching, research, and service missions and

its Catholic, Jesuit identity. However, more can be done to distinguish and better articulate the College's distinct identity, the breadth of its academic programs, impact on the university, and opportunities to prospective students and the public writ large.

Working closely with faculty, staff, students, administrators, and other key stakeholders, the incoming dean will develop a vision for the College that clearly defines its place in the Catholic intellectual tradition through its focus on liberal arts education, research excellence, and service to the Milwaukee community and beyond. Reexamining and clearly articulating the College's identity, offerings, and contributions to Marquette's Catholic, Jesuit mission will be critical to its continued work in recruiting top students, staff, and faculty from across the nation and around the world. The dean will lead the identification and promotion of the College's value and distinctive student experience in order to strengthen its presence and impact nationally and globally. They will translate this shared vision into clear priorities that guide academic strategy and investment across the College.

Serve as a passionate and effective champion for the College both across campus and externally

As a member of the University Leadership Council and close partner to university administration, the incoming dean will be a champion for the College, raising the visibility of faculty, staff, and student accomplishments, building relationships across schools and colleges on campus to identify opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaborations, strengthening ties with the Marquette Jesuit community to promote the significance of the College's liberal arts education, and advocating for resources from university leadership. The dean will articulate the College's critical role in the Marquette Core Curriculum and demonstrate how its contributions to students' education across disciplines strengthen the university.

Externally, the dean will build relationships across Marquette, throughout Milwaukee and beyond, and partner with development staff to cultivate and steward philanthropic donors. The incoming dean will bring the College, Marquette, and other key external stakeholders together around collective objectives that are grounded in its unique strengths and Catholic, Jesuit mission.

Effectively manage and grow the College's resources and actively lead fundraising efforts

The next dean will be responsible for the budget management and resource allocation across the College. Working transparently with department chairs and other leaders within the College, the dean will align investments with university priorities and make thoughtful, data-driven decisions to steward resources strategically and efficiently in support of continued academic excellence. The dean will be expected to grow and diversify the College's funding sources. Securing these resources will include providing the necessary support for increasing extramural research and training grant awards, as well as forging new corporate partnerships.

Marquette is a pillar of the Milwaukee community, and the dean must persuasively articulate the College's priorities and their importance to Marquette's mission to build internal and external support among alumni, parents, supporters, and friends. The dean will make meaningful efforts to engage the national

alumni base and identify new opportunities to make supporters enthusiastic about Marquette's Catholic, Jesuit mission and the College's liberal arts core in order to build out its donor base, annual giving, and secure major gifts. The dean will lead efforts to identify and pursue new avenues of financial backing through concerted fundraising efforts, including partnerships with local and national organizations.

Advance Marquette's teacher-scholar model to connect discovery, creativity, and student success

Marquette's educational model brings teaching and scholarship into a mutually enriching relationship, with faculty serving as dedicated educators and active scholars and researchers. The next dean will champion this model by expanding high-impact learning experiences that engage undergraduate and graduate students in research, creative practice, and community-engaged learning that spans the disciplinary breadth of the College. The dean will help shape a shared vision for undergraduate and graduate education that connects the College's scholarly strengths with students' intellectual growth and preparation for life and work beyond Marquette.

Strengthen the conditions for research excellence and scholarly impact

Marquette's strong, mission-centered environment encourages its community of talented scholars to engage in research and scholarship that address the world's most pressing questions and challenges. The next dean will foster an environment in which faculty can advance ambitious research and scholarship across the College's diverse disciplines. The dean will also help the College navigate the current opportunities and challenges that emerging technologies present for research, scholarship, and teaching. A successful candidate will articulate how their approach to this will pay close attention to ethical practice, critical thinking, and independent judgment.

Partnering with faculty and university leadership, the dean will identify priorities for investment and strengthen support for external funding across the arts and sciences, promote interdisciplinary collaborations, and further community-engaged scholarship. The opportunity for the next dean is to increase the visibility, reach, and impact of the College's research portfolio through focused investments that build on faculty strengths and align with Marquette's Catholic, Jesuit mission.

Advance student success and outcomes through a holistic educational experience

The next dean will keep students at the center of decision-making, fostering conditions that allow undergraduate and graduate students to thrive academically, professionally, personally, and spiritually. Working with the College's key stakeholders, the dean will address any barriers to retention and timely graduation, and strengthen connections between academic programming and student aspirations. The dean will work to expand access to internships, community engagement opportunities, and other experiential learning practices that help students apply learning, explore careers, and build meaningful connections across the College and beyond. Guided by Marquette's commitment to educating the whole person, the dean will bring an understanding of and commitment to student success and will use data and community feedback to guide improvements across the unit.

