



Dean, Vanderbilt Divinity School
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, Tennessee

THE SEARCH

Vanderbilt University invites nominations and applications for the position of Dean, Vanderbilt Divinity School (VDS or Divinity School). The University seeks a dean with distinction as both a scholar and leader, proven administrative skills, deep commitments to matters of justice, equity, and diversity, and a strong record of institutional and community leadership who will capitalize on the Divinity School's strengths and opportunities for growth, and will develop a collective vision for VDS' future.

The Divinity School has been a part of Vanderbilt University since 1876, shortly after the University's founding in 1873, and is one of only six university-based, interdenominational divinity schools in the country and the oldest one in the South. The Divinity School's nineteenth-century founders adopted a commonplace label for theological institutions of their era, "school of the prophets," as they sought to lift up the importance of education for clergy. Today, VDS lives into this legacy, in a world of a large tent Christianity, religious pluralism, an ever-expanding understanding of the nature of the diversities in our midst, and marvelous and challenging cultural differences.

The Divinity School prepares learners for religious leadership and scholarship within a justice-seeking, interdenominational, and expanding interfaith community of teaching and learning that is partnered with the broader Nashville community. The Divinity School brings together rigorous scholarship, spiritual and intellectual growth, and impactful field education for a community of over 200 master's and doctoral students supported by 26 core faculty members and an additional 20 affiliated and adjunct faculty. The Divinity School offers the Master of Divinity (MDiv), Master of Theological Studies (MTS), Master of Theology (ThM), and Doctor of Ministry in Integrative Chaplaincy (DMin) degrees. Additionally, VDS has administrative oversight of the Graduate Department of Religion, in collaboration with the Graduate School, which offers Master of Arts (MA) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees across nine fields of study.

The dean will join the VDS community at a defining moment in the School's history, and will work closely with faculty in articulating strategic priorities, opportunities, and ambitions, including

strengthening the School's connections across the University; fostering an inclusive, supportive community that is equitable and diverse; sharpening the School's brand and programmatic focus; streamlining internal systems and updating administrative processes; and raising significant funds to support the critical and transformational work of the School. In addition, the dean will be a senior leader at the University, joining a collegial and collaborative group of decanal colleagues who oversee the nine other schools on campus. The successful candidate will have excellent academic and professional credentials, demonstrated success in managing complex units or organizations, a history of welcoming and fostering diversity and advocating for inclusive, equitable policies and professional communities, and a strong track record of fundraising and administrative leadership.

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

ABOUT VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Vanderbilt University, located in Nashville, Tennessee, is a top-15 private research university offering a full-range of undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees. Created from an initial \$1 million gift from Cornelius Vanderbilt, who envisioned a place that would "contribute to strengthening the ties that should exist between all sections of our common country," Vanderbilt is situated on a 330-acre campus near the thriving city center, serving more than 13,000 students and employing almost 7,000 faculty and staff.

Vanderbilt offers undergraduate programs in the liberal arts and sciences, engineering, music, and education and human development, as well as a full range of graduate and professional degrees. The combination of cutting-edge research, strength in the liberal arts, and nationally recognized schools of business, divinity, education, engineering, law, medicine, and nursing creates an invigorating atmosphere where students tailor their educational experiences to meet their goals and researchers collaborate to solve complex questions affecting health, culture, and society.

Vanderbilt provides a gateway to greatness, drawing the best and brightest students from all backgrounds across the nation and around the world. Vanderbilt alumni can be found in Congress, on the judicial bench, among the list of Nobel laureates, heading corporations, conducting innovative medical research, writing for and appearing on the stage and screen, and playing in the NFL and major league baseball.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are top priorities across the Vanderbilt campus. In 2019, a university-wide Diversity Council was convened and charged with advocating for diversity and inclusion for all members of the Vanderbilt community. The Council is the latest example of the efforts by Vanderbilt's senior leadership to support DEI work across campus.

