



THE SEARCH FOR THE NEXT  
PRESIDENT OF UNION PRESBYTERIAN SEMINARY



UNION  
PRESBYTERIAN  
SEMINARY

For the Church in the World

PROSPECTUS



# PROFILE AND INTRODUCTION



**Union Presbyterian Seminary invites nominations and applications for the role of president of our two campuses. After 16 years of remarkably faithful and effective service, Dr. Brian K. Blount will step down on June 30, 2023, leaving behind a strong seminary that is well positioned to meet the challenges of theological education in a rapidly changing world.**

Union Presbyterian Seminary is one of the nation's outstanding centers of theological education, long recognized as a leader in the Reformed tradition. While staying true to its Presbyterian roots, the Seminary has embraced ecumenical and international diversity in its faculty and student body and prepares students for vital Christian ministries in a variety of settings.

Blessed with a creative cadre of faculty scholars, a talented and dedicated staff, a supportive board of trustees, and a substantial endowment, the Seminary is prepared to continue its work under the direction of a visionary leader.

Union Presbyterian Seminary has embraced the opportunity to expand beyond its original Richmond, Virginia, base by establishing a second thriving campus in Charlotte, North Carolina. While we are now an institution with two locations, we are committed to learning how to live more fully into a vision of "One Seminary, Two Campuses."





# UNION PRESBYTERIAN SEMINARY MISSION

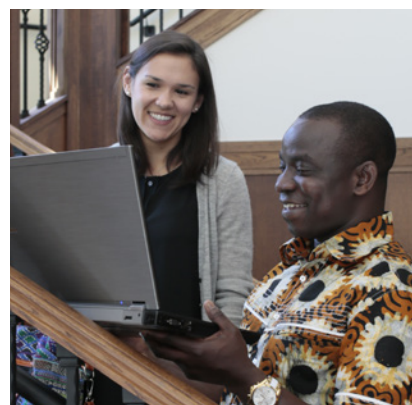


Union Presbyterian Seminary equips people in the ways of Jesus to witness, teach, and live into the movement of God’s Reign through their ministry in the church and in the world—a sacred vocation that requires deep learning, commitment to service, and an ability to read cultures and circumstances in the light of the rich resources of Scripture and theological tradition.

## This mission is guided by our core values:

- **WE BELIEVE** that Jesus is God in the flesh, the Son of that One whom he called Father. His life, ministry, death, and resurrection have transformed the world. As the risen and living Lord, Jesus has called us to bear witness to and participate in the Spirit’s transformative presence in the world.
- **WE PROVIDE** innovative and effective programs of theological education, grounded in the Reformed theological tradition and ecumenically attuned, that inspire and empower learners for bold service to God’s Reign in the church and in the world.
- **WE NURTURE** increasingly diverse and inclusive learning communities for service in the world.
- **WE SERVE** as a theological resource for church and society in partnership with other institutions, organizations, and faith communities.

Our goal is to place strong, capable leaders in churches and to inspire and equip knowledgeable people of faith who are called to leadership in varied public venues. We prepare a diverse student body for a range of vocations within the church, the nonprofit sector, schools, businesses, public service, politics, and beyond. Dedicated to our mission, we engage students in the rigors and joy of deep learning, equip them for the practice of ministry, and shape their identity as faith leaders who are prepared to answer their vocational callings.







**Since its formation in 1812 as a theology department of Hampden-Sydney College, the Seminary has sustained the intention of its founders to provide education for Christian ministry that is scholarly, pastoral, and engaged with contemporary life.**

We are one of 10 theological seminaries of the Presbyterian Church (USA), with a Richmond campus that was established in 1898. The Seminary's neighbor, the Presbyterian School of Christian Education (PSCE), was originally established as the General Assembly's Training School for Lay Workers in 1914. Its name was changed to PSCE in 1959, and when it joined the Seminary in 1997, the two schools became Union-PSCE. In 2009, the Seminary's board of trustees voted to change the name of the institution to Union Presbyterian Seminary.

Traditionally, most of our students have been active members and leaders of Presbyterian congregations preparing for church vocations. Our primary educational programs in relation to student enrollment have been the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) and Master of Christian Education (M.A.C.E.), with

curricular focus on preparation of people for service as practical theologians, congregational leaders, and community witnesses. We are the only PC(USA) seminary that also provides a distinctive M.Div./M.A.C.E. dual degree as a commitment to the importance of Christian education in the life of the church, the academy, and the public arena.

