



Dean of Hendricks Chapel

Leadership Profile

Spring 2026



Executive Summary

[Syracuse University](#) invites inquiries, nominations, and applications for a visionary, collaborative, and inclusive leader to guide religious and spiritual life at the university and to serve as the eighth dean of [Hendricks Chapel](#).

Reporting to the chancellor, the dean provides strategic and pastoral leadership that nurtures and enriches religious and spiritual life across the university and its extended community. The dean ensures a dynamic and supportive environment where individuals can explore religious practice, personal spirituality, moral courage, community-building, and social service. This appointment comes at a pivotal moment for Syracuse University as it ushers in a new era of leadership with the appointment of [Chancellor-Elect J. Michael Haynie](#). The university seeks a leader who will partner with senior leadership and others to build upon and extend an exceptional foundation that ensures all members of the university community find vibrant and meaningful opportunities for religious life, spiritual engagement, ethical reflection, and interfaith understanding. At the same time, Hendricks Chapel is approaching its centennial in 2030 — a landmark moment that makes this an extraordinary opportunity to shape the institution's next century.

The dean of Hendricks Chapel occupies a complex and highly visible role. The dean oversees the campus ministries; offers counsel, connection, and comfort in times of celebration and challenge; and serves as a steady presence during campus-wide crises. The dean serves as a spiritual resource and trusted sounding board for the chancellor, senior leadership, faculty, students, staff, and the broader university community, participating actively in numerous councils, committees, and groups that touch nearly every facet of campus life.

A central aspect of the role is stewardship of Hendricks Chapel, the spiritual and physical heart of Syracuse University for close to 100 years. Founded with Methodist roots in 1870, the university expanded its religious openness in 1930 when Hendricks Chapel welcomed people of all denominations—a hallmark of its identity ever since. Today, the Chapel stands as an inclusive community known as “a home for all faiths and place for all people,” embracing those with established religious traditions, those without a faith tradition, and those seeking spiritual grounding. It supports more than 25 affiliated religious groups and 15 chaplaincies representing major world religions. Together, the chaplaincies offer spiritual guidance, lead worship, promote community service and interfaith dialogue, and work collaboratively in the pursuit of justice and peace. In the 2024-2025 academic year Hendricks Chapel sponsored over 1,500 programs for more than 1,000,000 total attendees—the result of nearly a decade of consecutive year-over-year growth in student engagement. Hendricks Chapel is widely regarded as a national model for interfaith engagement. As a central contributor to holistic life and learning at Syracuse University, it helps to prepare engaged citizens, scholars, and leaders for participation in a changing global society. The chapel's reach extends well beyond worship and spiritual care: its music programs, anchored by the nationally recognized Hendricks Chapel Choir and the beloved Holidays at Hendricks concerts, make it one of the most visible cultural institutions on campus.

Candidates should bring the ability to envision and cultivate a vibrant, inclusive environment in which religious and spiritual exploration flourishes and free inquiry is paramount. The ideal candidate will demonstrate exemplary communication and organizational skills; collaborative and inclusive leadership; a strong moral compass; and deep experience partnering across faiths and backgrounds. They should also possess the capacity to work effectively with a dedicated advisory board and to inspire lifelong connection, engagement, and philanthropic support for the chapel's mission. Given the chapel's extraordinary scope and pace, the next dean must bring sustained energy, enthusiasm, and a genuine love for the full range of demands the role presents. Above all, the successful candidate must be able to serve as a trusted spiritual partner to university leadership and to the broader community.

Candidates should be ordained or credentialed within a faith tradition and hold a seminary or other advanced degree; a Ph.D. is preferred. The successful candidate will bring professional ministry experience; exceptional preaching and pastoral skills; robust administrative ability including hiring, mentoring, and supporting staff; and an

informed understanding of public service and ethical issues, along with the ability to foster thoughtful campus dialogue and participation around them.

Founded in 1870, Syracuse University is a private, coeducational research institution with a longstanding commitment to bringing together students from diverse backgrounds. More than 21,000 students are enrolled across nationally recognized undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs in the university's 13 schools and colleges. The university employs approximately 2,100 full- and part-time faculty across tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track roles.

Additional information about Syracuse University may be found at <https://www.syracuse.edu>. The global executive search firm WittKieffer is assisting with this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to the firm as noted at the conclusion of this document.



Role of the Dean of the Hendricks Chapel

Reporting to the chancellor, the dean of Hendricks Chapel serves as the principal leader of religious and spiritual life at Syracuse University. The dean nurtures and safeguards the spiritual well-being of the campus community, strengthening connection and relationship-building across all faith traditions while advancing the university's commitment to a welcoming environment.