The University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelor's, master's, education specialists and doctoral degrees. Vanderbilt is a member of the Association of American Universities.

UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

Daniel Diermeier, an internationally renowned scholar of political science and managerial leadership, began his tenure as the ninth chancellor of Vanderbilt University on July 1, 2020. Diermeier was formerly provost and dean of the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago and before that a longtime professor at Stanford University and Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management.

Diermeier guided the University through the many challenges and unknowns of the COVID-19 pandemic—driven by Vanderbilt's commitment to protecting the health, safety, and wellbeing of the community, and also by the university's mission to provide an empowering residential education to the leaders of tomorrow. During his first year in office, Diermeier launched several ambitious programs with the goal of setting new benchmarks for excellence. Key initiatives include Destination Vanderbilt, a bold commitment to recruiting and hiring renowned faculty at an increased rate, and The Vanderbilt Project on Unity and American Democracy, which seeks to elevate evidence-based reasoning in the national conversation. Diermeier also oversaw the launch of Vandy United, a \$300 million campaign dedicated to Vanderbilt student-athletes, athletics programs and Commodore fans, which is the largest undertaking of its kind in the University's history.

A first-generation college graduate, Diermeier earned a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Rochester. He also holds master's degrees in political science from the University of Rochester and the University of Munich, and he earned a master's degree in philosophy from the University of Southern California.

C. Cybele Raver is Vanderbilt's provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs. An esteemed developmental psychologist whose leadership has spanned research, clinical, academic, and administrative settings, Raver oversees all faculty, staff, programs, and initiatives for Vanderbilt's 10 schools and colleges. She also leads the University's research, admissions, student affairs and residential life.

Raver has recently been elected as a fellow of the AAAS and holds a Cornelius Vanderbilt Chair as professor of psychology and human development at Peabody College.

Prior to joining Vanderbilt, Raver was deputy provost at New York University, where she worked to advance interdisciplinary research and provided leadership for faculty and graduate students. She was also the provost liaison for several institutes, including NYU's Center for Data Science, the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences, and the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of

Public Service, as well as the Social Science Division and Graduate School within the College of Arts & Science.

A native of New York City, Raver earned her B.A. magna cum laude from Harvard University, where she studied psychology and filmmaking. She later earned her Ph.D. in developmental psychology from Yale University.

VANDERBILT DIVINITY SCHOOL

Vanderbilt University was founded in 1873 as an institution of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. When classes began in 1875, the Biblical Department was one of four schools in the university, the others being an undergraduate college (the Academic Department) and the schools of law and medicine. Wesley Hall, a five-story structure providing classrooms, offices, a library, dining facilities, and residences for students and faculty, opened in 1881. In 1915, Vanderbilt University became an independent institution no longer formally affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The following year, the Biblical Department became the Vanderbilt School of Religion, continuing as an interdenominational school, with its curriculum broadened to indicate an increasing ecumenical consciousness. In 1956, the name was changed to the Divinity School, in keeping with the national pattern for university-related theological institutions. The Graduate School of Theology of Oberlin College merged with the Divinity School in 1966, an event acknowledged in naming the present building (which opened in 1960) the Oberlin Quadrangle. Since 1960, several transformations, both cultural and religious, have reshaped the school in significant ways, and these are reflected in the purposes and commitments of the Divinity School outlined below.

Today, Vanderbilt Divinity School is one of 10 schools and colleges at Vanderbilt University. Unique in the South, the Divinity School is committed explicitly to the inclusivity of all religious traditions, races and ethnicities, gender identities, and sexual orientations. Students have the freedom to build their educational experiences around their interests—degrees are interdisciplinary, and students may study for certificates from different schools throughout the University and take courses from other Vanderbilt graduate and professional schools. VDS is a vital institution in the southeast, with alumni serving in congregational and denominational leadership, nonprofit leadership, chaplaincy, government and politics, higher education, and other sectors essential to the human condition.

