



## **Presidential Leadership Profile**

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Search for the 25th President  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin



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Marquette University, a private, coeducational, Catholic, Jesuit institution in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, seeks an enthusiastic and visionary leader to serve as President. As the chief executive officer, the 25th President will build on Marquette's rich tradition of Catholic, Jesuit liberal arts education and boldly lead the university into the future.

Marquette is committed to excellence, faith, leadership and service. [Marquette's mission](#) is the search for truth, the discovery and sharing of knowledge, the fostering of personal and professional excellence, the promotion of a life of faith, and the development of leadership expressed in service to others. The university aims to graduate students who are transformed by their education and who, in turn, will transform the world.

The university enjoys strong enrollment with approximately 11,400 students: 7,700 undergraduates (1,900 first-year students), 3,700 graduate and professional (i.e., dental, education, health sciences, law and nursing) students; students typically come from all 50 states and more than 60 countries. Founded in 1881, Marquette is one of 28 Catholic, Jesuit universities in the United States and is the largest private university in Wisconsin. Marquette's attractive 90-plus-acre campus on the edge of Milwaukee's downtown is home to a highly collegial community with more than 1,200 faculty members.

In 2031, Marquette University will celebrate 150 years of serving God by delivering to its students a transformative education rooted in its Catholic, Jesuit tradition. Heading into this milestone, the university remains committed to its mission, vision and guiding values. The Board of Trustees endorsed Marquette University's new strategic plan for 2031: [Guided by Mission, Inspired to Change](#) in December 2023. This aspirational, actionable plan is the culmination of a yearlong, campuswide process of discernment, exploration and collaborative problem solving, and it calls the Marquette community to build upon its strong foundation and collective strengths in teaching, research and innovation, as the university continues to adapt and evolve.

In concert with the strategic plan, a new initiative called [Securing Our Future](#) is focusing on Marquette's operational and financial health so that the university is better positioned to deliver on its strategic plan and thrive for generations to come. *Marquette 2031: Securing Our Future* is an inclusive process for considering program offerings, physical footprint and organizational structure, and processes for how work is done. The Executive Leadership Team — with the support of the Board of Trustees and the University Leadership Council — has set a goal of permanently reducing the annual operating budget by 2.5% (\$11 million) in FY26 (which starts in July 2025), with a multiyear implementation plan moving to a cumulative 7% (\$31 million) reduction by FY31 as savings are realized over time. Over the next six fiscal years, the university plans to reinvest over 40% of this total amount back into funding priorities outlined in the Marquette 2031 strategic

plan, including staff and faculty compensation, research and student success. Reinvestment will happen throughout the years as progress is made.

The 25th President will play a decisive role in shaping and implementing these plans and inspiring and supporting faculty, students and the university community.

### **Key Opportunities and Challenges for the 25th President**

The President serves as the chief executive officer for Marquette and has overall responsibility for the university. The President provides leadership and oversight for all aspects of the university, including academics, finance, planning, student affairs, enrollment, advancement, athletics and other key areas. The provost, executive vice president and chief operating officer, vice presidents, and several other staff members report to the President. The President works closely with the provost, executive vice president and chief operating officer, and vice presidents to ensure that the strategic direction and policies of the university are aligned with its mission. The President reports to the Board of Trustees and works with the board in establishing policies to guide the institution.

As the chief executive officer, the President has principal responsibility for the planning, development, implementation, assessment and improvement of all programs and policies. Recognizing the educational challenges of the 21st century, the President will:

- Serve as a compelling spokesperson for Catholic, Jesuit education within the university and beyond.
- Be the chief advocate and leader of the university's mission.
- Nimblely address and meet the challenges facing higher education while enhancing Marquette's commitment to the almost 500-year-old Jesuit education tradition.
- Expand the university's resources, particularly through philanthropy, by serving in a prominent role of cultivating and soliciting donors, as well as providing leadership in Marquette's next comprehensive campaign.
- Lead efforts to enhance and implement the strategic plan and execute the Securing Our Future initiative.
- Inspire a cohesive, high-functioning leadership team.
- Grow and strengthen Marquette's diverse community and culture of inclusiveness and belonging.

