



Syracuse University - Chancellor Position and Candidate Specification



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THE OPPORTUNITY

In a dynamic moment in American higher education, the next Chancellor of Syracuse University will step into a financially stable, values-driven, student-centered research institution with a distinctive brand and global reach. Syracuse University stands out for its powerful blend of professional excellence with a strong liberal arts foundation. The University's culture emphasizes hands-on learning, creativity, and global engagement. It is a place both deeply rooted and globally connected, an institution of beauty, purpose, and enduring impact. Nationally renowned programs, such as those at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, The David B. Falk College of Sport, and Syracuse Architecture, come together to reflect Syracuse's distinctive strength: combining intellectual rigor with professional readiness in a setting that encourages bold thinking and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Anchored by a committed and supportive Board, a talented senior leadership team, a distinguished faculty, a dedicated staff, an engaged and impressive student body, and a proud and connected alumni network, Syracuse University stands apart for its student-centricity, excellence in education and research and R1 designation, renowned Division I athletics programs, and national leadership in serving veterans and military-connected families. Significant campus renewal and capital projects, recent student-experience investments, and a "One University" ethos have strengthened the institution and created momentum to match Syracuse's values, traditions, and resilient culture.

The range of strategic opportunities for Syracuse University in the years ahead is broad and has the potential to transform the institution. Syracuse University is one of the largest employers in Central New York and an essential part of the region's cultural and economic fabric. Syracuse's strategic leadership in fostering Central New York's "[Micron moment](#)" and associated growth position the University to be an indispensable talent engine for the region and research partner across engineering, computing, policy, business functions, and communications, while also broadening opportunities in arts and culture, education, health, housing, and workforce development for the city and surrounding communities. At the same time, the University is leaning into digital transformation and AI-enabled teaching and learning at scale; expanding experiential, interdisciplinary, and global programs; and elevating corporate, governmental, and community partnerships to accelerate impact. In athletics, Syracuse's brand and community identity are intertwined with a rapidly evolving D1 landscape. The charge to the next Chancellor is to convert these opportunities into durable advancements while preserving the distinctive character and culture of the University.

Success will require a values-anchored, externally savvy professional with experience serving as an innovative leader. The next Chancellor will serve as an inspiring and transparent communicator who listens deeply to faculty and staff, engages confidently with trustees and donors, is authentically engaged with students, and partners effectively with elected officials, industry, and community leaders. The ideal leader is crisis-tested, yet optimistic; entrepreneurial, yet grounded in a passion for knowledge creation and the academic enterprise; and comfortable making difficult choices and leading by creating a shared vision. They will shape the University's stance in national athletics realignment, mobilize philanthropy to ensure access and affordability as costs rise, and articulate a clear and compelling value proposition to prospective students and families, all while

championing the Syracuse story with humility and ambition. Above all, they will embrace the University's distinctive spirit—entrepreneurial, unentitled, caring, and welcoming to all—and channel it into the next chapter of Syracuse's academic excellence, research impact, and regional and global leadership.

OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY'S NEXT CHANCELLOR

- Articulate and advance **Syracuse University's unique character** as a private university with a public spirit—one that is **entrepreneurial and committed to access and opportunity for all students**, including veterans, first-generation students, international students, and those from a wide range of geographies and backgrounds.
- Elevate and communicate the **synergies of the University's professional schools, research, and experiential learning emphasis** with its **holistic, liberal arts approach to undergraduate education**.
- Lead a bold, **data-driven strategy to focus on academic quality**, ensuring that Syracuse's R1 status is not only maintained but leveraged as a differentiator and **advancing a concentrated academic portfolio to ensure that resources are directed toward areas of true excellence and national distinction**.
- **Serve as an advocate for the value and mission of higher education** in an increasingly skeptical environment, articulating Syracuse's distinctive contributions to knowledge creation, social mobility, and democratic citizenship.
- **Foster a campus culture committed to civil discourse and academic freedom**, ensuring that Syracuse remains a place where diverse perspectives are welcome, rigorous debate is encouraged, and the principles of free inquiry and expression are protected and practiced.
- Address broader trends in American higher education and the University's tuition dependence by **developing creative, diversified revenue streams**, including online education, corporate partnerships, and philanthropy, while maintaining affordability and access for a wide-ranging student body.
- **Position Syracuse University as the partner of choice in the region's economic renaissance**, particularly through the generational opportunity presented by Micron and the broader tech ecosystem. Develop and execute strategies that align academic programs, research, and workforce development with the needs of emerging industries.
- **Lead with vision and agility in the evolving landscape of Division I athletics**, ensuring that Syracuse remains competitive and that **athletics continue to serve as a powerful connector and differentiator** for alumni, students, the Central New York community, and the **University's national reputation**.
- Lead the University through the **rapidly evolving landscape of artificial intelligence** and digital transformation, providing a strong ethical and mission-driven framework to **ensure that Syracuse is at the forefront of responsible pedagogical innovation and workforce readiness**.
- Expand and **integrate global engagement, experiential learning, and study abroad opportunities**, ensuring that Syracuse's international, as well as local/regional footprint and alumni network are leveraged for student success and institutional advancement.