In 1875, Bishop McTyeire proclaimed Vanderbilt's Biblical Department, the predecessor of today's Divinity School, to be a "School of the Prophets." Striving to embody the spirit of that proclamation, the Divinity School has historically engaged issues including, but not limited to, economic, environmental, social, racial, and gendered (in)justice. The various faith traditions represented at the School recognize the multidimensional reality of poverty and uphold commitments to foster human flourishing and care for those who are in need. In a global and multi-religious world, the Divinity School seeks to fulfill the following objectives: to engage in theological inquiry; to help persons prepare for the practice of Christian ministry and public

leadership; to encourage personal and spiritual formation; to prepare agents of social justice; and to educate future scholars and teachers, locally and globally.

Academic Programs

VDS' degree programs enable students, with the aid of faculty advisers, to plan a course of study in light of their talents, interests, and professional objectives. Resources of the University and affiliated institutions offer rich opportunities for students to secure additional knowledge and skills in preparation for their vocations.

The Divinity School offers three master's degree programs: the Master of Divinity (MDiv), a professional degree offering in-depth interdisciplinary graduate work, often in preparation for a career in ordained ministry or another form of professional public or institutional leadership; the Master of Theological Studies (MTS) offering graduate study across disciplines as a foundation for doctoral studies, ordained or lay ministry, leadership in the nonprofit sector, or to further develop one's personal theological understanding; the Master of Theology (MTh), an advanced theological degree, principally in preparation for doctoral study in a specific discipline; and the Doctor of Ministry (DMin), a professionally oriented doctoral degree that provides students advanced training in practices of ministry and advanced academic study in theological disciplines relevant to their vocations. VDS is accredited to offer master's and doctoral degrees in divinity, ministry, and theological studies by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS). Additionally, VDS has administrative oversight of the Graduate Department of Religion, in collaboration with the Graduate School, which offers Master of Arts (MA) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees across nine fields of study.

The Divinity School and Vanderbilt University offer certificate programs and degree concentrations in several areas of interest:

Certificates offered within the Divinity School: **Religion in the Arts and Contemporary Culture**; **Kelly Miller Smith Institute on Black Church Studies (KMSI)**; **Carpenter Program in Religion, Gender**.

Certificates offered in the broader University and available to Divinity School students: **African American and Diaspora Studies**; **Jewish Studies**; **Latin American Studies**; **Global Health**.

MDiv and MTS degree concentrations: **Black Religion and Culture Studies**; **Chaplaincy**; **Pastoral and Prophetic Congregational Leadership (MDiv only)**; **Global Christianities and Interreligious Encounter**; **Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies**; **Prison and Carceral Studies**; **Religion and Economic Justice**; **Religion and the Arts**; **Religion, Gender, and Sexuality**; **Spirituality and Social Activism**.

Student Profile

As of Fall 2020, 57% of students were enrolled in the MDiv, 21.5% in the MTS, 10% in the DMin, and 4% in the ThM. Additionally, joint degrees are offered in community development and action (Peabody College of Education), law (Vanderbilt Law School), business administration (Owen Graduate School of Management), medicine (Vanderbilt School of Medicine), and nursing (Vanderbilt School of Nursing).

For the graduating class of 2020, 18% pursued congregational or parish ministry, 17% chaplaincy ministry, 18% nonprofit leadership, 15% additional graduate education, 6% higher education administration, 5% for profit positions, 2% K-12 education, and 18% other fields of employment.

For the Fall 2020 incoming class, 61% of the students identified as White, 25% African American, 7% Asian, 3.3% Hispanic/Latinx, 1.6% First Nation, and 1.6% African. 52.25% of the class identified as female and 47.45% as male. 30% self-identified as LGBTQ+. Students hailed from 15 different U.S. states, 11 countries beyond the U.S., and were affiliated with 30 different Christian denominations or other religious traditions.