### ***Serve as a compelling spokesperson for Catholic, Jesuit education within the university and beyond***

The President plays a crucial role as the public face of Marquette University and, more broadly, an ambassador for the Catholic, Jesuit education tradition. The President will help the institution tell its story effectively to a wide variety of audiences including alumni, future students, their parents, institutional partners and the greater community. In particular, the President will convey a clear, compelling case for Marquette as a distinctive institution that provides students with a rigorous, world-class educational experience that attracts high-caliber students and faculty from around the world. At the forefront of the President's work will be the guiding beliefs and values of Jesuit education. The President will help position Marquette as a national model for the Jesuit liberal arts tradition, the importance of professional education in the contemporary university, and how the university supports and engages its community.

The President will understand and effectively communicate internally and externally the exceptional role of a Catholic, Jesuit university as a place of dialogue and exploration oriented to the common good. The President will possess an unwavering commitment to academic freedom and the ability to engage complex and emotional issues related to faith in contemporary society.

***Be the chief advocate and leader of the university's mission***

The President is a visionary and strategic leader who embraces, articulates and engages with Marquette's distinctive mission of excellence, faith, leadership and service. The President will forge strong relationships with the provost, executive vice president and chief operating officer, deans, trustees, vice presidents, the Jesuit community, alumni and other key leaders across the university and promote communication about the university's academic pursuits and vision for the future. The President will be a champion of the academic freedom of faculty, and a leader of students and staff in ensuring that the mission is paramount in all discussions about policies, processes and resources.

The President must have the intellectual breadth and curiosity to understand and engage academic units across the university's intellectual and professional spectrum, from the liberal arts to the sciences to the professions. The President will develop partnerships across divisions and colleges, and strengthen relationships between academic and non-academic units. Through this outreach, the President will gain a thorough understanding of the status of the institution and its faculty, students and staff, and encourage creative solutions with an eye toward the future. The President will reach beyond the borders of the university to convey the mission to alumni, parents and friends in the Milwaukee community, the region and the nation.

***Nimble address and meet the challenges facing higher education while enhancing Marquette's commitment to the almost 500-year-old Jesuit education tradition***

2048 will mark the 500th anniversary of Jesuit education. The pace of change in higher education has accelerated dramatically in recent years, and these developments are likely to continue in the years ahead. The President must be a person who not only understands the rapidly changing higher education environment but also anticipates, nimbly addresses and meets these challenges. Among the most pressing is the task of enhancing the university's excellent, highly competitive academic programs that reflect student demand, as well as societal needs. The President must also be able to address concerns about the cost of higher education more broadly, particularly as others question its value. In addition, the President will lead efforts to increase the university's assets and revenue base while also controlling costs and helping ensure access to a Marquette education for all students.

The university has a strong commitment to delivering rigorous curricula such as the Marquette Core Curriculum that enable students to develop their fullest intellectual, emotional and spiritual capacities. Despite the rapidly changing higher education environment, Marquette must not lose its commitment to the transformational nature of a Jesuit education grounded in the liberal arts. The President will articulate the importance of Jesuit education and its relevance in the 21st century. This will require vision, team leadership and the courage to make difficult choices.

***Expand the university's resources, particularly through philanthropy, by serving in a prominent role of cultivating and soliciting donors, as well as providing leadership in Marquette's next comprehensive campaign***

Marquette has a loyal base of more than 110,000 living alumni. The President has an opportunity to generate significant benefits for the university by developing stronger ties with this community as well as with parents,

benefactors and friends. The President should develop and nurture meaningful relationships with key alumni and benefactors, engaging in fundraising efforts and connecting benefactors to the mission and programs of the university. The President will work closely with University Advancement leaders to identify, cultivate and solicit donors. By nurturing and engaging a loyal, committed base of alumni and friends, the President will help to create a powerful resource of support for the financial and academic well-being of the institution — and in raising the profile of Marquette as a leading Jesuit university.

