

TIAA Institute Theodore M. Hesburgh Award for Leadership Excellence in Higher Education (2026–27)

The TIAA Institute Hesburgh Award for Leadership Excellence in Higher Education is named in honor of Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, CSC (1917–2015), a past president of the University of Notre Dame, an esteemed leader in higher education, and a longtime member of the TIAA and CREF Boards of Overseers. This award is intended to recognize a current college or university president or chancellor who embodies Reverend Hesburgh’s spirit, his commitment to higher education, and his contributions to the greater good.

Considerations for Selection

This award recognizes a **current** college or university president or chancellor who demonstrates achievements at the institutional and national levels and:

1. Is a visionary who demonstrates innovative thinking about strategic challenges and opportunities, sustains higher education’s core values, and adopts strategies to ensure future vitality at their institution
2. Impacts higher education and/or society—through their personal involvement—in a positive way
3. Cultivates collaborative partnerships within the campus or externally that enhance the ability to achieve excellence both within the institution and for the greater good
4. Positions the institution to thrive in an uncertain future by anticipating trends and developing strategies to manage change

Nomination and Selection Process

Kindly nominate one candidate based on the above considerations. Nominees may be leaders of a single campus or a multicampus system. **All nominations are due by September 30, 2026.** Please send your nominations to TIAA.Hesburgh.Award@acenet.edu.

Nominees may **not** include former or current TIAA trustees or employees. Nominees cannot have announced their retirement prior to being nominated. Nominees remain in the pool of possible award recipients for three years as long as they remain a current president or chancellor, do not announce retirement, and do not take on a role as a TIAA trustee. **Nominees must be ACE members.**

Each nominator should submit a bulleted list (five to 10 items) of contributions, accomplishments, and attributes that they believe distinguish the nominee in the spirit of the award. If possible, links to additional information about the items should be included.

Past Award Winners

2026	Sian Leah Beilock	2017	Gail O. Mellow
2025	Mildred García	2016	Patricia A. McGuire
2024	Kent Syverud	2015	John E. Sexton
2023	Christina H. Paxson	2014	Scott S. Cowen
2022	Alex Johnson	2013	Diana Natalicio
2021	Ruth J. Simmons	2012	Charles B. Reed and Eduardo J. Padrón
2020	Joseph E. Aoun and Shirley A. Reed	2011	Freeman A. Hrawbowski III
2019	Mark P. Becker	2010	William E. “Brit” Kirwan
2018	Paul J. LeBlanc	2009	Graham B. Spanier