Faculty

The Divinity School's faculty is comprised of leading scholars and practitioners across nine formal areas of study. Interdisciplinarity, a commitment to teaching excellence and mentoring, and prodigious research and publications are hallmarks of the Divinity School faculty. There are 26 core faculty members and an additional 20 adjunct and affiliated faculty. The Divinity School has one of the highest percentages of full-time faculty of color among top research seminaries and divinity schools at 37%. 26% of the faculty identify as Black, the highest percentage among university-embedded, predominantly White Divinity Schools.

Facilities and Finances

The Divinity School quadrangle, where the school has been rooted since 1960, includes classrooms and seminar rooms, administrative and faculty offices, a reading room, audiovisual facilities, a student common room, and a space for worship and meditation. Benton Chapel, which serves as the university chapel, is named in honor of John Keith Benton, dean of the school from 1939 until 1956. In May 1970, the Board of Trust specified that the quadrangle should be named the John Frederick Oberlin Divinity Quadrangle, in commemoration of the Divinity School's merger with the Oberlin Graduate School of Theology and symbolic of the continuation at Vanderbilt of that school's long and distinguished history. The All Faith Chapel, dedicated in 1993, allows students and faculty and staff members to worship and meditate in an environment created to serve the needs of all religious traditions. In the summer of 2017, the Divinity School began a renovation and expansion project which included an easily accessible and distinguishable

main entrance featuring an outdoor plaza and light-filled atrium; a multipurpose space for worship, meetings, and musical events; new classrooms equipped with smart technology; an outdoor terrace for reflection and small group gatherings; and office suites for the administration and program coordinators. The building, which included the expansion named the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation Wing, was dedicated on August 23, 2019.

The Divinity Library is the religion/theology division of the Jean and Alexander Heard Libraries. In addition to supporting the instructional and research programs of the Divinity School, Graduate Department of Religion, and the Department of Religious Studies, it serves the university community with technical studies in religion. The Divinity Library is one of the nine divisions of the Heard Libraries system, which collectively houses nearly five million items and provides access to millions more resources. The nine campus libraries share an online presence that provides access to an integrated catalog of print and e-resources, as well as information about library services, workshops, programs, exhibitions, research guides, and librarian subject specialists.

The FY22 annual budget for the Divinity School is \$12.77m.

THE ROLE OF THE DEAN: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Rev. Dr. Emilie Townes has served as dean of Vanderbilt Divinity School since 2013 and will step down at the end of the 2022-2023 academic year after 10 years in the role. As dean, she has led the re-envisioning of theological education at Vanderbilt while increasing the visibility of the institution's historical commitment to seeking justice and preparing 21st-century ministers, scholars, and community leaders for service in an increasingly complex world. One of Townes' most visible projects on campus was the three-year renovation and addition to the Divinity building, which had not been updated since 1960. Programs established during Dean Townes' tenure include the **James Lawson Institute for the Research and Study of Nonviolent Movements**, a cross-disciplinary collaboration between the Divinity School and the College of Arts and Science that advances the life's work of the Rev. James Lawson, a civil rights icon and one of Vanderbilt's most revered alumni; the **Public Theology and Racial Justice Collaborative**, funded by the Henry Luce Foundation; the **David G. Buttrick Certificate Program in Homiletic Peer Coaching**, funded by the Lilly Endowment; and the **Wendland-Cook Program in Religion and Justice**, supported by a gift from Barbara Cook Wendland. Her tenure as dean has been notable for the strengthening of the Divinity School's scholarly profile, faculty, and student life, and laying the administrative and cultural groundwork for even more collaboration and integration between the Divinity School and other academic and co-curricular aspects of the University.

Reporting to the provost, the dean is, in effect, the chief administrative and academic officer for the School with responsibility for the budget, curriculum and academic programs, faculty, facilities, community relations, and development. The dean is supported in all of this by a talented and devoted staff. The dean's senior staff includes a chief business officer, an associate

dean for development and alumni relations, an assistant dean for academic affairs, and an assistant dean for admissions, vocation, and stewardship. The dean also has oversight of the Graduate Department of Religion in collaboration with the Graduate School.