An ongoing challenge for the university is to grow revenue for both endowment and immediate needs to a level that will support continued enhancement in academic programs, increased scholarship aid and faculty resources, and ongoing capital projects. With an endowment totaling \$917 million as of June 30, 2023, Marquette ranks 155th according to the National Association of College and University Business Officers endowment survey. To fulfill the ambitions and goals of *Guided by Mission, Inspired to Change*, it is clear Marquette must improve its endowment resources and annual operating revenues. To do so, the President must be able to articulate the critical needs of the university in a way that captures attention and generous support for these and other initiatives. To accomplish this, the President will partner with University Advancement, the provost, deans and others to plan and execute a major comprehensive fundraising campaign that builds on the success of the recent \$750 million *Time To Rise* campaign, which raised more than \$800 million against a \$750 million goal.

***Lead efforts to enhance and implement the strategic plan and execute the Securing Our Future initiative***

Marquette's strategic plan provides an ambitious vision for the university with clear goals that drive institutional priorities. The President will define specific strategic initiatives the university will undertake to execute the plan. This is an outstanding opportunity to move the institution forward at a pivotal moment, promoting its strengths, building trust, and fostering excellence and innovative thinking.

*Guided by Mission, Inspired to Change* will guide the near- and long-term future of the campus, and the President must work with the provost, executive vice president and chief operating officer, deans, vice presidents, faculty and staff to clarify the goals and implement the plan. The ambitious goals will require trade-offs, choices and investments. The President will help lead efforts to identify areas of excellence and establish priorities, programs, policies and practices that will help Marquette further evolve as a distinguished university. This will involve making challenging decisions to prioritize programs that merit strategic investment to promote the academic mission of the university and enhance the student experience at Marquette.

Marquette has an excellent faculty dedicated to teaching, research, service and the university's mission. Over the next few years, the university will be facing a significant number of faculty retirements. The next President will help with the selective hiring of mission-driven, diverse faculty at the cutting edge of their fields.

The President will be instrumental in key decisions related to tuition, enrollment, research funding, fundraising and other revenue streams, particularly in view of the university's *Securing Our Future* initiative. Fiscal management skills and an understanding of the complex financial landscape of private institutions will be necessary to ensure that the strategic plan has the budgetary framework to be successful. The President will lead important decisions regarding how Marquette should invest its resources, inspiring the campus community to develop a system of services and programs focused on providing every student with an outstanding experience, and advancing research. This includes working to maintain access and affordability for students and ensuring that the institution sends a strong message about its Jesuit mission and its distinctive role in the Milwaukee community.

### ***Inspire a cohesive high-functioning leadership team***

The President is responsible for the development of a dynamic, visionary and cohesive leadership team that includes the provost, executive vice president and chief operating officer, deans and vice presidents.

The President will encourage a high level of transparency to ensure all voices are heard as priorities are established and decisions are made. The President must establish credibility as chief executive officer, while providing the provost, executive vice president and chief operating officer, deans and vice presidents the autonomy to be effective leaders in their own right. The President is responsible for soliciting the opinions of faculty, staff and students and honoring the letter and the spirit of shared governance. The President will open and strengthen clear channels of communication around information gathering and decision-making at the institutional level while demonstrating the ability to provide courageous and decisive leadership. This includes working effectively with the Board of Trustees, seeking the Board's counsel and understanding the roles of governance and management in the effective stewardship of the university.

