

President Search Profile

The Board of Directors of Bexley Seabury Seminary announces the search for our next president. As previously announced, our current president, the Rev. Dr. Roger Ferlo, will retire in 2017. We now seek the person who will lead Bexley Seabury as we continue living into our vision to be a 21st century seminary beyond walls.

In 2016 we successfully implemented the first stages of Bexley Seabury's strategic plan to transform the way it forms church leaders for a new church. For example:

- We deepened our decades-long association with Chicago Theological Seminary (CTS) to include sharing space and programming. In July, we consolidated our operations at CTS and now offer our students a stimulating intellectual environment that is ecumenical and environmentally responsible.
- We created a new low-residency Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program that allows students to complete their degrees with a combination of fully online and intensive residency courses. This program has grown out of our successful Doctor of Ministry program with its emphasis on systems thinking, community organizing skills, and congregational studies. This makes our M.Div. program unique in the Episcopal Church.
- We launched the Communities of Learning and Formation program through which we partner with dioceses and congregations to provide an innovative, community-based field education experience for students. Students will partner with mentoring congregations near their home, working closely with laity and clergy as they prepare for ministry. We have established partnerships with some Midwest dioceses and look forward to expanding the scope of this program as new students enroll in the M.Div. program.

These initiatives respond to the current generation's needs for alternative learning environments that respect their personal needs while fully forming them for church leadership.

Our Strengths

1. The association with Chicago Theological Seminary in the Hyde Park/Woodlawn neighborhood places Bexley Seabury in the heart of an interfaith and intellectual environment that invites myriad opportunities for collegiality and shared programming with Bexley Seabury's fellow members of the Association of Chicago Theological Schools, as well as the University of Chicago Divinity School.
2. We have experienced very positive enrollment increases. We enrolled 25 new students in various programs in the fall of 2016, far surpassing our goal of 10 students and giving us confidence that our student body will only increase as more people learn of Bexley Seabury.



3. The shift to a low-residency M.Div. program has created new possibilities for the future:
 - a. An expansion of our base of potential students beyond the Midwest. As an alternative to traditional three-year residential programs, we have the opportunity to establish the Bexley Seabury “footprint” for Episcopal preparation for ordination that is not limited by geography;
 - b. Greater latitude for the development of innovative programs, such as our Communities of Learning and Formation program described above.
4. Our new initiatives position us to be a leading voice in a new age of theological education:
 - a. Our student body is becoming more diverse, helping us to meet the needs of an increasingly multicultural church;
 - b. We are forming future leaders who will be prepared to serve in a wide variety of settings and contexts, not only in traditional parish ministry.
5. Bexley Seabury has long been committed to non-degree students, including the formation of lay leaders so that the whole of the Body of Christ is theologically formed. Our consolidation in Chicago has opened up opportunities for collaborating with the Diocese of Chicago and Living Compass to provide exceptional programming for many people in metro Chicago, lay and ordained. Our online courses offer the opportunity to reach an even wider audience.
6. We have an active Board of Directors with a passion for Bexley Seabury. The Board is enthusiastically supportive of our new direction, actively engaged in the governance of the seminary, and ready to provide unifying support for the next president.

Challenges for the Next President

We face three primary challenges that the next president will need to address.

1. As with many seminaries today we have significant work to do to create levels of revenue that support our vision. The next president will work with an able financial staff to reduce endowment draw and limit operating deficits. Though recently there has been positive response to some major gift requests, fundraising for annual operations must be improved, and the president will have the opportunity to appoint staff to assist in this effort.
2. The administration of a small but active institution is a second challenge. To achieve financial stability and to support the school’s new programs, the president will need to continue to organize, lead and inspire a small but strong group of staff and instructors to maximize educational effectiveness, and to make institutional arrangements that are efficient and economical.
3. The recent upswing in enrollment is an indication that Bexley Seabury’s new approach to theological education is gaining acceptance. Much remains to be done, however, to build awareness of our programs and to convince graduates and the wider church that Bexley Seabury is working out its long-standing mission in a new and promising form.

Opportunities for the Next President

These challenges are balanced by major opportunities.

1. As noted above, enrollment is increasing sharply at a time when seminary enrollments nationally are declining. This is a very encouraging sign that Bexley Seabury has tapped real needs.
2. New donors and potential donors have made significant promises to Bexley Seabury over the past few months. At the same time, the Board of Directors is committed to working with the president to identify additional potential donors in key Midwest dioceses.
3. The school has begun to develop new partnerships with dioceses, congregations and other seminaries. The incoming president will have the opportunities to develop these and other alliances that can yield educational benefits and increased levels of support.

The President We Seek

The president of Bexley Seabury is the chief executive officer, bearing ultimate responsibility for the management of seminary affairs. The president is responsible for leading the institution, in partnership with the Board of Directors, as it moves fully into its vision to be a 21st century seminary beyond walls. She or he will be responsible for strengthening Bexley Seabury through leadership of the faculty and staff, effective fundraising, and management of administration and finance. Our president will be a builder with an entrepreneurial spirit, a charismatic ambassador to prospective students and financial supporters, and a fearless risk taker.

We seek a president who is . . .

- A faithful follower of Jesus Christ
- Committed to the mission and vision of Bexley Seabury and able to invite others to support the vision
- A creative and imaginative thinker with a love and appreciation for academia who has the imagination to join us in this new adventure
- Passionate about the Episcopal Church and the formation of leaders for the future
- Experienced with the church on a practical level and can speak to the realities of congregational and diocesan life
- Able to articulate a vision for theological education and the church beyond Bexley Seabury
- Personable and accessible with the ability to build trust with diverse groups inside and outside the church
- An articulate and effective communicator in multiple contexts and settings
- A leader who can manage a religious institution during a time of change
- Experienced with the challenges and opportunities of institutional finances and willing to make necessary choices to create financial sustainability
- Able to manage staff and build community with a small group of people to get a project done

The Search Committee is open to candidates from a wide variety of backgrounds, including education, pastoral leadership, and church and secular administration. The capabilities needed to build on our strengths and meet our challenges are more important than formal credentials.

If you are interested in applying, we look forward to hearing from you. Please include a cover letter, CV and a list of references.

We also invite you to nominate leaders you believe we should consider. Please include biographical information and a description of their abilities. Please also suggest others who could tell us more about the nominee/s. You do not need to contact the persons whose names you send us. We simply want your best suggestions, whether the persons you identify would wish to be considered or not.

Applications and nominations should be submitted electronically no later than January 15, 2017 to bexleyseaburypresident@gmail.com

Bexley Seabury Search Committee
c/o St. Paul's Episcopal Church
6050 N. Meridian Street
Indianapolis, IN 46208