



NASHOTAH HOUSE NEWS

NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nashotah House names Dr. Lauren Whitnah as dean

Nashotah, Wisconsin (April 26, 2024) – Concluding a competitive national search, Nashotah House Theological Seminary has named Lauren Whitnah, PhD, as its next dean.

Whitnah joins Nashotah House from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where she has held academic and administrative roles.

A medieval historian, Whitnah has served on the teaching faculty of the University of Tennessee since 2014 and more recently as research manager and associate director of the university's Global Computing Lab. In the latter role, she oversees communication with collaborators in academia, industry, and national nuclear laboratories, securing and managing grants totaling more than \$30 million from the National Science Foundation and other entities.

Whitnah holds a PhD in Medieval Studies and Master of Medieval Studies, both from the University of Notre Dame; a Master of Studies in History from the University of Oxford; and a Bachelor of Arts in History from Gordon College.

"What distinguished Dr. Whitnah among a strong pool of candidates was not only her stellar academic credentials, but also her administrative competence and background in development," said the Rev. Canon Ed Monk, Chairman of the Nashotah House Board of Directors. "We're confident in her capacity to lead Nashotah House into a bright future."



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Whitnah assumes her role effective August 1, 2024.

As dean, Whitnah's priorities will include continuing Nashotah House's recent progress in student enrollment and fundraising, management of operations, and maintaining trust with all seminary constituencies.

"I'm honored and delighted to step into this role at Nashotah House," said Whitnah. "As an educator, I'm eager to join a seminary that is serious about cultivating students' love of God and neighbor through a Benedictine ethos of prayer, worship, and community. As an administrator, I feel deeply privileged to lead an institution with as rich a tradition as Nashotah House and to inherit it during this season of growth. The House has been built on a strong foundation, and I am confident that it is well situated to form the next generation of leaders for lives of knowledge, love, and service."

A cradle Episcopalian, Whitnah has been nourished in the Anglican tradition her entire life and hails from a family of vocational commitments to the church. Whitnah's father and brother are both priests in the Episcopal Church, and her mother holds a Doctor of Ministry in spiritual formation.

"My dad's first day at Virginia Theological Seminary was my first day of kindergarten," Whitnah said. "So, most of my life has been spent in close proximity to those discerning, preparing for, and living out their call to ministry. To get to join in Nashotah House's mission of raising up more ministers for the church feels like a full-circle moment."

Whitnah's academic focus centers on devotion to saints and understandings of sacred place in the High Middle Ages, particularly in northern England and southern Scotland. She has published and presented on topics including liturgical developments in veneration in the twelfth century, Aelred of Rievaulx and the saints of Hexham, and women at the shrine of St Cuthbert in Durham. She has taught at Episcopal and Anglican churches on a wide range of topics, including Benedictine monasticism, the life and work of Hildegard of Bingen, and medieval devotional art.



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Her academic interests trace back to when she studied abroad at Oxford under Sister Benedicta Ward, an Anglican nun and theologian, as an undergraduate.

As senior lecturer at UT, she taught more than 400 students annually in interdisciplinary classes exploring the history, politics, culture, art, religion, economics, and literature of Western Europe from ca. 300 to ca.1500. During the decade she taught Medieval and Renaissance studies at the university, the number of students pursuing majors and minors in that discipline tripled. Whitnah also served on the university's Faculty Senate and as co-chair of the Faculty Senate Teaching and Learning Committee.

Whitnah has received numerous awards as an educator, including the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching at UT and the Award for Teaching Excellence from the Southeastern Medieval Association.

Leveraging her background as a researcher and technical writer, Whitnah transitioned in recent years to research management in high-performance computing. In 2023, she was named associate director of UT's Global Computing Lab, where she oversees grant writing and management, education, and outreach for the research lab.

"The throughline of my career is a passion for teaching and distilling complex concepts for a wide array of people," she said. "I'm thrilled to apply that skillset as I share Nashotah House's critical mission with new audiences."

The Nashotah House Board of Directors worked with Dr. Andrew Westmoreland of the Dallas-based executive search firm FaithSearch Partners during the dean search process. After a five-month nationwide search and prayerful consideration, the board approved Whitnah's appointment as dean on April 25.

She will succeed Dr. Garwood Anderson, who has served as dean since 2017 and announced in fall 2023 his intention to retire from the deanship at the end of this academic year. Anderson's term concludes May 31, 2024. He plans to return to the classroom in the fall of 2024, serving as the Donald J. Parsons Distinguished Professor of Biblical Interpretation.

A dark blue banner with the text "NASHOTAH HOUSE NEWS" in white. On the right side, there is a faint, circular seal of Nashotah House, featuring a central emblem with a cross and a book, surrounded by the text "Nashotah House" and "1842".

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Founded in 1842, Nashotah House is a seminary located in Nashotah, Wisconsin, serving the Episcopal Church, Anglican Communion, and other ecumenical partners.