



# 2024 TIAA Institute Theodore M. Hesburgh Award

For Leadership Excellence  
in Higher Education

Honoring Kent Syverud  
Chancellor and President, Syracuse University



“Kent Syverud is a leader who sets clear strategic priorities, marshals the resources to achieve them, and adapts quickly to changing circumstances. His long list of accomplishments has positioned Syracuse as a worldclass university on many fronts, providing enormous benefits to students and the Central New York region.”

Surya Kolluri  
Head of the TIAA Institute





# Honoring Kent Syverud Chancellor and President, Syracuse University

## **2024 Recipient of the TIAA Institute Theodore M. Hesburgh Award for Leadership Excellence in Higher Education**

Now in his tenth year as Chancellor, Kent Syverud has overseen the hiring of hundreds of new faculty members and doubled down on embracing academic excellence. He's also expanded scientific research in emerging fields, fostered innovation in online degree programs, enhanced the beauty and function of the university's historic campus, strengthened intercollegiate athletic programs, and raised over \$1.3 billion through the Forever Orange campaign. All of this and more has put Syracuse in an enviable fiscal position, poised to make deep investments in an array of strategic priorities—while continuing to attract an increasingly diverse and accomplished student body.

## Inclusive higher education

A staunch advocate for people with autism spectrum disorders, Chancellor Syverud has helped make Syracuse a global leader in inclusive higher education. The university's support for neurodiverse students starts at the Center for Autism Research and Electrophysiology (CARE) Lab. Using a strength-based approach, the lab conducts behavioral and neurophysiological studies to understand the manner in which typically developing children, children with developmental disabilities, and children on the autism spectrum process and integrate sensory information and perceive the world around them.

The lab's research insights have taken root across campus, culminating in an initiative known as InclusiveU. Part of the Taishoff Center for Inclusive Higher Education, InclusiveU provides individualized coursework, internship opportunities, social activities, and other support to students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Participants in the program experience all aspects of college life in a fully inclusive setting—while developing the skills needed to pursue their dream vocations.

“I am honored to receive this award, in particular because it honors Father Hesburgh, who was a higher education hero and who was born and raised in Syracuse. I am grateful to be recognized by my peers for leading at a time of transformational change for Syracuse University and for higher education.”

Kent Syverud  
Chancellor and President, Syracuse University



## Best for veterans

Chancellor Syverud's focus on inclusion extends to military veterans and their families. Under his leadership, Syracuse has overhauled its policies and procedures related to admission, registration, credit transfer, housing and new student orientation—all in an effort to meet the unique needs of military-connected students. The university also provides extensive support to military family members through its D'Aniello Institute for Veterans & Military Families.

These initiatives have enabled Syracuse to consistently rank among the “best places for veterans” in surveys conducted by *Military Times* and other national publications. The university's focus on vets has also had a significant effect on military-related enrollment, which has increased fivefold since Chancellor Syverud began his term in 2014.

In a further demonstration of its commitment to veterans, Syracuse in 2023 co-hosted with the University of Tennessee a first-of-its-kind National Veterans Summit. Attended by military leaders, university presidents and government officials, the summit deepened awareness of, and support for, key issues affecting the long-term sustainability of our nation's armed services.

# Revitalizing Central New York

Chancellor Syverud has said the biggest contribution Syracuse can make to its home city and surrounding region is to be a thriving and engaged international research university. So for the past decade he has worked with faculty, students, staff, trustees and alumni to lead Syracuse through transformational change and progress. These efforts have had a broad impact across campus—enhancing Syracuse’s academic reputation, attracting scholars from around the world, and driving record numbers of applicants and enrollees.

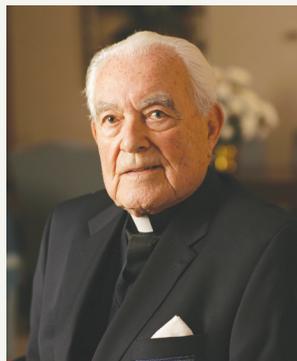
Syracuse’s success, as predicted, has benefited Central New York, which is on the cusp of an economic renaissance. In 2022, Micron Technology announced it will invest \$100 billion to build a massive semiconductor fabrication plant in the region, the largest investment and facility of its kind in the United States. Syracuse was not only instrumental in recruiting Micron to the area, it’s also partnering with the company on education and professional training to prepare people in the local the community to take on high-tech jobs.



## About the award

The Hesburgh Award is named in honor of the Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., past president of the University of Notre Dame and longtime member of the TIAA and CREF Boards of Overseers. A world-renowned educator and humanitarian, Father Hesburgh (1917-2015) was a lifelong champion of human rights, the cause of peace, and care for the poor. He received both the Congressional Gold Medal and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor.

As a tribute to Father Hesburgh's lasting legacy, the TIAA Institute grants the Hesburgh Award to a current college or university president or chancellor who embodies Father Hesburgh's commitment to higher education and the world at large. The American Council on Education administers the award on the Institute's behalf, and recipients are chosen by an independent panel of judges.



**Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh**  
**Past President, University**  
**of Notre Dame**

## About the TIAA Institute

Since 1998, the TIAA Institute has helped advance the ways individuals and institutions plan for financial security and organizational effectiveness. The Institute conducts in-depth research, provides access to a network of thought leaders, and enables those it serves to anticipate trends, plan future strategies and maximize opportunities for success. To learn more, visit [tiaainstitute.org](https://tiaainstitute.org).

## About TIAA

TIAA is a leading provider of secure retirements and outcome-focused investment solutions to millions of people and thousands of institutions. It is the #1 not-for-profit retirement market provider<sup>1</sup>, paid more than \$5.6 billion in lifetime income to retired clients in 2022, and has \$1.28 trillion in assets under management (as of 12/31/2023)<sup>2</sup>.

## About Syracuse University

Syracuse University is a private research university advancing knowledge across disciplines to drive breakthrough discoveries and breakout leadership. In and beyond the classroom, we connect people, perspectives and practices to solve challenges with interdisciplinary approaches. Together, we're a powerful community that moves ideas, individuals and impact beyond what's possible.

<sup>1</sup> As of July 21, 2022. Based on data in PLANSPONSOR's 403(b) 2022 DC Recordkeeping Survey, combined 457 and 403(b) data.

<sup>2</sup> As of December 31, 2023, assets under management across Nuveen Investments affiliates and TIAA investment management teams are \$1,284 billion.