The successful dean will bring inspirational vision and a deep-rooted commitment to the enterprise of theological education in a research University context that is fully committed to the interrelationship of scholarship and practice. To accomplish this overarching vision, the dean must be prepared to address the following opportunities and challenges:

Lead a comprehensive, inclusive, and collaborative strategic planning process resulting in an innovative and actionable vision for the Divinity School's future that reflects the changing landscape of religious and theological education and the broad range of fields of professional practice for theologically trained leaders.

The dean will join a genuinely collaborative community of learners, scholars, and practitioners, and will have the opportunity to work in partnership with these stakeholders to drive a process of strategic planning and implementation across the Divinity School. In this planning for the Divinity School's future, the dean should prize open, transparent communication; clear and streamlined processes for action; and creative, forward-thinking ideas that place the Divinity School on the leading edge of theological education that is ecumenical, multifaith, and transdisciplinary in orientation. There is great appreciation among the Divinity School community for the quality and impact of its academic programs, the quality and diversity of its students, and the preeminence of its faculty. At the same time, there is an appetite across the Divinity School, and the broader University community, for boldness of vision and an entrepreneurial approach to exploring new curricular and co-curricular possibilities, particularly those that lean into the Divinity School's historic commitments to ministry in the public square broadly defined, including social justice advocacy and social sector leadership. The dean should enthusiastically embrace this opportunity to reimagine what is possible and then make those possibilities reality.

Champion the recruitment, retention, and support of students, faculty, and staff to build upon and further enhance the Divinity School's reputation as a center for excellence and innovation in theological education.

It is an increasingly competitive and challenging environment for theological institutions to attract and retain students. The Divinity School must redouble its efforts to recruit and enroll the highest caliber students, many of whom are also being heavily recruited by its peer institutions. The dean must work with Divinity School faculty and staff to catalyze innovative and effective marketing, outreach, and student recruitment efforts; cultivate opportunities for contextual education, career services, and lifelong learning/alumni engagement to ensure that students are set up for success post-graduation; and foster a safe and inclusive environment where students, faculty, and staff from all backgrounds can thrive. The dean must also provide robust support of faculty teaching, research, and service; support the professional development of faculty and staff

at all levels; and actively recruit faculty and staff of the highest caliber to fuel the Divinity School's ambitions and competitiveness.

Expand the fundraising base and increase annual contributions to support the work of the Divinity School.

The next dean, in collaboration with Divinity School faculty and staff as well as the University leadership and Office of Development and Alumni Relations, will continue to develop and refine the Divinity School's efforts to cultivate a positive student experience and maintain strong alumni connections that will result in an enthusiastic and generous culture of alumni giving. The dean will also work to cultivate a broad base of individual and institutional philanthropy to support the dynamic and impactful work of the Divinity School. Fundraising priorities include master's and doctoral student scholarships, endowed faculty chairs, and funding for the wide range of Divinity School programs, institutes, centers, and initiatives. Raising the Divinity School's philanthropic aspirations and annual draw should be a key goal for the next Dean to enable the Divinity School to continue to attract, retain, and support the highest-caliber students, faculty, and staff.

Strengthen and bring clarity to administrative systems and processes across the Divinity School and among key academic partners across the University.

Upon arrival, the next dean will be expected to assess existing protocols, policies, and administrative systems with an eye toward increasing operational efficiencies, better utilizing technology, and improving consistency. The dean may also choose to review the Divinity School's organizational structure and will want to establish best practices for regularly sharing key School-wide data and updates with the Divinity School faculty and, as appropriate, the entire Divinity School community. Additionally, the next dean will work with key academic partners across the University including the Graduate Division of Religion (Graduate School), the undergraduate Department of Religion (College of Arts & Sciences), Jewish Studies, Islamic Studies, and others to facilitate increased collaboration, joint course offerings, and cross registration opportunities.

