



# Dean of the College of Biblical Studies

SEARCH PROSPECTUS



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### THE OPPORTUNITY

Abilene Christian University (ACU) seeks a visionary and mission-driven leader to serve as Dean of the College of Biblical Studies (CBS), the chief executive officer of the college and the Graduate School of Theology (GST), which is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools. The Dean advances ACU's mission to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world and oversees academic programs including those in the departments of Bible, Missions and Ministry; and Marriage and Family Studies, which includes the Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy. The Dean of the GST is the chief academic officer for the GST.

The person in this role provides strategic leadership, fosters faculty excellence, and ensures alignment with accreditation standards. Additionally, the Dean leads a collaborative College Leadership Team, manages budgets and operations, and promotes curricular innovation, experiential learning, and student spiritual formation. Building on ACU's historic ties to Churches of Christ and influence in a growing number of Christian communities, the Dean serves as a respected theological leader—actively engaging external audiences through teaching, speaking, and relationship-building.

A strong candidate will demonstrate a deep understanding of current trends in theological education, ministry preparation, and church engagement, including the evolving needs of congregations, emerging models of ministry, and the integration of academic rigor with practical training. The Dean of CBS holds a unique position that offers opportunities to develop and nurture relationships with Christian congregations and Christian leaders beyond the university. Over the years, CBS has enjoyed a positive relationship with congregations by sending out faculty for preaching, teaching, and consulting, and by welcoming church members to ACU for equipping events like Summit and the offerings hosted by our ten centers. This close collaboration frequently leads congregations to hire CBS graduates as ministers. While church leaders remain a primary external focus, opportunities exist to cultivate relationships with new constituencies. It is equally important for the Dean of CBS to represent the college within the university among colleagues who often look to this college for theological leadership. Tending to relationships with these external stakeholders and constituents within the university increases both trust in and the credibility of the college.

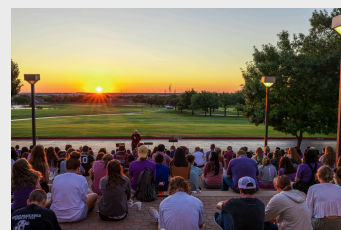
ACU seeks a scholar and leader enthusiastic about the leadership opportunity this role represents at a uniquely innovative and forward-looking university and the opportunity to lead in an educational environment where the university's mission of cultivating Christian service and leadership is a shared commitment of the entire community.

### MISSION

The mission of ACU is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.

### PROMISE

ACU is a vibrant, innovative, Christ-centered community that engages students in authentic spiritual and intellectual growth, equipping them to make a real difference in the world.





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The Dean reports to the Provost and collaborates with other Deans and campus partners to enhance visibility and funding. This position champions faculty development, interdisciplinary initiatives, and the integration of faith and learning.

The ideal candidate will hold a terminal degree in a relevant discipline, demonstrate a record of academic leadership and scholarship, and be a committed member of the Churches of Christ. Strong communication skills, fundraising experience, and a passion for equipping students for Christian leadership are essential. This is a high-impact opportunity to lead a mission-centered academic community at a time of strategic growth.

### THE UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1906, Abilene Christian University has grown from a small classical institute into a nationally recognized, Carnegie R2 research university known for academic excellence and deep Christian commitment. For more than a century, ACU has pursued its mission to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world—fostering a learning community that integrates scholarship, spiritual formation, and service.

Today, ACU enrolls almost 7,000 students across its residential and online campuses, offering more than 150 undergraduate and graduate programs. With a growing national footprint, ACU has served students from all 50 U.S. states and more than 40 countries. Under the leadership of President Phil Schubert, the university has experienced unprecedented growth—expanding academic offerings, launching a branch campus in Dallas, and recently raising more than \$300 million to invest in people, programs, and facilities that strengthen research, enrich the student experience, and elevate ACU's national impact.

ACU is consistently recognized among the top 50 national universities for undergraduate teaching and research by *U.S. News & World Report* and is the highest-ranked university in Texas on several student success benchmarks. It has been named a leading producer of Fulbright Scholars and was one of the first universities in the nation named an Apple Distinguished School.