Hendricks Chapel is firmly woven into the daily life of the university, serving students, faculty, and staff across a broad spectrum of identities and beliefs. The university seeks a dean who can build upon this strong foundation—extending the chapel's reach, influence, and impact; deepening its engagement with the full campus community; and shaping an aspirational and forward-looking vision for the chapel and its leadership team. The dean provides strategic guidance for chapel staff in programming, community engagement, and the arts; oversees the Chaplains Council; and offers administrative support to all affiliated religious organizations. The chapel leads an acclaimed suite of music programs anchored by the nationally recognized Hendricks Chapel Choir and hosts a robust calendar of major university ceremonies and signature events.

The dean collaborates extensively across the university with students, faculty, staff, and administrators, while also engaging meaningfully with the greater Syracuse community. Beyond supporting the chaplains, the dean plays a vital role in fostering students' religious, spiritual, and ethical development. As complex issues emerge—whether globally or on campus—the dean is uniquely positioned to convene multiple perspectives and help the community find common ground.

The dean leads a team of approximately 13 administrative staff, 15 chaplaincies, and 25 affiliated religious groups and manages an operating budget of roughly \$1.6 million.



Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The next dean of Hendricks Chapel steps into a role shaped by extraordinary momentum, deep student engagement, and a campus-wide recognition of the chapel as a unifying center of spiritual, religious, and communal life. At the same time, the university is entering a period of leadership transition, rising expectations for transparency, accountability, and innovation, and a dynamic resource environment that calls for entrepreneurial and strategic thinking. The new dean will be asked to honor Hendricks' historic mission while expanding its reach, strengthening its infrastructure, and guiding a highly committed community into a new decade marked by the chapel's approaching 100th anniversary in 2030.

Several key opportunities and expectations have emerged for the next dean and are outlined below.

Champion and Advance a New Strategic Vision for Hendricks Chapel

An emerging strategic plan—initially shaped by the seventh Dean of Hendricks Chapel Brian Konkol, the Advisory Board, chaplains, staff, and students—is poised for fresh eyes and any refinement prior to adoption. The new dean will have a meaningful opportunity to exert leadership in shaping, finalizing, and executing this plan. The dean will be expected to:

- Articulate a compelling, contemporary vision for interfaith and religious life on campus.
- Align the chapel's vision with university priorities at a moment of institutional transition.
- Build on pioneering work already underway, such as the Global Interfaith Scholars Leadership Project, emerging global initiatives, and expanding interfaith dialogue.

Strengthen and Support Chaplains, Chaplaincies, and Spiritual Communities

Hendricks Chapel's array of chaplaincies is a defining asset, representing a range of models, resources, and levels of engagement. The next dean will be expected to:

- Provide leadership, cohesion, and accountability across a chaplaincy structure with diverse models of funding and engagement.
- Support chaplains and religious life groups in enhancing visibility, programming consistency, and student engagement.
- Address the challenges facing fiscally constrained chaplaincies and explore creative ways to sustain and expand support, including potential donor partnerships or operational redesign.

The dean must be an accessible, trusted partner who can successfully engage a diverse group of chaplains, advocate for their needs, and provide clarity around expectations, policies, and shared priorities.

Elevate Student Engagement, Well-Being, and Belonging

Students consistently identify Hendricks Chapel as a place of welcome, grounding, and connection. Leaders across campus emphasize that the chapel plays a key role in student retention and the student experience.

The next dean will:

- Maintain and expand the deep culture of student engagement that has become a hallmark of the chapel.

- Meet students “where they are,” including strengthening programs across residence life, academic units, athletics, and cultural centers.
- Sustain and grow creative programming—from wellness and service programs to arts and music to interfaith engagement—that draws students into meaningful relationships with each other and with the chapel.
- Maintain a visible, relational presence on campus and be available in moments of celebration, crisis, and complexity.

Steward and Strengthen the Chapel’s Resources, Budget, and Infrastructure

Hendricks operates with a complex mix of operating dollars, discretionary/gift funds, chaplaincy arrangements, and donor-supported initiatives. Its eighth dean will face a shifting fiscal landscape and will be expected to:

- Assess the chapel’s budgetary structure, including staff salaries, chaplaincy support, and reliance on soft or discretionary funds.
- Plan strategically for a dynamic resource environment, bringing entrepreneurial creativity and sound fiscal stewardship to advance the chapel’s mission.
- Partner effectively with the development office to sustain and grow donor support, including major gifts for strategic initiatives such as global programs, chaplaincy stability, the emergency fund, and the centennial.
- Strengthen the chapel’s development capacity by establishing consistent fundraising infrastructure and staffing commensurate with its donor relationships and philanthropic potential.
- Direct capital renewal and reimagining of the chapel’s physical footprint, particularly the lower level, improving functional program space.

