



## Vice President University Relations

The University of the South seeks nominations and applications for the position of Vice President for University Relations.

### The University of the South: An Overview

The University of the South (familiarily known as Sewanee, the town in which the University is located) is one of the nation's finest universities. An institution of the Episcopal Church, it has a distinguished undergraduate College of Arts and Sciences, a leading graduate School of Theology, and an innovative School of Letters offering summer master's degree programs in English literature and creative writing. In an environment of intense intellectual engagement, Sewanee students are challenged to live the life of the mind and to apply their education to the complexities of our time through civic leadership. Sewanee has produced 26 Rhodes Scholars, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, a U.S. Senator and other elected officials, critically acclaimed poets and writers, leading academics who became college presidents, and three of the last five Presiding Bishops of the Episcopal Church.

The University's commitment to the liberal arts, to the complementary nature of faith and reason, and to the fundamental importance of integrity and honor is grounded in its motto from Psalm 133: *Ecce quam bonum et quam iucundum habitare fratres in unum* ("Behold how good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity"). And it finds full expression in the quality and passion of the faculty. They are leading scholars and researchers in their fields with an abiding commitment to teaching, and in the close community that is Sewanee they develop extraordinarily rich and enduring relationships with their students that transcend both place and time.

These relationships—person to person, as well as to the special place that is Sewanee—have sustained the University of the South since its founding in 1857. They have given rise to unique and cherished traditions that continue from generation to generation, linking students and alumni in common affection for the University. Most importantly, they have provided a wellspring of institutional achievement from which Sewanee looks confidently to its future.

The University of the South campus comprises 13,000 contiguous acres, known as the Domain. The University's landholdings are the second largest among institutions of higher education in the United States. Situated between the Tennessee cities of Nashville and Chattanooga, the Domain occupies the western face of the Cumberland Plateau and includes a 20-mile perimeter trail providing scenic overlooks and wooded paths to bluffs, caves (some with cave-paintings), lakes, waterfalls, pasture, woods, and meadows. About one-third of this land makes up the campus, business, and residential area; the remaining two-thirds is the University Forest, managed for recreation, research, and teaching. The Domain offers recreational experiences unparalleled on any other campus in the country.

## Background

The University of the South has taken the opportunity over the past dozen years to look back on a distinctive history of trial and triumph, including marking both the 150th anniversary of its original founding in 1857 and that of its successful second founding a decade later after the Civil War when the original resources of the University had been lost. The second founders overcame many challenges to finally open the University's doors in 1868.

Sewanee has strengthened its position among the nation's liberal arts universities and Episcopal seminaries and has enjoyed record applications to the College. New academic initiatives, including majors in neuroscience and finance and a comprehensive Office of Global Citizenship, have enhanced the curriculum, extended Sewanee's reach, and provided expanded opportunities for research and internships.

In addition, the University has reaffirmed its goal of making an excellent college education more accessible for more of the nation's best students. In September 2019, the University announced that it will meet the full demonstrated need of admitted students who qualify for financial aid, starting with the first-year students who arrived in fall 2020. The University's Board of Regents has made a commitment that by no later than fall 2026, the University will return to meeting the full need of all of its undergraduate students. Previous efforts include the University, in 2011, reducing the cost of a Sewanee education by 10 percent; for several years after that, a four-year tuition freeze applied to each incoming class. Together these actions represent a strong commitment to keeping the cost of a top-quality college education as affordable and predictable as possible.

## Leadership

Reuben E. Brigety II became the 17<sup>th</sup> Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of the South in June 2020. His election as the university's first African-American senior leader was an historic one. He previously served as the dean of the Elliott School of International Affairs at the George Washington University and former U.S. ambassador to the African Union. As Dean of the Elliott School of International Affairs Brigety led a school of international affairs that consistently ranked among the nation's 10 best and is one of the largest by enrollment. Under Brigety's leadership, the Elliott School created research institutes for every region of the world, launched an incubator for applied ethics education and leadership training, and increased support for student research travel and internships.

Prior to becoming dean in 2015, Brigety served as U.S. ambassador to the African Union for two years. In that role, he managed the strategic partnership between the United States and the African Union with an emphasis on democracy and governance, economic growth, and development. He also served as the permanent representative of the United States to the UN Economic Commission for Africa; and, earlier, as deputy assistant secretary of state in the Bureau of African Affairs, with responsibility for Southern African and regional security affairs.