Even as many other institutions struggle to adapt to the changing landscape of higher education, ACU continues to grow, excel and innovate. ACU's endowment is more than \$820 million, affording it the latitude to think and invest strategically. Its commitment to innovation is evident in initiatives like its Adobe Creative Campus designation, the NEXT Lab for nuclear energy research, and robust study abroad programs in Oxford, England; Leipzig, Germany; and Valencia, Spain. Reflecting this spirit of excellence, ACU's Wildcats consistently compete for championships as members of the Western Athletic Conference in NCAA Division I.

### ENDURING CORE VALUES

#### ACADEMIC INNOVATION

Rigorous critical thinking and academic exploration shape our calling to teach, research and mentor.

#### SPIRITUAL DEPTH

Missional living and spiritual formation are centered in our campus culture.

#### RELATIONAL FOCUS

Fortified and nurtured relationships become deep bonds between students, faculty, staff and alumni.

#### INTENTIONAL DIVERSITY

Members of our community from all ethnic, racial and gender backgrounds are created and beloved in God's image.

#### SUSTAINABLE EXCELLENCE

Evidence-based decisions undergird our commitment to economic, high-quality programs.



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Rooted in the Churches of Christ tradition, ACU is a close-knit, mission-driven community where faith and learning are deeply intertwined. With a bold strategic plan and vision for its second century, ACU prepares graduates to think critically, lead faithfully, and serve globally—shaping the church and the world for generations to come.

### THE COLLEGE OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

Biblical studies have always occupied a central place in the life of ACU. In 1984, the Bible Department evolved into the College of Biblical Studies. Since this transition 41 years ago, only three people have led the college as its Dean. Today, the College of Biblical Studies is academically composed of three distinct areas:

- The Department of Bible, Missions and Ministry (DBMM) serves two primary functions within the university. First, it provides a critical dimension of the university's general education curriculum, which requires that all students in the undergraduate residential programs take five courses provided by the DBMM. Second, it equips students for careers in ministry through two Bachelor of Arts degrees offered in multiple tracks. In Fall 2025, the department will also offer a Bachelor of Science in Christian Ministry, designed to make it easier for students to pursue a double major—combining this ministry degree with a second major from another academic discipline outside of DBMM.
- The Department of Marriage and Family Studies offers a Master of Marriage and Family Therapy (MMFT), a Bachelor of Science in Child and Family Services with an optional Child Life track, and minors in Child and Family Services and Aging Studies. It also houses the Marriage and Family Institute, a community-based marriage and family therapy clinic where MMFT students complete their internship. The department serves about 100 majors, 40 minors and 30 graduate students.
- The Graduate School of Theology (GST), ACU's Association of Theological Schools-accredited seminary, currently has 175 students pursuing degrees and certificates. The GST offers Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Christian Ministry, Master of Theological Studies, and Doctor of Ministry degrees, as well as a Certificate in Practical Ministry. As a graduate professional school offering programs in both online and residential modalities, the GST benefits from the additional leadership of its own Dean while remaining closely integrated with the broader work of CBS. Whereas most other American seminaries are experiencing declining enrollment, the GST is enjoying tremendous growth and will achieve a near record enrollment in the Fall 2025 semester.

### PROFILE

**Location:** Abilene, Texas

**Year Founded:** 1906

**Student Enrollment:** 6,730 total; 4,630 undergraduates; 2,100 graduate students; generally from 46 states and territories, and 53 nations.

**Faculty:** 266 full-time residential faculty members with 99 percent of tenured or tenure-track faculty holding terminal degrees. ACU has a student-to-faculty ratio of 13:1.

**Operating Budget:** \$160 million

**Endowment:** \$821 million

**Instruction and Research Budget:** \$60 million

#### **Academic Colleges:**

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; College of Biblical Studies; College of Business Administration; College of Health and Behavioral Sciences; College of Health and Human Services; College of Leadership and Professional Studies; College of Learning and Development; Honors College; Onstead College of Science and Engineering

**Mascot:** Wildcats





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CBS fulfills ACU's mission to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world *by providing leadership preparation and resources for effective worldwide ministry in the cause of Christ*. Fulfilling this important mission requires the prayerful collaboration of faculty, staff, administration, and students, each working through distinct but interconnected avenues of activity, such as:

- Providing the biblical instruction and theological formation foundational to all ACU undergraduate students;
- Equipping undergraduate majors and preparing graduate-level professionals for ministry and therapy;
- Leading initiatives through a variety of centers and institutes gathered under the CBS umbrella, including the Halbert Center for Missions and Global Service, the Carl Spain Center, the Siburt Institute for Church Ministry, the Marriage and Family Institute, the Faulkner Center for Marriage and Family and centers for Women in Christian Ministry, Youth and Family Ministry and Baptist Studies, and others;
- Organizing student missions and providing leadership and resources for other aspects of campus spiritual life;
- Managing financial resources, including endowments and scholarship funds;
- Engaging with Christian congregations, ministers, and other leaders who are stakeholders in the CBS mission and whom the college seeks to serve, including hosting events such as the annual Summit gathering for spiritual renewal.