- **Inspire and mobilize a broad community of stakeholders**, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, trustees, and community partners, **through transparent communication, humility, and decisive action**.
- Embrace and advance Syracuse's longstanding commitment to **veterans and military-affiliated individuals** as a critical area of distinction and pride for the University.
- Demonstrate the ability to **manage complexity, lead through crisis**, and make tough, strategic decisions **with integrity and empathy**. Identify, assess, and **manage risk related to academic, financial, and reputational sustainability**.
- **Strengthen the University's relationship with the city of Syracuse and the region of Central New York**, positioning the institution as an anchor for economic development, social mobility, and civic partnership.
- **Champion shared governance**, fostering a culture of **transparency, trust, and meaningful consultation** with faculty, staff, and student leadership, with an ability to broadly gather input and ultimately make decisions in the University's best interest.
- **Foster a vibrant, safe, and supportive campus environment welcoming to all**, prioritizing the well-being, mental health, and belonging of students, faculty, and staff, and preparing graduates for meaningful careers and civic engagement.
- Leverage the University's **remarkable and engaged alumni network**; influential and passionate individuals eager to contribute time, talent, and resources to advance the mission and ambitions of the University.

The Chancellor of Syracuse University serves as the chief executive officer of the University. Reporting directly to the Syracuse University [Board of Trustees](#), the Chancellor holds comprehensive oversight of the University's 13 schools and colleges, 23,000 students, 1,900 faculty, 6,000 total staff, \$1.9B operating budget, and \$2.2B+ endowment (*all approximate*). Working closely with the Chancellor's [Executive Team](#), the Chancellor's [Council](#), the [University Leadership Team](#), and the [University Senate](#), the Chancellor is responsible for the effective stewardship of the University's resources in service of its vision to be a pre-eminent and welcoming student-focused research university, preparing engaged citizens, scholars, and leaders for participation in a changing global society.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

- **Demonstrated leadership in a context of commensurate scope and complexity:** Proven success as a senior executive leader within a similarly complex institution. Experience managing a large, multi-faceted enterprise with significant operational, financial, and reputational scope.
- **Strategic vision and execution:** Demonstrated ability to lead through periods of significant upheaval and transformation. Experience making difficult, strategic decisions that position an institution for long-term success, with the capacity to strategically broadcast the shared vision and ambitions of the University.
- **Intellectual breadth and engagement:** A deep commitment to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, and innovation, with the ability to connect authentically with the University's academic enterprise, demonstrate broad intellectual curiosity, and articulate a forward-thinking approach to challenges, risks, and opportunities in the context of the higher education landscape.
- **Financial acumen and resource stewardship:** Extensive experience with complex financial and operational models, with demonstrated ability to steward resources, manage large-scale capital projects, and drive operational efficiencies while investing in people, programs, and infrastructure.
- **Crisis management and resilience:** Demonstrated success navigating complex financial, reputational, and operational situations, with the ability to anticipate, prepare, and nimbly respond to political and societal changes.
- **Development and advancement:** The capacity to serve as a compelling and engaging champion for the University in support of expanding its philanthropic support and/or a successful track record of fundraising and engaging with alumni, donors, and external stakeholders.
- **External engagement and brand management:** Experience engaging with a broad array of external constituencies, with a nuanced understanding of how to collaborate and influence to advance priorities while elevating an institution's brand and public perception.
- **Coalition building and shared governance:** A record of building and leading high-performing and collaborative teams, with an appreciation of shared governance and the ability to foster trust, transparency, and alignment across a broad range of constituent groups.