## University Governance and Reporting Relationships

The distinctive nature of governance at the University of the South is a reflection of its abiding relationship with the Episcopal Church and the pragmatic needs of a modern university. There are two principal and interrelated bodies, the Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents. The Board of Trustees is composed of

bishops of the 28 owning dioceses of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America as well as elected presbyters and lay communicants from each diocese; elected laypersons and representatives of the faculties, staff, and students of the University; representatives of the Associated Alumni of the University; and elected at-large trustees who may be from outside the owning dioceses. In all, the Board of Trustees is composed of 140 members.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for approving all plans for the growth and development of the University, for evaluating progress toward established goals, and for approving any acquisition or transfer of University property. The Board of Trustees elects the chancellor, the vice-chancellor, and the chaplain of the University.

In its Constitution and Ordinances, the Board of Trustees chooses to designate a Board of Regents, elected by the trustees and delegated particular responsibilities. The Board of Regents is the executive body given authority for the University's establishment, maintenance, and government, except in areas expressly reserved by the Board of Trustees. Of the 24-member Board of Regents, 15 are elected by the Board of Trustees, and nine are nominated by the regents and confirmed by the Board of Trustees.

## **Finances**

The continued value of a Sewanee education is a direct result of the University's ability to finance faculty and educational resources through endowment that supplements tuition and fees in support of continued academic excellence. Sewanee has been disciplined and prudent in managing its financial resources, and as a consequence is in a strong financial position.

In 2019-20, Sewanee ended the fiscal year with assets of \$763 million, composed primarily of investments valued at \$406 million; land, buildings, and equipment valued on a cost-less-depreciation basis of \$205 million; pledges receivable of \$32 million; and funds held in trust by others of \$24 million. Liabilities of \$116 million consist primarily of long-term debt or bonds payable of \$89 million.

The University's net assets totaled \$647 million (assets of \$763 million minus liabilities of \$116 million) as of June 30, 2020, an increase of \$14 million over the previous fiscal year. The market value of the endowed assets was \$420 million as of June 30, 2020.

Operating revenues for fiscal year 2019-20 totaled \$111 million, and operating expenses totaled \$107 million. Current restricted and unrestricted operating revenues for the year exceeded expenses by \$3.5 million. The fiscal year 2019–20 endowment spending or distributions to support scholarship and other current funds totaled \$21.8 million. Endowment support represented 19.7% of the University's operating revenues, while total contributions totaled \$20.4 million. Giving to the Sewanee Fund, which is included in total contributions, totaled \$9.2 million or 8.3% of the University's operating revenues for the year.

## **The Office of University Relations**

The Office of University Relations comprises the advancement, alumni, and parent programs, and marketing and communication operations. Sewanee has more than 19,000 living alumni of either the College or the School of Theology, whose avidity for the institution, the faculty, and their fellow alumni manifests itself in lifelong engagement and support. The team raises an average of \$23 million per year

(\$34.5 million in gifts, pledges and planned gifts) and the Sewanee Fund enjoys over 36% participation from College graduates and raised more than \$7.70 million in spendable gifts in FY20.

*Stronger, Truer, Sewanee*, a comprehensive fundraising campaign for endowment, facilities, and operating support, concluded in 2020 with \$296 million raised. The final campaign total exceeded the original goal of \$250 million and is the most successful in Sewanee's history in terms of both dollars raised and the number of donors who participated, with more than 23,000 individuals and organizations making a commitment.

An ongoing agenda for fundraising includes securing resources for significantly expanded financial aid commitments; new and expanded facilities; faculty compensation; centers of excellence in civic engagement, pre-professional programs, environmental studies, and business; and School of Theology programs. The top priority in the coming year is raising an additional \$2 million in support for students as the University transitions to a financial aid program that meets 100 percent of demonstrated need. A longer-term goal is increasing the financial aid endowment dedicated for student support in order to sustain the commitment to meeting full need.

The office of Marketing and Communications manages all university communications with focused support for admissions and advancement. The office helps tell Sewanee's stories about students, programs, alumni and the people of the community. The stories, well told, enhance the University's reputation, broaden its reach, support recruitment, and strengthen bonds with alumni, parents, our community, and indeed the world.

### **The Role of the Vice President for University Relations**

Reporting to the Vice-Chancellor and President of the institution, the Vice President for University Relations is the chief advancement officer for the institution, member of the Executive Leadership Council and the Vice-Chancellor and President's cabinet and has full oversight of the University Relations strategy for the University.

Direct Reports to the Vice President include the Associate Vice Presidents for Alumni and Parent Relations, Advancement—Major Gift/Sewanee Fund, Advancement—Development/Operations and Marketing and Communications. The Division has a total team of 30 professionals and an operating budget of \$2.8 million.

### **Position Priorities for the Vice President for University Relations include:**

#### **Partner with the Vice-Chancellor**

The Vice President for University Relations will be a thoughtful, strategic, and driven partner to the Vice-Chancellor and they will work closely together to further cultivate and foster relationships with institutional partners and supporters. The Vice President will have the opportunity to leverage the Vice-Chancellor's visibility and commitment to fundraising efforts and will be able to introduce him to the larger Sewanee community.