Recruit, develop, retain, and inspire an exceptional faculty and staff

The faculty and staff within the Klingler College of Arts and Sciences are indispensable to its mission. As it develops and advances a strategic vision led by the dean and in alignment with campus' strategic plan, the College's diverse and passionate faculty and staff will be critical to carrying these initiatives to fruition. Working in collaboration with department chairs and center directors, the dean will oversee the recruitment, retention, and advancement of tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track faculty, as well as staff across the College. The dean will invest in professional development and employee retention efforts, ensuring that people are acknowledged for outstanding work and feel valued for their contributions.

The incoming dean will display exceptional interpersonal and management skills and be an accessible, visible, and engaged leader. This individual will be committed to ensuring a healthy workplace environment and foster a culture of shared governance, transparency, team building, and collaboration in which a diverse faculty and staff are eager to teach, research, and work. The incoming dean will be prepared to lead in a complex environment and enhance morale for faculty and staff.

Communicate openly, make decisions with fortitude, and explain those decisions clearly to the College community

The incoming dean must lead the Klingler College of Arts and Sciences during a dynamic period in higher education with an intentional strategy that supports university-wide goals and objectives. Working with other college-wide and university leaders, the dean will maintain accountability across the unit to help the College be successful in a challenging and rapidly evolving higher education environment. They will be open to dialogue and foster a culture of trust and shared governance prior to making decisions while having the courage to make difficult decisions. The dean will communicate openly, transparently, and honestly and explain the rationale behind decisions to the College community.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The incoming dean of the Klingler College of Arts and Sciences will bring a distinguished record of academic accomplishment and administrative experience. They will possess a clear vision for the future of liberal arts education and research, an ability to cultivate philanthropic support, an understanding of and appreciation for shared governance, a demonstrated commitment to inclusive excellence and student success, and the ability to work effectively with a diverse array of departments and stakeholders associated with the College. While no candidate will possess all the ideal qualifications, the successful candidate will bring many of the following experiences and abilities important to the role:

- A terminal degree and/or credentials that merit an appointment at the rank of full professor;
- A commitment to Catholic and Jesuit higher education and familiarity with the Catholic intellectual tradition;
- A strong commitment to teaching, research, and service;

- Administrative leadership experience;
- Proven success in – or aptitude for – external and alumni relations and development;
- A commitment to advancing inclusive excellence;
- Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills;
- Evidence of leading with integrity and sound judgment; a demonstrated record of building trust across an academic community, strengthening shared governance, and providing steady leadership through periods of challenge and uncertainty;
- A demonstrated ability to build effective partnerships internally and externally;
- Strong business acumen and strategic thinking, including the ability to manage complex budgets, optimize resource allocation, and align strategies with academic and university-wide priorities;
- A record of accomplishment in recruiting, developing, and retaining outstanding faculty and staff;
- Dedication to undergraduate and graduate student success, retention, advising, and high-impact learning opportunities;
- Commitment to securing research funding and an understanding of the infrastructure required to support research;
- Demonstrated success managing complex academic portfolios and leading change with positive outcomes;
- Leadership in integrating emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, into curriculum, research, and service aligned with the institution's mission.

LOCATION

Marquette is located on a 90-acre campus in the near-downtown Avenues West neighborhood of Milwaukee. Lake Michigan is roughly one mile east of the edge of campus. Milwaukee is the largest city in Wisconsin, and its metropolitan area is the 40th-most populous metro area in the U.S. with 1.57 million residents. Milwaukee is highly diverse, with about 39% African American and 20% Hispanic/Latino residents.

Milwaukee is one of America's great cities, combining a dynamic urban community with a rich cultural heritage. There is also accessibility to parks, rivers and other outdoor recreation. It is a popular venue for sailing, windsurfing, kitesurfing, ethnic dining, and cultural festivals. Milwaukee's Summerfest is the world's largest musical festival. The city is recognized for its museums, fine dining and hotels, professional sports, gardens and parks, and the Milwaukee County Zoo. These various opportunities, combined with strong public and private schools, make Milwaukee a family-friendly city. Milwaukee also has two opera companies, a ballet, a symphony, and several live theatre companies that range from Broadway musicals, Shakespeare and the classics to smaller, regional productions. Milwaukee also hosts professional basketball, indoor soccer, and hockey teams. The city is also home to the Milwaukee Brewers, who won their first World Series championship in 2026. To learn more, see www.visitmilwaukee.org.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website:

https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/marquette-university-helen-way-klingler-college-arts-and-sciences/dean

For best consideration, apply by January 4, 2027.

Julie Filizetti, Rafa Escobedo, and Gabi Nayar
Isaacson, Miller

Marquette University affirms its longstanding commitment to the principle of equal employment opportunity regardless of race, color, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, veteran's status, or national origin. Marquette affirms its commitment to the principle of affirmative action and its commitment to abide by state regulations and federal laws pertaining to equal employment opportunity.

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