### ***Grow and strengthen Marquette's diverse community and culture of inclusiveness and belonging***

The President will be a key figure in the university's efforts to support a welcoming and diverse community and assure the success of students, faculty, and staff from all backgrounds. It is expected that the President will welcome students, staff and faculty who bring diverse experiences, backgrounds and perspectives and will clearly demonstrate a personal commitment to community and belonging. Marquette has a historic commitment to diversity, becoming in 1909 the first Catholic university in the world to offer coeducation as part of its regular undergraduate program. In 1969 Marquette's Educational Opportunity Program was the first federal TRIO program in the nation. Marquette launched its Gender and Sexuality Resource Center in 2012 as part of ongoing efforts to promote dialogue and understanding on campus. The next President will help identify resources and establish programs that support an atmosphere that welcomes and celebrates diversity, including differences in social and economic backgrounds, lifestyle, gender, race, ethnicity, political affiliation, religion, sexual orientation, and intellectual views, and nurtures the unique gifts of all members in accordance with the mission and values of the Catholic, Jesuit tradition.

### **Qualifications and Characteristics**

The successful candidate for President will be an experienced and accomplished academic leader and fundraiser with a high level of energy, political savvy, drive, and the engaging personality necessary to achieve ambitious university-wide goals. The successful candidate will bring many, if not all, of the following professional qualifications, skills, experiences and personal qualities:

#### ***Leadership Priorities***

- Commitment to Marquette's Catholic, Jesuit mission and values, including the ability to work successfully with the Marquette Jesuit Community and other Catholic higher education leaders; and an unwavering commitment to academic freedom and the ability to navigate the crosscurrents in Catholic higher education
- Demonstrated ability to implement a strategic plan
- Significant success in securing transformational gifts and leading a comprehensive fundraising campaign
- Decisive leadership skills exemplified by a record of courage in making difficult decisions in a complex environment with competing demands and limited financial and human resources

- Demonstrated ability and nimbleness in leading a large organization and leadership team
- Proven experience in utilizing a transparent, collaborative process in decision-making that invites multiple perspectives
- Record of success as a visionary executive, including the fiscal skills and acumen necessary to facilitate the allocation of resources effectively and efficiently among competing needs of the institution
- Excellent collaboration and consensus-building abilities to bring together a diverse group of constituents, including a track record of working with groups such as a board, faculty, students, alumni and the larger community
- Evidence of fostering excellence in teaching and scholarship
- Successful experience in developing and executing strategies in a complex and comprehensive university that includes research across disciplines
- A demonstrated record of success in promoting and sustaining efforts to attract and retain a highly qualified and diverse faculty, staff and student body
- Appreciation for the significance of a national athletics program to the overall image and success of the institution and the ability to work with the NCAA and the Big East Conference

### ***Personal Attributes***

- Roman Catholic as required by Marquette's Bylaws
- An earned doctorate or equivalent terminal degree
- Superior communication skills, especially the ability to be an articulate advocate for Marquette to all audiences
- A bold leader with personal humility
- A servant leader who is both visible and approachable
- Integrity, honesty, enthusiasm, sense of humor, resilience and a strong work ethic

### **About Marquette**

Marquette University was founded in 1881 through the vision of Milwaukee's first archbishop, Rev. John Martin Henni, who named the institution after Rev. Jacques Marquette, S.J., a 17th century missionary and explorer. In the ensuing decades, the university has expanded to encompass 11 academic divisions: Helen Way Klingler College of Arts and Sciences; College of Business Administration; J. William and Mary Diederich College of Communication; College of Education; Opus College of Engineering; College of Health Sciences; College of Nursing; Graduate School; Graduate School of Management; School of Dentistry; and Law School. As an institution committed to both teaching and research, Marquette offers undergraduate programs in more than 80 majors and 80 minors, in addition to more than 100 certificate, master's and doctoral degree programs. Marquette is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and underwent its decennial reaffirmation of accreditation visit in late 2023.



Marquette is ranked in the top 20% among national universities at No. 86 in the 2024 *U.S. News & World Report* Best Colleges rankings. Marquette is also ranked on the peer-nominated list for Best Undergraduate Teaching at No. 19, and the university is ranked 34th among Most Innovative Schools. Visit Marquette's [Rankings and Recognition website](#) for a comprehensive list of accolades.

