

BELLARMINE UNIVERSITY

2026-27 Presidential Search Prospectus

Louisville, Kentucky

About Bellarmine University

Bellarmine University is a Catholic institution in Louisville, Ky., that educates an increasingly diverse community of students in mind, body, and spirit for meaningful lives, rewarding careers, ethical leadership, and service to improve the human condition. Opened on October 3, 1950, as a men's college under the sponsorship of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Louisville, Bellarmine follows a proud line of diocesan-founded institutions of higher learning in one of the oldest dioceses in inland America. In 1968, the university became coeducational and self-governing after a merger with Ursuline College. In 2000, reflecting its growth into a comprehensive institution, the Board of Trustees changed the name from Bellarmine College to Bellarmine University. The university today is organized into six colleges offering undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees. Bellarmine holds three Carnegie Classifications:

- a Professions-focused Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate-Small institution
- an Opportunity College and University – Higher Access, Higher Earnings institution, placing Bellarmine among a select group recognized for fostering student success and creating upward economic mobility
- an Elective Classification for Community Engagement, recognizing its collaboration with the broader Louisville community for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources.

Bellarmine is one of only 14 private institutions in the nation to hold both the Opportunity College and Community Engagement classifications.

The university enrolls 3,255 students on its main 134-acre academic and residential campus in Louisville's upscale and eclectic Highlands neighborhood.





Catholic Identity & Mission

Bellarmine finds its Catholic identity in the inclusive spirit of the Trappist monk Thomas Merton and through the vibrant spiritual life practiced on its campus. It offers a mission-driven education rooted in the rich tradition of the Catholic liberal arts and sciences – a broad-based curriculum that eschews narrow specialization and instead prepares graduates to be lifelong learners and ethical decision-makers. Bellarmine's mission shapes curriculum, campus culture, hiring, and every decision about who Bellarmine serves and how we go about it.

Bellarmine is home to the Thomas Merton Center, the official repository of Merton's artistic estate, housing more than 50,000 Merton-related materials. In their coursework, students learn Merton's wisdom about the search for the true self, the interconnectedness of life, and the solidarity of the human spirit.



Mission

We are an inclusive Catholic university that educates students – mind, body, and spirit – for meaningful lives, rewarding careers, ethical leadership, and service to improve the human condition.

Vision

We will become the leading Catholic university in the South by embracing innovation and creativity, forging new and mutually beneficial partnerships, intentionally diversifying curricula and community, and providing a distinctive and transformative student experience.

Values

Academic Excellence
Intrinsic Dignity
Social Responsibility
Integrity
Hospitality
Stewardship



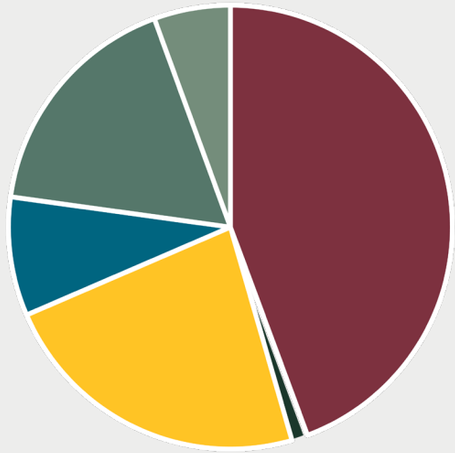




A Liberal Arts Education for the 21st Century

Academics are at the heart of the Bellarmine experience. Grounded in the Catholic tradition of higher education and in the liberal arts and sciences, Bellarmine offers more than 50 undergraduate majors. Its distinguished faculty members are experts in their fields and teachers whom students remember for the rest of their lives, thanks to a 14:1 student-to-faculty ratio. Since adopting a bold strategic plan in 2019, the university has been intentional about its commitment to make a Bellarmine education affordable and accessible to students of all backgrounds. This commitment includes serving students who are striving to become the first generation in their family to complete a college degree, a type of student Bellarmine serves extremely well through unrivaled outcomes that create upward economic mobility.