Build on Momentum as a Unifying, Visible, and Trusted Campus Voice

Hendricks Chapel’s role as a moral and spiritual center positions the dean as a highly visible figure in campus life. The next dean must:

- Serve as a calm, trusted, and balanced presence in moments of tension, protest, tragedy, and polarization—someone who helps the university community find clarity, perspective, and shared humanity.
- Represent the university at major events through invocations, benedictions, and other ceremonial roles.
- Work closely with senior leadership—including a new chancellor and evolving leadership team—to provide counsel, partnership, and spiritual grounding.
- Maintain strong relationships with the Advisory Board, who are deeply invested, engaged, and expect accountability, communication, and the continuation of Hendricks’ upward trajectory.

Expand Visibility, Communication, and Storytelling—Internally and Externally

Across listening sessions, campus and board leaders emphasized the need to better tell the story of Hendricks Chapel. The next dean will be expected to:

- Raise the profile of the chapel's 1,500+ annual events, human-interest stories, and student successes.
- Improve communications and outreach to campus audiences that may not yet see themselves in the chapel's mission.
- Champion the chapel's role in fostering spiritual curiosity, ethical reflection, interfaith understanding, and compassionate citizenship.
- Use data, metrics, and assessment to demonstrate impact, deepen engagement, and support fundraising and resource planning.

Lead with Balance, Empathy, Accessibility, and Institutional Savvy

The next dean will succeed a leader who was widely viewed as both a pastor and partner across the university. There is a strong desire for the next dean to:

- Model deep empathy, humility, and listening.
- Maintain an open-door presence for students, chaplains, faculty, staff, and alumni.
- Navigate organizational complexity with tact and wisdom, building relationships thoughtfully across a period of institutional transition.
- Build trust quickly with constituencies who are both hopeful and anxious to sustain the chapel's momentum.

Prepare for and Lead Toward the Chapel's Centennial in 2030

The Chapel's 100th anniversary provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to:

- Mobilize donor enthusiasm and philanthropic investment.
- Enhance the building and its infrastructure.
- Strengthen interfaith initiatives and global programs.
- Celebrate Hendricks' legacy while launching its next century.

The next dean will serve as the architect of this milestone moment.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The next dean of Hendricks Chapel should be a spiritually grounded, relational, visionary, and entrepreneurial leader with the following qualities and experiences:

Integrity, Humility, Empathy, and Pastoral Strength:

- A grounded personal spiritual identity and practice.
- Humility and self-awareness, with the ability to center the chapel's mission rather than personal visibility.
- Genuine enjoyment of university life and deep care for students.
- Empathy as a defining leadership characteristic.
- Enthusiasm for the full scope of the role, with the stamina and energy to sustain deep engagement across a demanding calendar of pastoral, programmatic, ceremonial, and administrative responsibilities.

Leadership, Vision, and Strategic Capacity:

- A capacity to articulate an inspiring vision for spiritual, religious, and interfaith life at a modern research university.
- Experience developing, refining, and implementing strategic plans.
- The creativity and imagination to build innovative programs—global, interfaith, communal, wellness, and artistic—that meet students' evolving needs.
- The ability to navigate ambiguity, guide transition, and lead through organizational change.

A Deeply Relational Presence with Exceptional Communication Skills:

- Outstanding listening skills—calm, patient, open, and attentive.
- The ability to be a steady and trusted voice in moments of crisis, protest, conflict, grief, or uncertainty.
- A demonstrated record of building trust across diverse communities, including students, chaplains, faculty, staff, senior administrators, and alumni.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills across multiple audiences.

Operational and Organizational Leadership:

- Experience managing a complex organization with multiple funding streams, a diverse team, and varied stakeholder groups.
- Ability to set clear policies, ensure accountability, and support operational excellence.
- Experience guiding or supervising religious professionals, chaplains, faculty, or staff.
- Comfort using metrics, assessment, and data to inform decision-making.

Commitment to Inclusion and to Interfaith Engagement:

- Demonstrated experience leading or supporting interfaith initiatives and engaging people with a wide breadth of religious, spiritual, and ethical backgrounds and traditions—including those who claim no tradition.
- Multicultural fluency, cultural humility, and the ability to foster belonging for all.
- A record of creating environments where students feel supported in exploring spirituality, faith, doubt, and meaning.

