



# Presidency of the Pacific School of Religion

## AN EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITY

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**P**ACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION (PSR) is seeking a new president to succeed William McKinney, who ends his tenure on June 30, 2010. This is an extraordinary opportunity for a proven leader who is committed to serving God through developing leaders for ministries of justice and compassion.

For the past 13 years, PSR has enjoyed a remarkably stable and fruitful era under President McKinney's leadership. The PSR community—faculty, trustees, staff, and students—has a shared sense of our identity as progressive Christians, deeply committed to Christ's radical call to live and work for justice and compassion, and to develop a progressive Christian vision in the church and the wider world.

At the same time PSR, like other seminaries, faces a difficult funding environment and a limited pool of potential students who are able to afford a three-year residential program. Our endowment has lost value in the last year, and the annual draw on it, though lower than in past years, still exceeds the target level of 5.5%. Many of our students graduate with too much debt.

The central challenge for the next president is to lead us in dealing with current financial realities in a creative way that simultaneously strengthens progressive Christian leadership. In broad terms, meeting this challenge will require:

- Enhancing PSR's leadership in articulating and acting on a progressive Christian vision in the church and the public square.
- Ensuring the school's financial future by increasing both contributed and earned income, decreasing the draw rate on the endowment, implementing board plans for facilities renewal, and ensuring that expenditures are aligned with revenue.
- Building on the strengths of current programs, making strategic modifications in some cases, and redeploying assets that can be put to better use.
- Increasing distance-learning or other means of offering seminary education to potential leaders who cannot spend three years on campus.
- Engaging with the Graduate Theological Union (GTU), an ecumenical consortium of nine seminaries and three interfaith centers, as it wrestles with serious financial challenges and pursues new opportunities for consortial collaboration.
- Furthering an essential priority of this seminary—actively confronting systemic racism



and bringing LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) and other marginalized communities into the center of social and theological life.

Meeting these challenges will also require a high order of collaborative leadership—with a strong executive team, the faculty, trustees, staff, and students. Only with such leadership will the school move forward effectively, as well as manage the inevitable conflicts and tensions that arise within an intensely values-driven community.

Our ideal candidate will:

**Be a respected leader** in theological education and in advancing a progressive Christian vision in the church and in the wider world.

**Embody the core values of PSR**, including:

- Spiritual rootedness in the Christian tradition and openness to the value of interfaith wisdom.
- Passionate belief in the development of a progressive Christian vision as an authentic expression of God’s call and an indispensable force for good in the church and the world.
- Deep commitment to dismantling systemic racism and to bringing LGBT and other marginalized communities into the center of social and theological life.



**Have a track record of accomplishment**, including:

- Leading an organization to reshape and strengthen a portfolio of financially viable programs.
- Establishing an effective fund-development program and raising substantial funds personally.
- Building and working through a strong leadership team.
- Guiding a substantial new programmatic initiative, successful in terms of results and finances.
- Demonstrating capacity for intellectual and theological leadership, as the president is the leader of the PSR faculty.

The challenges of leading a seminary effectively, combined with the challenge of working creatively with the GTU, suggest the value of deep knowledge and experience in theological education; therefore, a Ph.D. and past service as a seminary dean or president are most desirable. However, we are open to considering extraordinary leaders who may have acquired considerable knowledge of seminary leadership in other arenas.

### To apply

Please send a brief letter noting key ways in which your experience and commitments fit with PSR’s needs, accompanied by a CV and contact information for three people who know your work well, to:

PSR Presidential Search  
c/o Eileen M. Weston  
231 Market Place, #191  
San Ramon, CA 94583

See complete announcement on the Web at [psr.edu/presidentialexchange](http://psr.edu/presidentialexchange).

PSR is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.



## Pacific School of Religion: A Tradition of Boldness

**T**HE NEXT PRESIDENT of Pacific School of Religion will have the significant challenge of leading this seminary toward greater financial stability, with a broadened set of avenues for delivery of its academic resources, and with a greater public voice for a progressive Christian vision. All of this will require navigating through what is indisputably an uncertain time in theological education—declining applications for traditional seminary programs, a difficult funding environment, and a significant number of seminaries struggling to survive. And yet this seminary has a remarkable set of strengths to build on, which makes the coming presidency of PSR not only a challenge, but an extraordinary leadership opportunity.

Most centrally, PSR has a long and deep commitment to a Christianity that holds not simply an allegiance to the past, but an obligation to re-think the meaning of discipleship in each age. That orientation makes this seminary fertile ground for raising up the next generation of faith-based leaders who can think and act theologically, pastorally, practically, and politically, and with care and respect for all people while striving for justice and liberation. Now the school is approaching the end of a remarkably stable and fruitful era under President William McKinney’s leadership. Our new president will face important challenges, but PSR has never been stronger or better equipped to meet them.