A new core curriculum launched in the 2024-25 academic year increases the university's emphasis on experiential learning and community engagement; highlights eight dimensions of wellness; and updates foundational courses to make them more relevant to today's learners.



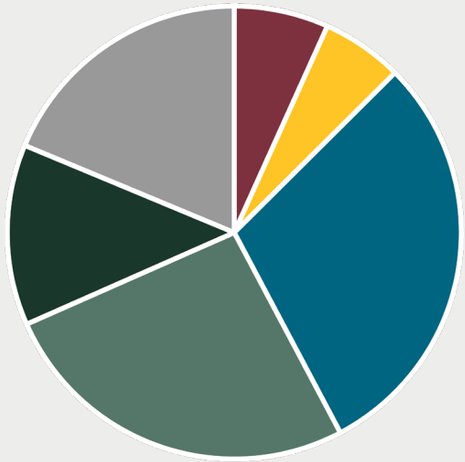
Undergraduate Enrollment

Bellarmine College of Arts and Sciences | 44.36%
College of Health Professions | 1.17%
Donna and Allan Lansing School of Nursing and Clinical Sciences | 23%
School of Movement and Rehabilitation Sciences | 8.66%
W. Fielding Rubel School of Business | 17.25%
Annsley Frazier Thornton School of Education | 5.57%

Graduate and Doctoral Programs Aligned with a Changing World



Bellarmine offers more than 20 graduate degrees in healthcare, education, business, communication, psychology, and technology, closely aligned with the region's workforce needs through ongoing dialogue with the area's top employers. For this reason, Bellarmine graduates enjoy a competitive advantage when seeking jobs. Eight programs are available entirely online, and others offer a hybrid experience. The university has committed to ensuring that its culture, soul, and unique character are preserved and palpable in the online educational experiences it offers. That commitment – combined with the pathways to local employment that Bellarmine can offer through its partnerships – has made its online product compelling in the region. Online graduate and doctoral learners report high levels of satisfaction.



Graduate & Doctoral Enrollment

Bellarmine College of Arts and Sciences | 6.73%
College of Health Professions | 5.79%
Donna and Allan Lansing School of Nursing and Clinical Sciences | 29.74%
School of Movement and Rehabilitation Sciences | 26.11%
W. Fielding Rubel School of Business | 12.92%
Annsley Frazier Thornton School of Education | 18.71%

Programs

DOCTORAL DEGREES

- Education*
- Education and Social Change
- Health Professions Education
- Leadership in Higher Education
- Nursing Practice*
- Physical Therapy

MASTER'S DEGREES

- Business Administration*
- Clinical Psychology
- Digital Media
- Education*
- Educational Specialist
- Health Care Leadership
- Health Science
- Nursing*
- Respiratory Therapy
- Software Engineering
- Teaching*

**multiple tracks available*

A Leader in Health Professions Education

Louisville is one of the nation's most dynamic healthcare markets, and healthcare education is a pillar of strength for Bellarmine. Forty-two percent of Bellarmine's students are enrolled in health professions programs – a reflection of both student demand and the university's depth in the field. These students are highly sought after in the region for their well-rounded education and their excellence in service delivery.

The College of Health Professions offers programs in Public Health, Health Care Administration, Health Care Leadership, and Health Professions, while housing two schools, both offering degrees at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels:

- **Donna and Allan Lansing School of Nursing and Clinical Sciences** – home to Nursing, Medical Laboratory Science, Respiratory Therapy, and Radiation Therapy.
- **School of Movement and Rehabilitation Sciences** – home to Exercise Science, Athletic Training, and Physical Therapy.

Across programs, students complete clinical training in diverse healthcare environments through partnerships with Norton Healthcare, Baptist Health, and CommonSpirit Health that extend well beyond clinical placement – informing curriculum, creating scholarships, and building talent pipelines.