Fundraising and Resource Development:

- Demonstrated success raising philanthropic support, cultivating major donors, and stewarding relationships over time.
- Comfort operating in financially constrained environments, including experience being strategic, entrepreneurial, and resource-savvy.
- The ability to expand donor engagement around major priorities such as global programs, chaplaincy sustainability, student emergency funds, and capital improvements.
- Experience partnering with an advisory board or governing body in advancement efforts.

Professional and Academic Credentials:

- Ordination or equivalent professional standing within a recognized faith tradition.
- A theological degree (seminary degree required; advanced degree preferred).
- Significant professional experience in ministry, chaplaincy, spiritual leadership, or religious life roles, ideally with exposure to higher education settings; experience connecting religious and spiritual life to the academic mission of a research university is a distinct asset.



About Syracuse University

Overview

Syracuse University, founded in 1870 as a private, coeducational institution with early strengths in the physical sciences and modern languages, has evolved into a comprehensive research university of global stature. By 1934, the university had established 13 schools and colleges—an academic structure that remains in place today. With a global footprint and a distinctive campus in the heart of New York State, the Orange community embraces innovation and fosters a strong sense of belonging.

At the close of fiscal year 2025, Syracuse University's endowment was valued at approximately \$2.1 billion. The university is home to nationally recognized programs in the humanities; natural and social sciences; information studies and library science; architecture; communications; business administration; sport management; public administration; and engineering. Its combination of cutting-edge research, a rich liberal arts and sciences foundation, and a diverse array of professional and graduate programs creates an invigorating academic environment in which students can shape their educational pathways and scholars can easily collaborate across disciplines. Syracuse remains dedicated to exceptional research and creative work, high-impact student experiences, a culture of innovation and discovery, and a longstanding commitment to access, engagement, and societal impact.

A university of national prominence and international reach, Syracuse is known for its strong professional programs, growing research enterprise, and spirited campus community. Total enrollment for fall 2025 was approximately 22,000, including over 16,000 undergraduate students, and 6,500 graduate and professional school students. Students represent all 50 U.S. states and 127 countries. The university has a historic commitment to veteran and military connected students and is rated the #1 private university for veterans.

With 13 schools and colleges, more than 200 customizable majors, 100 minors, and an array of online degrees and certificates, Syracuse University offers students extraordinary flexibility. Nearly 600 undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs enable students to design an academic path aligned with their goals and interests. New interdisciplinary opportunities—ranging from social justice and artificial intelligence to energy and environmental studies—provide hands-on research experiences that broaden perspectives and prepare students for emerging fields and careers.

Syracuse University also boasts five award-winning study abroad centers and international programs in 60 countries, offering students global experiences that shape their worldviews for a lifetime. The Syracuse Abroad centers—extensions of the university's campus—are recognized for their strong commitment to student success, the quality of their academic and cultural programming, and their innovative experiential learning opportunities.



Academics

The university is organized into 13 schools and colleges:

- [School of Architecture](#)
- [College of Arts and Sciences](#)
- [School of Education](#)
- [College of Engineering and Computer Science](#)
- [David B. Falk College of Sport](#)
- [School of Information Studies](#)
- [College of Law](#)
- [Martin J. Whitman School of Management](#)
- [Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs](#)
- [S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications](#)
- [College of Visual and Performing Arts](#)
- [College of Professional Studies](#)
- [Graduate School](#)

Research

As a Carnegie R1 research university, Syracuse University places research at the core of its mission—advancing education by engaging students in creativity, discovery, and the generation of new knowledge. The university receives approximately \$100 million in sponsored research awards annually. Additional support comes from state agencies, foundations, corporations, nonprofit organizations, and private philanthropy.

Across its 13 schools and colleges, Syracuse University sustains a wide range of scholarship, research, and creative activity. The university is also home to a robust network of research centers and institutes, many of which advance pioneering interdisciplinary work on topics such as smart materials, aging, disability studies, autonomous systems, and more. These centers strengthen collaborative research, enhance opportunities for faculty and students, and contribute to the university's growing impact on pressing societal challenges.

Athletics

Syracuse University is a proud member of the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), a premier collegiate athletics conference composed of 18 universities across 12 states. All ACC institutions compete at the NCAA Division I level, the highest tier of intercollegiate athletics. Syracuse's participation in the ACC reflects the university's commitment to excellence in both academic and athletic endeavors.