In its mission to foster men and women for and with others, Marquette asks students to be agents of change where they see disparities. As an engaged, mission-based community, Marquette has a responsibility to engage in respectful dialogue about injustices on our campus, in the city, in the U.S. and throughout the world. By getting involved in their communities, students help others lead better lives. Ninety-three percent of Marquette students report participating in community service efforts, and *The Princeton Review* ranked Marquette University 16th in the nation for students engaged in community service (2023).

Through personal relationships and professional connections, backed by an alumni network of support, Marquette graduates secure job opportunities quickly after graduation and continue to build successful, fulfilling careers. Marquette has nationally recognized outcomes in graduation rates and job preparation and placement. Based on Department of Education College Scorecard data, Marquette was ranked the 6th best college nationally and the best college in Wisconsin for job placement. Marquette's employment rate 10 years after graduation is 95.55%. According to the latest results of the Undergraduate Alumni Survey, 96% of alumni one year after graduation, 98% of alumni five years after graduation and 100% of alumni 10 years after graduation were engaged in an activity full time or were not seeking full-time employment.

Marquette prioritizes student success: The university wants every student who enrolls at Marquette to stay, learn and thrive — to truly feel they are home. Its mission as a Catholic, Jesuit university calls the community to ensure all students flourish from their first day on campus to their first destination beyond Marquette as they become people with and for others. Marquette has one of the highest retention and graduation rates among nationally ranked institutions in the country and focuses on increasing undergraduate student retention and improving graduation rates and first-destination outcomes. The university has a goal to increase the six-year graduation rate to 90% and year 1-2 retention rate to 94%. Aligning with mission to transform through education, Marquette is included by *U.S. News & World Report* as an A+ School for B Students, a distinction that honors how they provide opportunities for more kinds of students to stay, succeed and graduate.

Marquette's Catholic, Jesuit approach to and focus on student success and immersive, personalized learning experiences encourage students to think critically and engage with the world around them. When students graduate with a Marquette degree, they are truly prepared and called to Be The Difference.

View Marquette's [Fast Facts guide online](#).

## **Location**

Marquette is located on a 90-acre campus in the near-downtown Avenues West neighborhood of Milwaukee. Lake Michigan is roughly one mile east of the edge of campus. Milwaukee is the largest city in Wisconsin and its metropolitan area is the 40th-most populous metro area in the U.S. with 1.57 million residents. Milwaukee is highly diverse, with about 39% African-American, and 20% Hispanic/Latino residents.

Milwaukee is one of America's great cities, combining a dynamic urban community with a rich cultural heritage. There is also accessibility to parks, rivers and other outdoor recreation. It is a popular venue for sailing, windsurfing, kite-surfing, ethnic dining and cultural festivals. Milwaukee's Summerfest is the world's largest musical festival. The city is recognized for its museums, fine dining and hotels, professional sports, gardens and parks, and Milwaukee County Zoo. These various opportunities, combined with strong public and private schools, make Milwaukee a family-friendly city. Milwaukee also has two opera companies, a



ballet, a symphony, and several live theatre companies that range from Broadway musicals, Shakespeare and the classics to smaller, regional productions. Milwaukee also hosts professional baseball, basketball, indoor soccer and hockey teams. To learn more, see [visitmilwaukee.org](http://visitmilwaukee.org).

### **Applications, Inquiries and Nominations**

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Applications (resume and cover letter), inquiries, nominations and referrals should be sent to the [Isacson, Miller website](#).

Julie Filizetti, Phillip Petree, Rafael Escobedo, Katie Pusecker-Kilcawley  
Isacson, Miller

Marquette University affirms its longstanding commitment to the principle of equal employment opportunity regardless of race, color, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, veteran's status, or national origin. Marquette affirms its commitment to the principle of affirmative action and its commitment to abide by state regulations and federal laws pertaining to equal employment opportunity.