### Identity and Commitments

At this point in our history, the whole PSR community—faculty, trustees, staff, and students—has a widely shared sense of who we are and what we are called to do.

**We begin with a strong and clear identity as progressive Christians**, deeply committed to Christ’s radical call to live and work for justice and compassion for all of God’s creation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>As articulated by PSR’s faculty, a progressive Christian leader is one who:

- Is rooted in Christian tradition, with an ability to analyze texts and traditions critically, and to re-appropriate the traditions for new times and places.
- Understands the contextual nature of knowing and understanding—that one’s own perception is limited, that there is both reality and value in multiple perspectives—and can hold the tensions related to difference.
- Is self-aware and spiritually grounded.
- Works in partnership, and is actively involved in ecumenical and interfaith conversations; is not only appreciative of, but engaged with, the value of diversity; is competent in cross-cultural situations; and nurtures the development of leadership in others.
- Can envision and engage in personal and systemic transformation for a more just world, holding a liberation perspective and global consciousness.



**PSR is a multi-denominational Christian school.**

A seminary of the United Church of Christ (UCC), we also have close historic ties with The United Methodist Church (UMC) and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ, or DOC). Our faculty members come from all three of these denominations (as well as 10 other denominations and faith traditions), and about half of our student body comes from these denominations. (Others come from other mainline denominations and faith traditions as diverse as Metropolitan Community Churches, Unitarian Universalist Association, Swedenborgian Church, Religious Society of Friends, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and The Fellowship.)

**PSR has a proud history of embracing LGBT people** as fully created in the image of God and as prospective leaders in building God’s realm. The school goes far beyond qualified tolerance and uncomfortable accommodation, and has been a world leader in the movement for the full inclusion and equal treatment of the LGBT persons in our churches and in the secular world.



**PSR gives particular importance to building a truly multi-cultural institution** committed to dismantling racism and preparing its graduates for similar work in the broader society. We have made progress and we have a long way to go; we gain strength in knowing that this commitment is broadly shared and that we are facing these issues and problems with increasing openness while developing concrete ways for working on them.

**PSR has long graduated leaders who are able to give effective leadership to congregations.** A large share of the current pastors of UCC, UMC, and DOC churches in the West are PSR graduates, and their presence is increasingly noted in other parts of the country. PSR also develops leaders for emerging faith communities that are just beginning to take shape. Our current president often tells students: “The church you dream of serving may well be the church you will need to build yourself.”

**PSR is also committed to the development of leaders in the academy.** As a core member of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU), PSR’s faculty is vital to the doctoral program, and nearly all are part of the core doctoral faculty, teaching doctoral seminars and advising doctoral students.



## Academic Assets

Our academic resources are strong. Recently, PSR successfully completed the process of renewing its accreditation with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and the Association of Theological Schools, and is accredited for the next nine years.

**PSR offers a thoughtfully designed and innovative Master of Divinity (MDiv) program.** A decade ago, the faculty reshaped the MDiv program, based on four core educational values:

- *Contextuality*: Sacred texts, theological ideas, and religious traditions originate out of particular contexts, and at the same time they need to be properly engaged in the context, location, and realities of readers and communities. Moreover, the work of ministry is done in context.
- *Critical thinking*: The engagement and appropriation of sacred texts, theological ideas, and religious traditions must be done through a critical-thinking process, with the use of appropriate theories and methodologies.



- *Formation*: Development for religious leadership involves both spiritual and intellectual formation.
- *Partnerships*: The formation of religious leadership must be done in partnership with faith communities and other organizations to which we can be accountable.

**PSR has some experience with off-site delivery of learning opportunities**, especially in its Certificate of Ministry Studies and Certificate in Sexuality and Religion programs. The school is a partner of the Northwest House of Theological Studies in Salem, Oregon, where PSR students can earn up to one half of their credits by completing weekend and summer courses. PSR recently hired a director of community and continuing education to work with faculty in developing new options, including distance learning.



**Our faculty members have excellent reputations** for the quality of their scholarship, and several are leaders in their fields. They are devoted to their teaching; in general their students give them high marks, and PSR's program assessment confirms their effectiveness. The faculty is extremely diverse in terms of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, as well as denomination. Furthermore, it is more collegial and works more collaboratively than ever before. (Several members of the faculty will be retiring in the next five years. While faculty retirement involves loss, it also creates the opportunity to reshape its overall composition in light of new needs and opportunities.)