The Bellarmine IMPACT: Personalized Student Pathways

Bellarmine IMPACT is a commitment to providing a distinctive and transformative learning experience centered on Catholic and liberal arts foundations. With a focus on personalized pathways to success, students can tailor their education to their individual needs and interests. Students have access to a wide range of hands-on experiences – internships, clinicals, fieldwork, study abroad, and volunteer opportunities – allowing them to gain valuable knowledge and skills. An IMPACT Network of advisors and coaches supports students throughout their journey. Faculty advisors provide guidance and mentorship. Career coaches support resume reviews, mock interviews, and job-search preparation. Peer coaches assist with studying, writing, time management, and test-taking. Professional advisors provide academic support tailored to each student's major and interests.

The IMPACT pillars are operationalized through staffing, programming, and the university's core curriculum, ensuring that every student has consistent, structured support from enrollment through career launch.

Bellarmine graduates have access to a lifelong career network of fellow alumni as well as a dedicated career success advocate ready to help with job searches and career transitions. The university offers its graduates free career services for life.



Unrivaled Outcomes

Ninety-nine percent of Bellarmine graduates find employment or pursue an advanced degree within six months of earning their degrees, an outcome that's 16% higher than the national average for all colleges. They earn more than graduates from any other Kentucky institution, whether it's after six months, three years, five years, or 10 years. Three years after graduation, Bellarmine bachelor's degree recipients earn a median income that is 19% higher than the average median income for those holding bachelor's degrees from all Kentucky institutions. For master's degrees, the average median income is 23% higher. Measured over a lifetime, a Bellarmine degree generates a $1.93 million return on investment, significantly higher than the $1.51 million average for Kentucky private institutions and the $1.56 million average for Kentucky public institutions.

Experiential learning is a critical part of the Bellarmine experience. The university guarantees that every student has the opportunity to land an internship, develop a career plan, and build a professional network. 88% of Bellarmine students participate in more than 90 hours of internships, clinicals, student teaching, and other professional experiences.

99%

of Bellarmine graduates find employment or pursue an advanced degree within six months of earning their degrees.

97%

of employed grads are already engaged in full-time work in their chosen field within six months of earning their degrees.

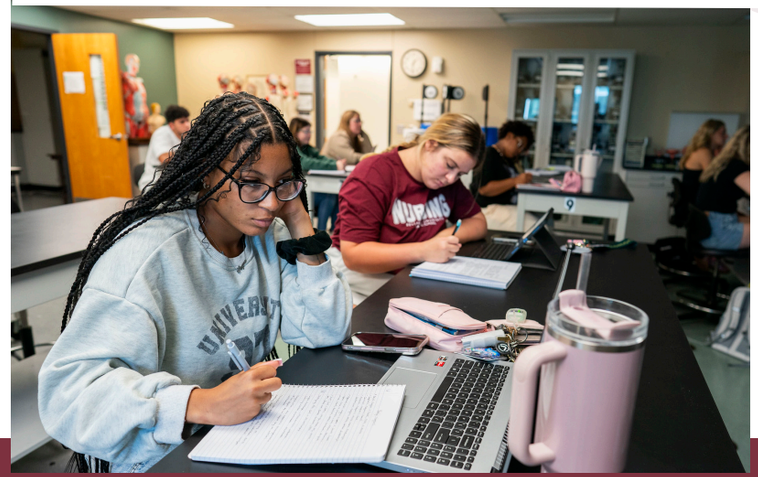












A Private University Education Within Reach

Over the past decade, Bellarmine has become far more intentional about a focus on affordability. At the undergraduate level, 100% of first-year students receive institutional scholarships, and the average amount is more than $36,000. The average amount of free aid – including institutional, state, and federal aid – is $46,000.

Among the university's signature access programs:

- **Hope Kentucky Scholars Program** – This initiative provides full tuition to Pell-eligible students who are Kentucky residents and graduate from a Kentucky high school. It covers 100% of tuition for traditional first-year and transfer students in Kentucky.