OTHER PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Humility, approachability, and integrity, with the highest ethical standards.
- Resilience and tenacity; "Bleeds Orange."
- Strategic vision, planning, and agility.
- Decisiveness in direction-setting with a collaborative approach to leadership, engaging and empowering others to execute.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY'S 12TH CHANCELLOR

Kent Syverud has served as Syracuse University's Chancellor since 2014 and will conclude his 12-year tenure in June 2026. Under Chancellor Syverud's leadership, Syracuse has made significant and lasting progress: efforts to foster a university that is welcoming to all continue with resolve, demand for admission has reached historic levels, and faculty achievement continues to grow across disciplines. Syracuse's research enterprise has expanded, and the University's support for veterans and military-connected students remains a national model. The campus has been physically transformed in ways that will serve generations to come; significant improvements and developments include the National Veterans Resource Center within the [Daniel and Gayle D'Aniello Building](#), the [Schine Student Center](#), [Barnes Center](#), and the [JMA Wireless Dome](#), as well as the ongoing construction of [new residence halls](#) and a [full-service hotel](#). Chancellor Syverud has also made a series of pivotal decisions that will shape Syracuse's future: forging a strategic partnership with Micron, modernizing digital infrastructure through collaboration with JMA Wireless, growing the D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families, and launching innovative academic programs to advance teaching, research, and student success.

FISCAL STABILITY AND MOMENTUM

The next Chancellor will inherit a university that is in a strong financial position. On December 31, 2024, Syracuse completed the largest philanthropic effort in University history; the Forever Orange Campaign exceeded its \$1.5 billion goal, helping to propel the University's endowment to over \$2.2 billion. Syracuse University has the financial stability and momentum to pursue ambitious goals and continues to invest in faculty excellence, student financial aid, research infrastructure, and campus facilities. Although the institution has navigated well financially, it is not immune to the pressures facing higher education overall; as such, the successful candidate will guide and support decisions on resource allocation, lead comprehensive fundraising efforts to grow the endowment, establish endowed chairs and professorships, expand financial aid, and invest in facilities and programs that will accelerate Syracuse's success.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Syracuse boasts nationally top-ranked programs in information studies and library science, architecture, communications, business administration, sport management, and public administration. The University continues to develop new academic programs where faculty can exhibit distinctive excellence in their fields while assessing and creating market demand across the breadth of its 13 schools and colleges, which include: the [School of Architecture](#); [The College of Arts and Sciences](#); [School of Education](#); [The College of Engineering and Computer Science](#); [The David B. Falk College of Sport](#); [School of Information Studies](#); [College of Law](#); [The Martin J. Whitman School of Management](#); [Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs](#); [S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications](#); [College of Visual and Performing Arts](#); [College of Professional Studies](#); and [Graduate School](#). Faculty are engaged in cutting-edge research and creative activity, growing the research enterprise, and invested in teaching excellence and student success within a university deeply committed to [free expression and free inquiry](#).

Syracuse maintains one of the most respected international programs in higher education, with study abroad opportunities at centers in major cities worldwide, including Florence, Madrid, London, Santiago, and others. Students benefit from a globally-minded curriculum and diverse perspectives that prepare them for international

careers and citizenship. The University is also deeply invested in study away centers in New York, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles. These programs create opportunities for immersive learning for students in their areas of scholarship.