Increasingly, our student body is becoming more diverse in its vocational goals and denominational affiliations. In response to shifting demographics among our students, we have thoughtfully revised the curricula for degree programs and created a new Master of Arts in Public Theology (M.A.P.T.) to deepen the capacity of individuals engaging in public theology and service. It, too, can be combined with the M.Div. or M.A.C.E. as a dual-degree option. Consonant with our affirmation of deep learning, our Master of



Theology (Th.M.) and recently launched Doctor of Ministry (D.Min., with an emphasis on “The Church in the World”) offer advanced degree programs for students who wish to build upon a first theological degree in pursuit of their vocational aspirations.

Union Presbyterian Seminary has sustained a formal relationship with The United Methodist Church as a non-United Methodist seminary approved by the University Senate. We have also nurtured a new formal partnership with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Virginia and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. In November 2020, a memorandum of understanding was executed to establish a Baptist House of Studies at the Seminary.

Our dynamic full-time faculty of 23 is dedicated to preparing Christian leaders for the sacred vocation of ministry in the church and in the world. Its members are increasingly diverse: In its present configuration, half are women, one-third are persons of color, one-third represent traditions other than the PC(USA), and one-fourth come from beyond the United States. Eighteen are ordained ministers. The faculty has given the institution a reputation for excellence, as its members have distinguished themselves in teaching effectiveness, scholarly engagement and publication, and service to the church and the community. Also noteworthy is the Seminary’s journal, *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*, which, since 1947, has offered pastors, scholars, and theologians a valuable resource for study, preaching, and teaching.

We remain committed to our historical role as a primary keeper of the Reformed flame in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Yet the Reformed tradition is ecumenical in its orientation, and we welcome students, faculty, and staff from diverse religious backgrounds and seek to expand our reach beyond our traditional Presbyterian calling. While most of our students are affiliated with the PC(USA), more than 36% of our student body represents other denominations.



In addition to our degree programs and lay education initiatives, the Seminary has created three new educational Centers in the past 10 years. A brief description follows.

- **THE SYNGMAN RHEE GLOBAL MISSION CENTER** for Christian Education serves as a generative resource for educators from other countries who seek support for their Christian education work and prepares international students for passionate and effective careers in their home nations. The Center also hosts international faculty and Ph.D. students for intensive periods of research in our theological library. This Center, located on the Richmond campus, is directed by Dr. James Taneti, a faculty member with expertise in the area of World Christianity.
- **THE KATIE GENEVA CANNON CENTER FOR WOMANIST LEADERSHIP** is a space for study and action nurturing the soul work of women of African ancestry by reimagining theology and its cognate disciplines in liberating ways. It invites religious practitioners from all faith traditions, healthcare providers, artists, cultural workers, policymakers, and students to participate in a programmatic agenda that prioritizes education and training, research, and community engagement. This Center, located on the Richmond campus, is directed by Rev. Melanie Jones, a member of the faculty whose work has focused on Ethics, Theology, and Culture.
- **THE CENTER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION** endeavors to bring theological and pedagogical analysis to the work of social justice by providing lecture series that explore the processes of social change through a theological lens. The Center hosts social justice advocates in the Seminary community to engage students and faculty and facilitates conversations in the wider community that foster reconciliation and social change. This Center, located on the Charlotte campus, is directed by Dr. Rodney Sadler, a member of the faculty whose teaching and writing has centered on Biblical Studies.



The Seminary's strategic plan (summarized on the next page) provides that the faculty implement designs for more creatively incorporating the programmatic work of these three Centers into our degree program curricula in ways that will provide opportunities for more engaged and integrated student learning in areas such as worship and liturgy, Christian Education in a global perspective, community organizing, and nontraditional ministries.



## OUR STRATEGIC PLAN



Union Presbyterian Seminary regularly engages in a research-based planning and evaluation process that focuses on institutional quality and effectiveness. Every five years, the Seminary conducts a comprehensive review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission to develop a strategic plan. Three successive strategic plans have been developed during the Blount presidency.

Our priorities are best reflected in our current [strategic plan](#), which covers the period of 2019 to 2024. They are to witness, teach, and live into the movement of God's Reign by:

1. attracting, educating, and supporting increasingly diverse communities of learners for ministry in the church and the world;
2. broadening the impact and reach of an increasingly diverse faculty and its work through an increased use of technology, new program initiatives, and strategic partnerships; and
3. gathering financial resources and providing the infrastructure support required to respond faithfully to our call as a theological resource to the church and the world.

Union Presbyterian Seminary is committed to making theological education accessible and expansive as it shapes leaders for ministries in a rapidly changing church and world. The faculty offers courses and degrees in a variety of modalities. The Richmond campus continues the tradition of residential learning with classes primarily offered in person and on

weekdays, although there are an increasing number of classes offered in the evenings and by distance configurations. The Charlotte campus delivers theological education through hybrid learning, structured to meet the needs of students who want to continue to work—either in the church or in a variety of other professions—while pursuing a seminary degree. Courses are offered in a combination of on-campus and online formats most often on Saturdays. Both campuses support full- and part-time enrollment.