- **Bellarmine Direct** – Qualified students graduating from Louisville high schools can receive automatic admission through a streamlined online process. Once Bellarmine receives a Bellarmine Direct applicant's high school transcript, that student will be automatically admitted with a minimum scholarship of $20,000 and a personalized financial aid package.

Partners in Building a Better Louisville

Louisville is the largest city in Kentucky and the core of a metropolitan area encompassing approximately 1.4 million residents across parts of Kentucky and Southern Indiana. The city's economy is fueled by healthcare, logistics, advanced manufacturing, and a growing food-and-beverage sector anchored by bourbon.

Bellarmine has built robust partnerships with some of the region's largest employers to offer real-world internship experience and build career pipelines for graduates. Partners include Norton Healthcare; Jefferson County Public Schools; the Archdiocese of Louisville; Baptist Health; CommonSpirit Health; metro, state, and federal government; and many regional accounting firms and banks. Seventy-two percent of Bellarmine graduates remain in Louisville after completing their degrees.

In recent years, Bellarmine has reshaped itself into an institution focused on partnerships that position the university and its growing number of academic programs as workforce development leaders in Louisville and the surrounding region.



Athletics

In 2020, Bellarmine moved its 23 athletics programs to NCAA Division I through the Atlantic Sun Conference, expanding the university's brand regionally and nationally. After a four-year reclassification process, Bellarmine is now eligible to compete in NCAA championship events. In only its second year in Division I, the men's basketball team captured the ASUN Championship, but was not yet eligible for the NCAA basketball tournament during the university's reclassification period.

The Knights are successful both on the field of play and in the classroom, with 100% of student-athletes employed or pursuing graduate degrees within six months of graduating over the past five years. The university is adapting to changes in NCAA regulation through NIL partnerships and aggressive recruiting in the transfer portal, with a focus on preparing student-athletes for successful careers after graduation.

Campus

The university's main 134-acre campus sits in Louisville's Belknap neighborhood, with residential facilities, dining, wellness, and ministry resources all embedded in a walkable, community-scaled setting. Beargrass Creek flows along the edge of campus, giving the grounds a distinctive natural character uncommon for an urban campus. The university owns residential properties near campus and two off-campus facilities focused on healthcare education and service delivery.









Financial Health

Bellarmine University just completed a yearlong celebration of its 75th anniversary, emerging with strong momentum and surpassing 3,000 total enrolled students for the first time in several years.

Philanthropic momentum and alumni engagement are strong. In 2024, the university achieved the most successful year of fundraising in Bellarmine's history, with more than $18 million in total giving. Building on that momentum, the university launched a $75 million comprehensive fundraising campaign the following year to advance four priorities: Student Success, Catholic Identity & Mission, Workforce Impact, and Athletics Excellence. The campaign reached its goal in September 2026.

Emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, Bellarmine faced a structural operating deficit that it managed through disciplined spending, targeted reductions, and the development of new revenue streams. While meaningful progress has been made, the university remains focused on strengthening its long-term financial sustainability through enrollment growth, disciplined resource allocation, philanthropy, and strategic investment in programs aligned with student demand. The next president will lead an institution that is financially disciplined, strategically focused, and deeply mission-aligned – with a community that believes in what Bellarmine stands for and is ready to carry it forward.

Operating Budget:

$75 million

Endowment:

$66.3 million

(as of May 31, 2026)

Recent Timeline





LEADERSHIP

2026-27 Presidential Search

Louisville, Kentucky

The Role

Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the President leads all aspects of the University, including strategic planning, mission fulfillment, administration, academics, athletics, fundraising, and financial sustainability. The next President will be expected to provide inspirational and decisive leadership during a period of significant change in higher education, strengthening Bellarmine's financial sustainability, growing enrollment and philanthropic support, and aligning institutional resources with its academic mission and long-term strategic priorities.