Micron Technology Announcement and Investment

In October 2022, Micron Technology announced plans to invest up to \$100 billion to build a mega-complex of semiconductor fabrication facilities in the northern suburbs of Syracuse. This partnership with New York State represents the largest private investment in the state's history, and Syracuse University played a pivotal role in helping attract Micron to the region. The university remains deeply engaged in the project and its long-term success—an involvement reinforced by the leadership of several Syracuse University alumni, including Syracuse Mayor Ben Walsh, New York Governor Kathy Hochul, and U.S. President Joe Biden, all of whom were instrumental in bringing Micron to Central New York.



Hendricks Chapel

Hendricks Chapel, the spiritual heart of Syracuse University, serves as a student-centered global home for religious, spiritual, moral, and ethical life. Established in 1930 as a home for all faiths and a place for all people, the chapel now hosts 15 chaplains and more than 25 religious and spiritual organizations, and sponsors over 1,500 programs each year for more than one million attendees. A new [documentary](#) exploring the history of Hendricks Chapel and the role of faith across the Syracuse University community premiered on Fox Nation in early April 2026.

The chapel employs student workers; supports an acclaimed suite of music programs, including the nationally recognized Hendricks Chapel Choir, and provides vital resources such as the Student Opportunity Fund, the Coach Mac Food Pantry, and the Student Veteran Support Fund. It collaborates extensively across campus to advance academic excellence and to help ensure that the university remains a welcoming and inclusive community.

The [Hendricks Chapel Advisory Board](#) is a dedicated body of alumni, parents, and friends of Syracuse University who provide strategic guidance, ambassadorial support, and philanthropic partnership to advance the chapel's mission. Comprising engaged leaders from diverse professional and personal backgrounds, the council includes individuals with longstanding and deeply personal ties to the chapel and the university, many of whom have been involved across multiple generations of Syracuse families. Together, the group advises the dean on emerging opportunities, helps strengthen relationships across campus and the broader community, and partners in

sustaining the chapel's programs, chaplaincies, and student-centered initiatives as it approaches its 100th anniversary.

As a central contributor to holistic life and learning at Syracuse University, Hendricks Chapel prepares engaged citizens, scholars, and leaders for meaningful participation in an increasingly complex global society.



Syracuse, New York

The Greater Syracuse region is defined by rolling hills, flat plains, and a network of lakes and streams. The City of Syracuse sits on a rise at the southern tip of Onondaga Lake, with gently sloping terrain extending 30 miles to the north, where it meets the shores of Lake Ontario. The Finger Lakes lie just 20 miles to the southwest, and Oneida Lake sits eight miles to the northeast.

Within the city, elevations range from 364 to 681 feet; approximately five miles south, the hills rise to nearly 1,500 feet. To the west, the landscape climbs 500 to 800 feet above median sea level. Anchored in the geographic center of New York State on Lake Ontario's southern shore, the Syracuse Metropolitan Statistical Area encompasses 3,083 square miles across four counties—Cayuga, Madison, Onondaga, and Oswego.

Syracuse, located in Onondaga County, is the region's primary metropolitan hub and the fifth-largest city in New York. It offers the cultural and commercial opportunities of a midsize city while being surrounded by open countryside and wilderness. The city is known for its historic architecture, diverse population, vibrant downtown, proximity to extensive state parks, flourishing theater and music scenes, and an increasingly dynamic tech sector. It is also home to the annual New York State Fair.

Today, Syracuse is recognized as a center of regional growth, with amenities and attractions that inspire strong civic pride. Major investment is reshaping the area, most notably Micron Technology's development of large-scale fabrication facilities in the suburbs—bringing tens of thousands of new jobs—as well as a new office and welcome center in downtown Syracuse.

The city is home to several higher education institutions, including SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, SUNY Upstate Medical University, Le Moyne College, and local community colleges. Syracuse University maintains active partnerships and collaborations with these institutions.

Additional information about the City of Syracuse is available at www.syr.gov.





Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting Syracuse University in this search. Review of applications has begun and will continue until an appointment has been made.

Please direct all nominations and applications to Robin Mamlet and Cathryn Davis through the WittKieffer Candidate Portal by clicking [here](#).

You may also reach the consulting team, Robin Mamlet and Cathryn Davis at:

Syracuse-Hendricks@wittkieffer.com

The target salary range for this position is between \$220,000 and \$264,000 annually, commensurate with experience.

Syracuse University values diversity and is committed to equal opportunity for all persons regardless of age, color, disability, ethnicity, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status or any other status protected by law.