Our learning community across both campuses has been deepened and broadened by the faculty's commitment to embracing new educational technologies that create opportunities for classes to be taught with some students simultaneously participating physically and others virtually. These new approaches to teaching and learning have also enabled the Seminary to offer Certificates in Christian Education and Public Theology and the M.A.C.E. in a fully distant format as a way of expanding the availability of theological education. As part of our recognition of the changing landscape of theological education, starting in September 2022, a hybrid M.Div. will be offered through the Charlotte campus.



# ONE SEMINARY, TWO CAMPUSES: RICHMOND AND CHARLOTTE



**Union Presbyterian Seminary has one president, one academic dean, one faculty, one staff, one student body, and one board of trustees. The two campuses complement each other and expand the scope of our reach beyond the traditional full-time, residential learning experience. While there are challenges in integrating the operations of two campuses located almost 300 miles apart that we continue to negotiate, our increased use of technology to facilitate instruction, meetings, and day-to-day coordination has made possible our approach of "One Seminary, Two Campuses."**

The Richmond campus has been a prominent part of the Commonwealth's capital city for well over a century. Richmond has seen substantial growth in recent years and is home to three universities: Virginia Commonwealth University downtown, the University of Richmond in the city's West End, and Virginia Union University just down the street. From art, to music, to history, to sports, Richmond offers vibrant cultural attractions, a growing and adventurous culinary scene, and numerous outdoor recreation opportunities, including the James River and the Capital Trail. Richmond is virtually equidistant from Virginia beaches, the Blue Ridge Mountains, and Washington, D.C, and roughly an hour by car to historic cities like Charlottesville and Williamsburg. Like many cities around the country, Richmond residents continue to wrestle with the legacy of white supremacy that manifests in education, health care, and housing. The Seminary seeks to play a role through involvement in community organizations like Richmonders Involved to Strengthen our Communities (RISC).

The Seminary campus is located in Richmond's Northside and consists of the historic quadrangle, which is home to Watts and Lake Chapels; the Holderness Dining Room, where community lunches and other gatherings take place; and the William Smith Morton Library, a gem among theological libraries in the U.S. Student housing is available on campus in the recently renovated Richmond Hall, and off-campus student housing sits within easy walking distance. Seminary-owned land adjacent to the campus hosts Shalom Farms, a nonprofit urban farm that addresses food insecurity, and Yaupon Place, an emerging Seminary initiative for community recreation and ecological restoration.

In 2002, in response to the invitation of the five surrounding Presbyteries, Union founded a nonresidential campus in Charlotte, North Carolina. The campus was originally located on the campus of Queens University, and a freestanding building was later constructed on the property of Sharon



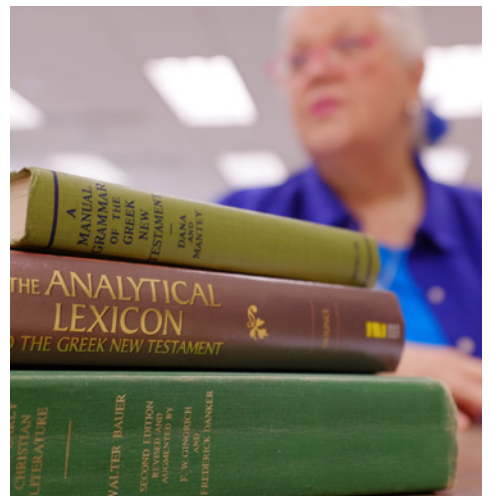
# ONE SEMINARY, TWO CAMPUSES: RICHMOND AND CHARLOTTE



Presbyterian Church in Charlotte. Initially designed to serve weekend students with classes on Friday evenings and Saturdays, the campus has grown to include a hybrid model of education, a theological library, a chapel, classrooms, and the Center for Social Justice and Reconciliation.

Charlotte is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the United States, with a majestic skyline, a dense tree canopy, and more than 52 miles of greenway trails. With its distinctive neighborhoods, arts, cuisine, culture, professional sports teams, professional communities, public transit, and outdoor recreation opportunities, Charlotte continues to look to the future. However, in a manner similar to Richmond, Charlotte continues to struggle with the legacy of white supremacy, which is evident in housing, education, and opportunity disparities across the city.