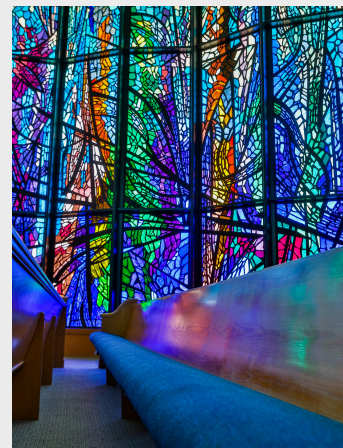
CBS benefits from a legacy of gifted and capable leaders across its diverse programs and initiatives, with whom the Dean collaborates to provide visionary leadership, effective coordination, and executive oversight.

### LEADERSHIP AGENDA

The next Dean of the College of Biblical Studies will join Abilene Christian University at a time of institutional momentum and opportunity. As the chief academic and executive officer of the college, the Dean will be expected to lead with vision, innovation, and faith-driven purpose. Key priorities for the Dean's leadership agenda will include:

#### **Articulate and implement a cohesive vision and strategic plan for CBS**

The Dean will unite the college's departments, centers, and academic programs around a compelling and mission-centered vision that affirms theological depth, intellectual rigor, and service to the church and world. This vision will clarify CBS's identity and distinctive contributions within a modern Christian university.



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### **Advance academic excellence and innovation**

Building on a strong foundation, the Dean will lead efforts to strengthen curriculum, expand interdisciplinary collaboration, and grow new programs that respond to emerging needs in ministry, theology, counseling, and church leadership. The Dean will promote faculty scholarship, excellence in teaching, and integration of faith and learning.

### **Champion student formation and student success**

The Dean will ensure that CBS remains a hub for holistic spiritual and vocational formation. This includes fostering environments where students thrive academically, engage deeply with their faith, and are equipped for diverse callings in ministry and service.

### **Expand the external visibility and academic reputation of the college**

The Dean will enhance CBS's national and global visibility to attract accomplished, mission-aligned faculty. By promoting faculty scholarship, cultivating strategic partnerships, and engaging academic and church networks, the Dean will position CBS as a leading center for Christian thought and theological education.

### **Deepen church and community engagement**

Continuing CBS's long-standing relationship with Churches of Christ and broader Christian networks, the Dean will proactively cultivate partnerships with congregations, ministries, and other institutions. The Dean will serve as a trusted theological voice, regularly engaging with external audiences.

### **Strengthen fiscal stewardship and grow philanthropic support**

With oversight of the college's budget and resource allocation, including several endowments, the Dean will lead efforts to align resources with strategic goals. A key priority will be partnering with Advancement to grow the college's endowment, increase the number of endowed chairs and professors, increase donor engagement, and pursue transformational gifts.

### **Promote faculty and staff development**

The Dean will partner with department chairs and other college leaders to recruit, develop, and retain mission-aligned faculty and staff, while fostering a culture of belonging and shared commitment to the university's Christian mission. Ongoing faculty development, mentorship, and clear pathways for advancement will be critical to sustaining excellence.

### **Represent CBS as a theological leader within ACU**

As a vital part of the university's academic and spiritual life, the Dean will engage with campus leadership, faculty across disciplines, and the broader community to offer theological insights. The Dean will elevate CBS's role as a source of theological reflection and Christian formation across the university.