#### **Fundraising Strategies and Innovation for Future Success**

The Vice President will inherit a strong philanthropic culture and sound fundraising process and practices. They will drive innovative and transformative ideas to expand the donor base, foster an environment that encourages new and innovative approaches to alumni participation and engagement, and prioritize pipeline development. The Vice President will be savvy in the art of using data, analytics, and strategic communications to create and share plans and harness resources to strengthen the institution's relationship-focused approach to philanthropy.

### **Significant Contribution to a Diverse and Inclusive Community**

On September 8, 2020, the University's Board of Regents released a [statement](#) recognizing the University's long entanglement with, and role in, slavery, racial segregation and prejudice, and white supremacy, and committing the University to an urgent process of institutional reckoning. The Vice-Chancellor has further [outlined](#) several steps to move the university toward this goal. The Vice President for University Relations will embrace and celebrate the best of the University's history and traditions, while also supporting current institutional priorities and directions, inspiring internal and external stakeholders to support institutional self-evaluation and renewal.

### **Articulate the Sewanee Story**

The Vice President will lead the Office of Marketing and Communication in the ongoing evolution of telling a compelling Sewanee story. The communication objectives should be to tell a story that resonates with future students and families, inspires faculty, staff, and alumni to engage in philanthropic efforts, and evolves markets to expand the Sewanee reach.

### **Manage and Develop Talent**

The Vice President will recruit, hire, develop, and retain a talented and diverse staff. They will cultivate a team culture that aligns with, reflects, and supports Sewanee's values and aspirations. The current staff are committed and talented and the Vice President will ensure that a shared vision and clear measurable goals are communicated and acted upon. The Vice President is responsible for maintaining team cohesion, securing appropriate staffing, operational excellence, and ongoing training for the highly integrated university relations team.

### **Preparing for the Next Campaign**

Under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor Brigety, the Vice President will work to successfully plan and execute the university's next campaign. While the previous campaign was successful in raising over \$296 million over the course of 10 years, it is anticipated that the next campaign may take a different shape or scope and/or cover a shorter period of time. The Vice President will be expected to consider creative campaign planning solutions and to work to successfully engage a new, emerging and as yet unknown set of donors. The Vice President will be expected to use traditional relationship discovery, cultivation, and solicitation practices enhanced by the creative use of technology and data. In planning for the next campaign, the Vice President will be involved in the university's strategic planning process.

### **Desired Qualifications and Characteristics**

The Vice President for University Relations plays an important leadership role at Sewanee and engages regularly with alumni, parents, and friends of the institution. The VP will build and sustain strong and sincere relationships with the Sewanee family and be a strategic, approachable, and collaborative leader.

The ideal candidate will have a record of success in:

- strategic leadership within a complex university relations office or other highly comparable environment;
- major and principal gift cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship and ability to develop and support others in this work;
- creating and implementing programs to enhance alumni engagement and giving;
- comprehensive campaign planning, implementation, and completion;
- developing and executing comprehensive marketing and communications plans, including leveraging social media;

- employing sophisticated information systems in support of fundraising and alumni activities and the ability to leverage data and metrics to inform and shape advancement strategies;
- partnering with institutional leadership to set aspirational but realistic goals to support priorities; and
- attracting, developing and motivating diverse, high-functioning teams with clear, measurable goals and objectives.

To thrive in the Sewanee community, candidates should possess:

- ability to articulate passionately the values and aspirations of Sewanee to its many constituencies;
- an innovative spirit, interested in the evolution of university relations strategies and deep understanding of current trends and best practices;
- strong diplomatic skills, able to deftly manage challenging and urgent situations with care and attention;
- an approachable leadership style able to work effectively and seamlessly with faculty, staff, students, and alumni;
- strong ethical grounding with a track record of visionary and responsible leadership;
- record of achievement in furthering diversity, equity and inclusion;
- excellent written and verbal communication and presentation skills;
- an entrepreneurial nature and a willingness to take calculated risks;
- strong listening skills, comfortable and effective at all levels of the organization; and
- the ability to advocate for staff and resources, with a keen focus on demonstrable return on investment.

Please send all nominations, inquiries, and expressions of interest, in confidence and electronically, to:



Susan VanGilder, Managing Director  
 Kenna Boyd, Managing Associate  
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*The University of the South, commonly known as Sewanee, comprises a nationally ranked residential College of Arts and Sciences and a School of Theology. The University is strongly committed to the values of intellectual inquiry, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and living and serving in community. Situated on 13,000 acres atop Tennessee's Cumberland Plateau, Sewanee is known for its stunning natural beauty while providing easy access to Chattanooga, Nashville, and Huntsville. The University is affiliated with the Episcopal Church and seeks to help employees of all backgrounds and identities flourish.*