Reporting directly to the President are the following positions:

- Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
- Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations
- Vice President for Enrollment, Marketing, and Communication
- Vice President for Finance and Facilities
- Vice President for Student Affairs
- Chief of Staff
- Associate Vice President for Athletics
- Assistant Vice President for University Communications



Qualifications

The successful candidate will be an inspirational, courageous, and accomplished leader with a demonstrated ability to lead complex organizations through significant change. Bellarmine welcomes candidates from both traditional academic backgrounds and nontraditional leadership paths, including business, healthcare, nonprofit, military, and other mission-driven organizations. While an advanced degree and experience in higher education are desirable, demonstrated leadership capability, financial acumen, strategic vision, and a commitment to Bellarmine's mission will be primary considerations.

As a Catholic university, Bellarmine prefers a Catholic President. Regardless of religious affiliation, candidates must demonstrate a deep understanding of, respect for, and commitment to advancing the University's Catholic identity, mission, and values.

While no one candidate can excel in all arenas, strong candidates will excel at most of the following:

- Inspirational and visionary leadership — Ability to articulate a compelling vision and motivate stakeholders to support it.
- Financial and business acumen — Demonstrated understanding of financial sustainability, resource allocation, and organizational structure.
- Courageous change leadership — Experience leading significant organizational transformation and making difficult decisions.
- Fundraising and external engagement — Demonstrated fundraising success or strong potential to develop major donor relationships.
- Growth and innovation — Ability to identify new revenue opportunities, strategic partnerships, strategies, and academic programs to strengthen enrollment and student outcomes.
- Catholic mission alignment — Commitment to advancing Bellarmine's Catholic identity, values, and educational mission.
- Communication and presence — Exceptional communication skills, emotional intelligence, and the ability to build trust.
- Academic appreciation and shared governance — Respect for academic excellence, faculty engagement, and the principles of liberal arts education while maintaining the decisiveness to make difficult institutional changes.
- Leadership team development — Ability to recruit, develop, and hold accountable a high-performing executive team.
- Integrity and character — Strong moral compass, humility, sound judgment, and a commitment to student success.

Priorities

The President will underscore Bellarmine's mission and unify constituents in pursuit of Bellarmine's core values. In addition to the day-to-day responsibilities of running the University, the President will be expected to focus on the following opportunities:

Provide visionary leadership

- Develop and communicate a compelling strategic plan that inspires faculty, staff, students, alumni, and donors while positioning Bellarmine for long-term financial sustainability;
- Demonstrate the vision and courage to lead institutional transformation, make difficult strategic decisions, and align resources with Bellarmine's mission and long-term priorities;
- Serve as a role model for Bellarmine's Catholic values and mission; and
- Promote academic excellence and innovation, ensuring that Bellarmine prepares students for meaningful lives and rewarding careers, including service and leadership, to improve the human condition.

Raise resources, visibility, and reputation

- Lead ambitious fundraising initiatives, build meaningful relationships with major donors, and expand philanthropic support for the University's mission and strategic priorities;
- Strengthen enrollment, retention, and net tuition revenue through innovative strategies to improve Bellarmine's competitive position and long-term financial sustainability;
- Build strategic relationships with Louisville's business, healthcare, and civic communities to expand educational opportunities and alternative revenue sources;
- Continue to engage alumni in the life of the University;
- Strengthen the University's reputation, visibility, and competitive position; and
- Articulate Bellarmine's advantages to a wider audience.

Enhance institutional capacity

- Build a high-performing leadership team and foster a culture of accountability and collaboration;
- Demonstrate the ability to engage faculty and other stakeholders while maintaining the decisiveness necessary to implement difficult institutional changes;
- Build trust, engagement, and a strong sense of community among faculty, staff, and students;
- Support the recruitment and development of talented faculty and staff;
- Develop mutually beneficial partnerships in Louisville and beyond;
- Drive innovation and identify new opportunities for growth; and
- Foster a culture of equity and inclusion in the spirit of Thomas Merton.

Contact

Nominations, inquiries, and expressions of interest should be sent to: **bellarmine@russellreynolds.com**.

Bellarmine is an affirmative action and equal opportunity employer and encourages applicants with diverse backgrounds to apply.