Enhance the Divinity School's reputation across the Vanderbilt campus, within the greater Nashville community, and among its peer institutions across the country.

The next dean should continue to promote and advance the interests of the Divinity School across the Vanderbilt campus, the Nashville community, nationally, and increasingly on the global stage. Working collaboratively with the other deans at the University, the next dean will identify new opportunities for cross-disciplinary, inter-school partnerships and initiatives, and should develop creative strategies for better integrating the Divinity School's students and faculty within the greater Vanderbilt community.

The dean will embrace the responsibility of leading a school with a rich and dynamic legacy as an incubator for civil rights and social justice advocacy and leadership. Known colloquially as "The School of the Prophets," the Divinity School is committed to religious and theological scholarship

and formation that centers spirituality and public prophetic witness undergirded by a rigorous theo-ethical framework. The next dean must be committed to the continued development of the Divinity School's reputation as an institution that produces leaders who are theologically adept, interfaith and interculturally competent, socially active innovators and change agents. The dean will honor the deep connections between the Divinity School and the Nashville community by expanding and deepening connections with congregational, institutional, civic, and philanthropic partners in the Nashville area. Similarly, it will be important for the dean to prioritize elevating the Divinity School's reputation among its peer schools, enthusiastically broadcasting the Divinity School's academic rigor and commitment to spiritual and theological formation in an incredibly diverse community, while also spotlighting the accomplishments and contributions of its faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

QUALIFICATIONS

The dean must have professional qualifications that earn the respect and inspire the trust of the faculty, the leadership at Vanderbilt University, the professional staff of the Divinity School, and the broader community of students, alumni, faith, scholarly, and civic partners. Effective and demonstrated administrative expertise, experience in teamwork and collaboration, emotional intelligence, and history of commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion; and an appetite for fundraising and "friend raising" are required. The successful candidate will also possess outstanding skills of leadership, community building, and interpersonal relations, excelling at communicating with diverse audiences and fostering an inclusive and open culture of intellectual inquiry across the range of disciplines and communities of practice represented in the Divinity School and Graduate Department of Religion.

The dean of the Vanderbilt Divinity School will be a leader of unquestionable integrity and will also possess many of the following professional qualities:

- Intellectual commitment to the mission of Vanderbilt University and to the importance of learning, teaching, and research in religious and theological education;
- Demonstrated commitment to supporting the professional practice of theological and/or ministerial vocation and a meaningful connection to communities of faith and/or spiritually informed public leadership and social change;
- Demonstrated talent in balancing competing interests, negotiating priorities, and aligning resources to adequately carry out the priorities of the School;
- Experience facilitating creative and effective approaches to fundraising, alumni engagement, recruiting, degree and non-degree academic programming, and strategic partnerships with a wide range of entities (i.e., denominations, congregations, advocacy organizations; local, national, and international convening groups, etc.)
- A proven record of leading and mentoring diverse people and teams; demonstrated respect for and competence in cultural diversity; and the ability to have hard conversations, to unpack complicated issues, and to cultivate a strong sense of inclusion

and belonging across diverse groups, particularly minoritized and historically underrepresented persons;

- Leadership of and respect for an intellectually engaged and active faculty;
- Commitment to working across academic units and disciplines as a team member within the School, across the University, nationally, and internationally;
- Aptitude and enthusiasm for administration, budgeting and financial management, and strategic planning and implementation.

TO APPLY

Vanderbilt University has engaged Isaacson, Miller to assist the Divinity School Dean Search Committee with identifying and reviewing candidates for this position. Inquiries, applications, and nominations may be sent in confidence to the following:

Ben Tobin, Partner
Katie Rockman, Partner
Ernest Brooks, Partner

<http://www.imsearch.com/8479>

Vanderbilt University has a strong institutional commitment to recruiting and retaining an academically and culturally diverse community of faculty. Minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, and members of other underrepresented groups, in particular, are encouraged to apply. Vanderbilt is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer.