

The Seattle School of Theology & Psychology

Presidential Profile

The Seattle School of Theology & Psychology seeks a president who can lead with spiritual maturity, institutional courage, intercultural credibility, strategic imagination, and deep love for the transformative work of the gospel.

We are one school with three expressions: the Graduate School, the Allender Center, and The Center for Transforming Engagement. Across these expressions, we are committed to training people to be competent in the study of text, soul, and culture in order to serve God and neighbor through transforming relationships. We form listeners, healers and rebuilders for a fractured world.

The next president will inherit a community of deep conviction, creativity, resilience, and love. The School is beloved by students, alumni, faculty, staff, donors, and partners who have been shaped by its distinctive integration of theology, psychology, story, trauma, culture, and embodied transformation.

At the same time, the next president will enter an institution facing real pressures: financial strain, enrollment challenges, accreditation concerns, leadership transitions, organizational fatigue, intercultural credibility gaps, and the broader instability of theological and graduate education. This is not a call for a caretaker. It is a call for a leader who can help The Seattle School discern and embody its next faithful form.

THE LEADERSHIP MOMENT

The Seattle School stands at a threshold.

The landscape of theological education is shifting. Graduate education is changing. The church is in upheaval. Mental health needs are rising. Communities are increasingly polarized. Students are asking urgent questions about faith, vocation, identity, justice, trauma, belonging, and formation.

In this moment, The Seattle School has something distinctive to offer. Its work has never been merely the delivery of degrees or credentials. At its heart, the School forms people who can enter stories, systems, neighborhoods, churches, clinics, organizations, and communities as agents of healing, repair, and transformation.

Yet the School must also face its realities honestly. It must ask hard questions about sustainability, enrollment, accreditation, compensation, partnership, program design, theological identity, institutional culture, and public identity. It must examine where its stated commitments and lived practices do not yet align. It must discern what should be preserved, what must be repaired, what needs to be released, and what new forms are required for the mission to thrive.

The next president must be able to tell the truth about the present while calling forth hope for the future.

THE LEADER WE SEEK

The Seattle School seeks a practical visionary: a leader who can see what is possible, name what is true, and translate vision into action.

This leader will be spiritually grounded, emotionally mature, relationally trustworthy, institutionally decisive, and interculturally credible. They will be able to hold complexity without becoming reactive or enmeshed. They will listen deeply and learn quickly. They will honor the wisdom of the community while also accepting the responsibility to lead.

The next president must be able to say, with clarity and humility: This is where we are going. This is why it matters. This is how we will move. And we will go together.

ATTRIBUTES OF OUR NEXT PRESIDENT

A Spiritually Mature and Courageous Christian Leader

The next president should possess a robust and generous Christian faith capable of leading across a wide spectrum of theological locations. The president needs to love Jesus and see His life, death, resurrection, and ascension not only as doctrinally core but also as the basis for their ability to enter the world unashamed of the gospel and confident in their engagement with trials, complexity, and dissent. The Seattle School inhabits

tensions within contemporary Christian culture, including evangelical, post-evangelical, traditional, progressive, contemplative, justice-oriented, and interreligious realities.

The president must be able to lead within these tensions without flattening difference or avoiding clarity. They should demonstrate humility, wisdom, courage, hope, integrity, and genuine love for Jesus and people.

A Differentiated and Emotionally Mature Presence

The next president must be able to stand within the system without being swallowed by it. They should be relationally present without being reactive, collaborative without becoming enmeshed, and pastoral without allowing care to become paralysis.

The president needs to model engagement with differences with openness and resolve – not requiring consensus or avoiding conflict, but offering a way forward, acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly. In doing so, refusing to tolerate any form of contempt or disparagement directed against students, staff, or faculty.

The School needs a leader who can metabolize anxiety, hold conflict, remain grounded under pressure, and help the community move through complexity rather than around it.

A Decisive and Trustworthy Decision-Maker

The Seattle School needs a president who listens deeply and then leads. The next president must be able to clarify decision-making processes, empower others to make decisions within their areas, and act with appropriate urgency when needed.

They should understand that not every decision requires the same process. Some decisions are communal. Some are consultative. Some are executive. The president must bring clarity to these distinctions and help the institution move beyond bottlenecks, ambiguity, and delayed action.

A Vision-Caster Who Can Implement

The next president must be able to articulate a compelling vision for The Seattle School's role in theological, psychological, cultural, and formational education. But vision alone is not enough.

This leader must also translate vision into strategy, structure, priorities, timelines, and measurable action. The School needs a leader who can inspire trust not only through language, but through follow-through.

A Leader with Intercultural Credibility and Courage

The next president must bring intercultural credibility: a demonstrated capacity to lead across racial, cultural, theological, and social differences with humility, courage, and accountability.

The Seattle School is a predominantly white institution with deep aspirations toward justice, reconciliation, intercultural formation, and healing. The next president must be able to help the School face this reality honestly and lead toward deeper integrity.

This leader should understand how institutional and dominant cultural forces shape imagination, leadership norms, decision-making, conflict, hiring, retention, curriculum, student experience, and public witness. They must be able to engage these realities with creative vulnerability in a manner that fosters belonging.

A Cultivator of Courageous Discourse

The next president must help The Seattle School become a community where difficult conversations can be held with truth, dignity, and love.

Students and faculty/staff have named the need for deeper belonging for students of color, greater clarity around theological identity, more room for interreligious and spiritually expansive dialogue, and a classroom culture where students across theological and political differences can speak without fear of shame or dismissal.

The president must be able to lead beyond polarization. They should be practiced in conversations about race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, theology, power, culture, and belonging. They must be able to protect human dignity while resisting ideological flattening, performative agreement, or conflict avoidance.

A Financially Sober and Imaginative Institutional Builder

The next president must be comfortable with cultivating donors, building partnerships, strengthening enrollment, developing revenue strategies, and making direct financial requests with clarity and conviction.

The president needs to be publicly and interpersonally persuasive, with a proven track record of engaging donors, and able to articulate the necessity of The Seattle School's mission and a robust, story-oriented theology worthy of their time, finances, and contacts.

This leader should understand that financial sustainability is not a distraction from mission. It is faithful stewardship. They must be able to hold financial realities and institutional imagination together, asking not only how the School survives, but what it would take for the School to breathe, thrive, and extend its impact.

A Steward of Academic and Formational Depth

The next president should understand the School's distinctive integration of theology and psychology. They do not need to personally carry every academic specialty, but they must be able to steward the academic and formational vision of the institution.

Given the centrality of counseling programs, the president should be able to speak meaningfully about the counseling field, clinical formation, theological integration, and the future of mental health education. They should also be able to support theological education at a time when traditional theological enrollment is under pressure.

The president must empower faculty and academic leaders toward curricular coherence, clinical excellence, theological depth, and educational innovation.

A Unifier of One School with Three Expressions

The next president must help The Seattle School become more fully one institution with three expressions rather than parallel entities with competing or unclear identities.

The Graduate School, the Allender Center, and The Center for Transforming Engagement share a common mission, but they require clearer alignment, strategy, and mutuality. The president must help clarify how these expressions belong to one another, strengthen one another, and extend the School's mission together.

A Leader for Mission-Driven Innovation

The next president must distinguish between the School's deepest mission and the inherited models that have historically carried that mission. The mission remains vital. The delivery models may need to change.

This leader should bring imagination for degree programs, certificates, non-degree formation, synchronous and asynchronous learning, strategic partnerships, public theology, trauma-informed education, community-based training, and new pathways for students and practitioners.

The School needs a president who can ask: What form must the mission take now?

A President Rooted in Place and Expansive in Reach

The next president should understand the significance of The Seattle School's location in the Pacific Northwest, in Seattle, and now in Judkins Park.

The School's place matters. The next president should help the community ask what theological, psychological, intercultural, and formational work can be done here that cannot be done in the same way elsewhere. Seattle is marked by innovation, loneliness, displacement, secularization, spiritual hunger, beauty, fragmentation, wealth, poverty, and social complexity. Judkins Park offers not merely a new address, but a new invitation.

At the same time, the School's community extends beyond campus. Online and low-residency students need deeper connection, clearer belonging, and intentional formation. The next president must be able to imagine community across place, distance, and modality.

INSTITUTIONAL REALITIES THE PRESIDENT MUST BE PREPARED TO FACE

The next president should enter with eyes open to the realities before the School:

- Financial fragility and the need for sustainable revenue.
- Enrollment pressure, especially in theological education.
- Accreditation concerns and the need for institutional strength.
- Organizational fatigue after years of transition.
- Staff and faculty under-resourcing.
- The need for clearer decision-making and empowered leadership.
- The challenge of integrating the Graduate School, the Allender Center, and The Center for Transforming Engagement.

- The School's identity as a predominantly white institution with aspirations toward justice and reconciliation.
- Student concerns about belonging, representation, discourse, and alignment between stated commitments and lived experience.
- The need to mature from deconstruction into reconstruction, generativity, and deeper rootedness.

The Seattle School is not looking for someone to rescue it by force of personality. It is looking for someone who can lead with courage, humility, and hope.

CORE PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT

In the next season, the president will need to:

1. Clarify The Seattle School's identity, theological posture, and public story.
2. Strengthen financial sustainability through fundraising, enrollment, partnerships, and program innovation.
3. Build trust across students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, applicants, and partners.
4. Lead with intercultural credibility that results in dynamic practice.
5. Foster courageous discourse across theological, cultural, racial, political, and social differences.
6. Strengthen the integration of theology and psychology across programs and public offerings.
7. Empower a strong leadership team and clarify decision-making authority.
8. Advance academic and clinical excellence.
9. Help the School intentionally partner with neighbors in Judkins Park, Seattle, and the Pacific Northwest.
10. Lead the School from institutional reactivity toward generative clarity.

CLOSING PROFILE STATEMENT

The Seattle School does not need a president who will simply preserve what has been. Nor does it need a leader who will impose a prefabricated vision disconnected from the School's history, faculty, students, alumni, donors, partners, and mission.

The Seattle School needs a president who can enter with humility and courage; listen without disappearing into process; act without severing trust; tell the truth about institutional realities while calling forth hope; and help the School adapt its form without losing its soul.

We seek a leader who can help The Seattle School become more fully itself: a community of healers and rebuilders formed at the intersection of text, soul, and culture for the sake of God's redemptive work in the world.

That future will require spiritual maturity, strategic imagination, financial courage, academic and formational depth, differentiated leadership, and intercultural credibility. It will require a president who can align aspiration with practice, deepen trust where trust has been strained, and embody a credible Christian witness toward healing, justice, reconciliation, and repair.