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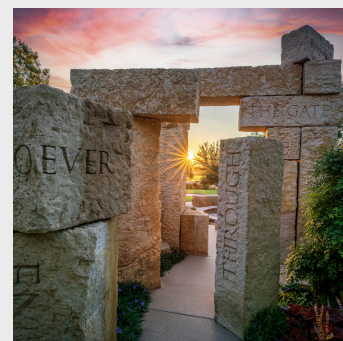


### REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Abilene Christian University is affiliated with the fellowship of the Churches of Christ. All qualified applicants for this position will be professing Christians and members of a congregation of the Churches of Christ.
- Earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited institution in a discipline within the college or an eligible area into which the college could expand.
- Record of scholarly excellence and effective higher education leadership.
- Understanding of current trends in theological education, ministry preparation, and church engagement.
- Organizational leadership experience (e.g., strategic planning, budgetary oversight, and effective relationship management skills with external and internal constituencies, including experience with fundraising).
- A strong belief in and desire to serve the mission of ACU.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

- Dynamic, relational and visionary leader.
- Collaborative nature and excellent interpersonal abilities, with the ability to build consensus within teams and diverse groups of people.
- Outstanding organizational and project management skills with the ability to consistently meet deadlines.
- Highly self-motivated with strong problem-solving skills, asking for input and initiating solutions as appropriate and reasonable.
- Ability to consistently make strategic decisions and exercise good judgment in a variety of circumstances.
- Ability to view and manage roles and responsibilities in relation to the larger mission, goals, and perspective of the university.
- Ability to provide or direct faculty development, connecting faculty with resources to improve teaching and scholarship or creative activity.
- Understands and is able to use technology within higher education contexts.
- Familiarity with the expectations of disciplinary accreditors and accreditation compliance.
- Demonstrated value of shared governance in a university environment.
- Demonstrated commitment to supporting a diverse environment.





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### ABOUT ABILENE

Located 150 miles west of the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex, Abilene is a vibrant West Texas city of approximately 129,000 residents. It offers a unique blend of small-town hospitality and big-city amenities, making it an attractive place to live, work, and raise a family. With a low cost of living (90.6% of the national average), a median home price 28% below the Texas median, and an average commute time of just 17 minutes, Abilene boasts a quality of life that is hard to match.

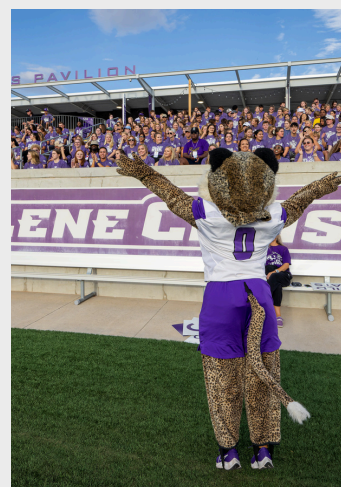
Abilene is a regional hub for education, healthcare, technology, and military service, with Dyess Air Force Base playing a vital role in the local economy and community. The city is supported by six institutions of higher learning and nearly 15,000 college students. It is also home to two highly regarded public school systems, including innovative STEM-focused schools such as ATEMS High School and Mann Middle School. Additionally, Abilene offers six private schools and multiple charter options, providing families with diverse educational choices.

Cultural and recreational opportunities abound. The historic downtown features the restored Paramount Theatre, a growing craft coffee scene, boutique shops, and several museums—including The Grace Museum, the Center for Contemporary Arts, and the National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature. Known as the Storybook Capital of America, Abilene hosts the annual Children's Art and Literacy Festival and showcases storybook sculptures throughout the city. Residents enjoy year-round events, a thriving arts scene, abundant parks, lakes for boating and fishing, and the Abilene Zoo. The state-of-the-art Dodge Jones Youth Sports Center offers sports and recreation opportunities for all ages.

Abilene also fosters a strong sense of community and inclusivity. The Abilene Interfaith Council, a nonprofit organization, promotes communication, understanding, and peace among people of different faiths through dialogue, events, and educational programs. Whether you're interested in professional growth, community engagement, or outdoor adventure, Abilene offers a welcoming and inclusive setting for a fulfilling life and career.

### APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the search process is completed or the position is filled. To apply, individuals should send a cover letter, current vita, and a description of the candidate's spiritual journey to [cbsdeansearch@acu.edu](mailto:cbsdeansearch@acu.edu). For best consideration, please apply by July 15, 2025.







# ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

## OUR PROMISE

ACU is a vibrant, innovative, Christ-centered community that engages students in authentic spiritual and intellectual growth, equipping them to make a real difference in the world.