COMMUNITY HISTORY AND OPPORTUNITY: WELCOMING TO ALL

Syracuse University is a glittering gem of higher education. Syracuse (Onondaga County) is the seat of the Haudenosaunee nation, a vital stop on the Underground Railroad, the heart of the Women's Movement, and central to the history of the Erie Canal, which led to the development of the United States of America. These legacies inform Syracuse's motto: *Suos Cultores Scientia Coronat – Knowledge crowns those who seek her.*

Syracuse University's [Land Acknowledgement](#) is a gesture of respect and recognition toward the [Onondaga Nation](#), on whose ancestral lands the University's campus now resides. The University honors the deep and enduring connection that indigenous communities have with the land and their contributions to the area's history and culture.

Syracuse University has extensive partnerships with nearby institutions, including shared facilities and special cross-registration with SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF), transfer credit acceptance from Onondaga Community College (OCC), and a longstanding collaborative relationship with Upstate Medical University through joint research and patient care. Partnerships with the [Syracuse City School District](#) include various community outreach programs and educational support initiatives.

Syracuse University's strategic leadership played a central role in securing Micron's \$100 billion commitment to build manufacturing operations in Central New York, and the next Chancellor will begin their role at a critical moment to realize the transformative possibilities of this historic investment. This is one of many opportunities the next leader will have to enhance corporate relationships, provide experiential learning and research opportunities for students and faculty, and play a critical role in the economic growth of the University, the city of Syracuse, and Central New York.

COMMITMENT TO VETERANS AND MILITARY-CONNECTED FAMILIES

The National Veterans Resource Center (NVRC) at the Daniel and Gayle D'Aniello Building at Syracuse University was conceived as a class-leading exemplar of academic, government, and community collaboration. The NVRC functions as the center of veteran life on campus. The NVRC leverages a public-private sector partnership model to nurture academic research, actionable programming, and collaborative thought leadership positioned to impact veterans and their families on the campus of Syracuse University, in New York State, and in communities across the U.S.

Syracuse University has a historic commitment to serving veterans and their families. The D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families, founded in 2011, further expands that commitment to serve across the country and beyond. Supported by a world-class advisory board and public and private partners, the professional staff delivers unique and innovative career, vocational, and entrepreneurship education and training programs to transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses. The IVMF also provides actionable and nationally impactful research, policy analysis, and program evaluation.

TECHNOLOGY FORWARD

With significant investments in technology and infrastructure, Syracuse University has established itself as a leader in digital innovation. In partnership with JMA Wireless, the University invested in a private 5G network across the entire campus and transformed the JMA Wireless Dome into the most connected collegiate stadium in the country. In 2025, Syracuse became one of the first universities to provide enterprise AI access to all students, faculty, and staff. Academic programs are evolving with technology, including the development of AI and esports majors, as well as being home to the first academic center focused on the creator economy. All of these strategic investments make Syracuse the most digitally connected campus in the nation.

ATHLETICS EXCELLENCE IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

Syracuse University Athletics competes at the highest level of NCAA Division I as a member of the Atlantic Coast Conference. The Orange have built a championship tradition with 31 team National Championships and 49 Individual National Championships across their storied history. Syracuse Athletics are important to the fabric of the broader Syracuse and Central NY community in addition to the thousands of students and alums who Bleed Orange.

Since joining the ACC in 2013-14, Syracuse has captured conference championships across seven sports, demonstrating sustained excellence throughout the athletic department. Syracuse student-athletes excel in the classroom as well, achieving a 93 percent NCAA Graduation Success Rate in the latest assessment, with 12 programs earning perfect scores, exemplifying Syracuse's commitment to developing student-athletes who succeed both athletically and academically.

The landscape of college athletics has undergone a dramatic transformation in recent years, with the introduction of Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) rights, the transfer portal, conference realignment, and evolving governance structures fundamentally reshaping the competitive environment. The next Chancellor must be a strategic leader who understands the complexities of modern collegiate athletics and can navigate this rapidly changing terrain while maintaining Syracuse's competitive position.

THE SEARCH PROCESS

Syracuse University has retained Spencer Stuart, a global executive search and leadership advisory firm, to support the search for its next Chancellor. The Search Committee is eager to receive input that will help it build a pool of talented individuals to consider for this important leadership opportunity. To that end, comments, inquiries, applications, and nominations may be submitted via the confidential search mailbox:

SyracuseChancellor@SpencerStuart.com.