As the Charlotte campus celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2022, Union Presbyterian Seminary is poised for impact in Charlotte. With more than 100 PC(USA) congregations, Charlotte and the surrounding communities are also home to some of the PC(USA)'s largest and smallest congregations. There are also more Black Presbyterian congregations in the Charlotte metro area than in any other city in the country. The Charlotte campus is distinguished by dedicated support and connections with local congregations, as students are typically already serving in a ministry setting, while faculty and staff frequently preach, teach, and lead workshops in area churches. Vital community partnerships are built through the Center for Social Justice, where Union Presbyterian Seminary continues to dialogue with and work alongside an array of community leaders and institutions.





# QUALIFICATIONS AND DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR NEXT PRESIDENT

The Union Presbyterian Seminary bylaws provide that the president is the chief executive and administrative officer of Union Presbyterian Seminary, who also serves as a voting member of the board of trustees and of the faculty. The bylaws also specify that the president must be an ordained officer in the Presbyterian Church (USA). The bylaws further provide that the president serves as chair of the faculty and as a member of all committees of the board and of the faculty.

While the duties of the president are specified in the bylaws, the desired characteristics of the president are not. The Presidential Search Committee has identified the following characteristics as crucial for the successful leadership of the Seminary:

- A committed disciple of Jesus Christ who is grounded in the Reformed tradition and passionate about supporting the life of both the Seminary and the Presbyterian Church (USA).
- A person with authentic global and ecumenical vision who will nurture a theologically diverse learning community, support international partnerships, and expand the school's commitment to preparing persons from various denominations for ministries throughout the wider church.
- A skilled communicator who will represent the Seminary well and articulate its mission effectively in a variety of settings.
- An accomplished leader in the church whose preaching, teaching, and writing are based on thoughtful scholarship and whose demonstrated ability to nurture congregations and to advance academic excellence will enhance the Seminary's ability to fulfill its mission.
- A wise theological thinker whose discernment of institutional values, guiding principles, and practice of leadership is theologically grounded as they shepherd the school's service to the church in the world and the public square amid rapid societal change.
- A gracious, collegial person with a pastor's heart who is able to build relationships with warmth, humor, and humility among students, faculty, staff, alumni/ae, and trustees; one who is genuinely concerned for the personal well-being of everyone involved in the work of the Seminary in Richmond, in Charlotte, across the country, and around the world.
- An able administrator, possessing management skills and experience and ethical integrity. The candidate must understand the opportunities and challenges entailed in effective oversight of one seminary with two campuses and must be dedicated to the thriving of both campuses.
- A person with genuine appreciation for the rich legacy of the Presbyterian School of Christian Education and a commitment to the importance of Christian education in the life of the congregation, the academy, and the public arena.
- A proven steward in their own life of faith who will challenge and encourage people to support the Seminary with their annual, planned, and major gifts, and also be an enthusiastic and articulate "friend-raiser" for both the Richmond and Charlotte campuses.
- A bold visionary who is not afraid to have ideas challenged, who listens carefully to others and values consensus, and who will lead Union Presbyterian Seminary courageously and decisively.





# INQUIRIES, NOMINATIONS, AND APPLICATIONS

**CANDIDATES WHO WISH TO APPLY** may send a letter of interest and an executive summary of relevant experience to [presidential.search@upsem.edu](mailto:presidential.search@upsem.edu)

**TO NOMINATE A CANDIDATE**, please email one of the Search Committee co-chairs listed below.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**, or to explore potential interest in this position, please contact one of the Search Committee co-chairs.

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## Search Committee Co-Chairs:

Rev. Lori Raible ('06), Trustee, Academic Affairs Committee

*Pastor, Selwyn Avenue Presbyterian Church*

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Dr. Steve Allred, Trustee, Academic Affairs Committee

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## Other Committee Members:

Ryan G. Atkinson, Charlotte Student

*Interim Student Pastor, Quail Hollow Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, NC*

Elizabeth McNair Ayscue ('84, '89), Trustee, Community Life Committee

*Retired Pastor*

Shell K. Berry, Trustee, Business and Finance Committee

*Elder, Reid Memorial Presbyterian Church, Augusta, GA*

Rebecca L. Davis ('90, '91, '07), Charlotte Faculty—Christian Education

Frances Taylor Gench ('82, '88), Richmond Faculty—Bible

Matthew A. Rich ('00), Trustee, Advancement Committee

*Pastor, Unity Presbyterian Church, Fort Mill, SC*

Rodney S. Sadler Jr., Charlotte Faculty—Bible

Richard W. Voelz, Richmond Faculty—Practical Theology

Michelle Walker, Staff—Dean of Students/Director of Financial Aid

Peter M. Wherry, Trustee, Academic Affairs Committee

*Pastor, Mayfield Memorial Missionary Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC*







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