**PSR's membership in the Graduate Theological Union (GTU)**, an ecumenical consortium of nine seminaries and three multi-faith centers, provides our students with access to one of the largest theological faculties in the United States and an outstanding and comprehensive theological library, also one of the largest in the country.

**PSR has several distinctive educational resources.** Ten years ago we established the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry (CLGS) and the Institute for Leadership Development and Study of Pacific and Asian North American Religion (PANA Institute). These centers have expanded the resources available for the formation of our degree-program students and extended our influence into churches and communities far beyond Berkeley. The financial bases of both centers need to be strengthened and their organizational relationships with PSR need to be developed further (PANA is actually on hiatus right now); but they are important parts of the PSR community.

The Badè Museum of Biblical Archeology has long been an important resource, and the Doug Adams Gallery for religious art has recently been added in a new partnership with the GTU's Center for Arts, Religion and Education.

**The richness and diversity of our student body** adds to the dynamic learning community that is present at PSR. Our students represent almost 40 denominations and faith traditions, and they come with a vast array of backgrounds, experiences, and ministerial gifts. Nearly half are from California; about 17% are international, and the rest come from across the country. They range in age from 22 to 72, and nearly 45% are from racial/ethnic minority groups. We have many gay, lesbian, and bisexual students and several transgender students who find PSR an affirming place to develop their leadership and ministry skills.



## Institutional Assets

Several other assets are important to PSR's future as well:

- Openness to creative collaboration across the GTU is growing. In the past, PSR, like each of the other seminaries in the GTU, has administered its operations as a wholly independent entity. But as new financial realities have pressed on all of the seminaries, PSR, Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSP), and the GTU entity itself have moved toward integration of their “secular administrative functions.” This innovative collaboration will not only reduce costs for the participating seminaries; over time it is likely to improve the quality and reliability of services. Longer term, it may spread to academic support functions, and perhaps even to shared curricular and instructional resources.
- PSR's staff of highly qualified and skilled professionals, many of whom have a strong commitment to and responsibilities in their churches, contribute to a shared sense of mission and a high level of commitment to the overall good of the institution.
- PSR has a diverse and dedicated board of trustees. Of its 32 current members, 14 come from the business and professional world, 11 are pastors, 3 are denominational leaders, 3 are leaders in academia, and 1 is a student.
- In recent years PSR has developed a strong sense of trust and important collaborative practices among its trustees, faculty, and staff members. This collegial style and commitment to transparency have allowed PSR to act in an entrepreneurial way in its creation of the new centers and the establishment of the Swedenborgian House of Studies.
- PSR has a beautiful campus on “Holy Hill,” across the street from the GTU library, looking out over Berkeley and the San Francisco Bay. The campus is very well suited for a residential program, with a chapel, a classroom building, a building for faculty and administrative offices, a dining room, and a good deal of student housing. Recently PSR, in partnership with the Disciples Seminary Foundation, bought a former DOC church across the street that has become the Ecumenical Center of Berkeley and provides another worship sanctuary, more meeting rooms, and additional office space, some of which is now generating rental income. Some of our facilities have significant deferred maintenance, and some are no longer needed; we are in the midst of a formulating a facilities plan that is intended to upgrade our residential property and lower our maintenance costs, and to identify properties that could be sold.
- Our location in Berkeley adds to the liveliness of PSR's intellectual climate. We are one block away from the world-renowned University of California at Berkeley, and our students have access to its courses, libraries, and other resources. We are in the heart of the San Francisco Bay Area, known for its diversity of cultures and faith traditions. Our mild climate year-round allows for maximum enjoyment of northern California's beautiful natural environment.





Pacific School of Religion Degree Programs	Enrolled Students (2008-9)
Master of Divinity	132
Master of Arts (GTU Common MA)	33
MDiv/MA	19
Master of Theological Studies	16
Doctor of Ministry	16
Certificate programs	43
Special students	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>266</b>
GTU doctoral students working with our faculty	34

Budgeted Expenditures, 2009-10	Budgeted Income, 2009-10	Endowment
\$6.94 million	Tuition and fees: 19%	\$31 million (6/30/09)
	Auxiliary enterprises: 23	Effective draw rate: 6.0% (2008-9)
	Gifts and grants: 14	<b>Financial Aid</b>
	Endowment spending: 36	46.3% (discount rate on tuition)
	Other: 8	73% of students receive financial aid

PSR Faculty	Trustees
16 full-time, including the president	32 (15 business and professional, 11 pastors, 3 denominational leaders, 2 academic leaders, 1 student)

Graduate Theological Union			
9 seminaries, 3 centers	137 core faculty	1006 students (FTE)	Approx. 600 courses/year

