



# 2026 TIAA Institute Theodore M. Hesburgh Award

for Leadership Excellence  
in Higher Education

Honoring Sian Leah Beilock  
President, Dartmouth



“President Beilock brings both intellectual depth and practical innovation to higher education leadership. Whether pioneering AI-powered wellness platforms, investing in sustainable campus infrastructure, or championing dialogue across differences, she exemplifies leadership that is both principled and forward-thinking.”

Surya Kolluri  
Head of the TIAA Institute





## Honoring Sian Leah Beilock President, Dartmouth

### **2026 Recipient of the TIAA Institute Theodore M. Hesburgh Award for Leadership Excellence in Higher Education**

Since becoming Dartmouth's first woman president in June 2023, Dr. Sian Leah Beilock has positioned the institution as a leader in constructive dialogue, affordability, and student wellbeing.

She launched "Dartmouth Dialogues", engaging over 15,000 community members in its first year to build skills for respectful engagement across differences. President Beilock expanded financial aid so families earning under \$125,000 face no parent contribution, with 46% of students receiving aid and 22% qualifying for Pell Grants. Additionally, the full cost of tuition is covered for students whose families earn between \$125,000 and \$175,000.

A cognitive scientist and leading expert on performance under pressure, she brings research-driven insight to higher education leadership.

## Fostering constructive dialogue in a polarized era

President Beilock has made training future leaders to engage respectfully across differences a defining element of her presidency. The “Dartmouth Dialogues” program, launched in 2024, represents a groundbreaking institutional initiative designed to continually strengthen campus culture through broad-based exposure to diverse perspectives and skill-building for navigating difficult conversations both inside and outside the classroom.

The program features discussions with world-class speakers who model these principles while addressing contentious global issues. Faculty researchers study related topics including polarization’s threat to democracy and how dialogue impacts cognitive processing.

In its first year alone, more than 15,000 community members participated in Dialogues events or training sessions. The results speak for themselves: an overwhelming 85% of Dartmouth students now express confidence in their ability to engage respectfully with differing viewpoints, preparing them to lead in an increasingly divided world.

“I’m honored to receive this recognition. I’m driven by Dartmouth’s mission to attract the broadest range of talented students and give them the skills to debate, disagree productively, and lead with purpose. At a moment when trust matters more than ever, our work reflects a simple truth: we exist to serve the public good.”

Sian Leah Beilock  
President, Dartmouth



## Advancing excellence through the liberal arts

President Beilock is a passionate advocate for liberal arts education in an age of technological transformation. As a cognitive scientist who served as Executive Vice Provost at the University of Chicago and President of Barnard College before leading Dartmouth, she brings unique perspective on how students learn and develop critical thinking skills.

President Beilock has authored 120 peer-reviewed papers and two acclaimed books, *Choke* and *How the Body Knows Its Mind*, and her TED talk on performing under pressure has been viewed more than 2.7 million times. She argues that while universities must embrace artificial intelligence and innovation, they must retain their unique capacity to train students how to think, not what to think. This philosophy guides her approach to integrating technology thoughtfully while ensuring that Dartmouth graduates possess the analytical skills, ethical reasoning, and intellectual flexibility needed to navigate complex challenges throughout their lives.

## Making excellence accessible and innovating for student success

President Beilock has demonstrated unwavering commitment to ensuring that a Dartmouth education remains accessible to qualified students regardless of financial circumstances. Following the 2024 expansion of Dartmouth's financial aid program, qualified students from families with annual incomes below \$125,000 can now attend without any required parent contribution or mandatory student loans and those from families earning \$125,000 to \$175,000 can attend tuition free. The results are remarkable: one-third of the most recently admitted class receives free tuition, 46% receive financial aid averaging 78% of full undergraduate costs, and 22% of enrolling U.S. citizens qualified for Pell Grants—the second consecutive year above 20%.

Beyond affordability, President Beilock is pioneering innovative approaches to student wellbeing. Dartmouth collaborated with Thrive Global to create Evergreen, an AI-powered wellness platform designed by students for students and supported by leading faculty in artificial intelligence and behavioral science. When complete, Evergreen will integrate AI with optional behavioral-sensing data to deliver science-based check-ins and personalized recommendations that will help students build resilience and flourish. This innovation reflects President Beilock's vision for leveraging technology to support student success while mitigating stress and anxiety before they become serious health concerns.

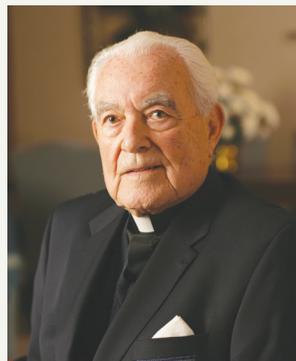
President Beilock also co-founded and co-chairs the EDGE Consortium, a national effort uniting institutions from elite private and public research universities and engineering colleges to expand pathways to careers in the semiconductor workforce.



## 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 helps provide secure retirements and outcome-focused investment solutions to millions of people and thousands of institutions.<sup>1</sup> It paid more than \$5.9 billion in lifetime income to retired clients in 2024<sup>2</sup> and has \$1.5 trillion in assets under management (as of 12/31/2025).<sup>3</sup>

## About Dartmouth

Founded in 1769 in Hanover, N.H., Dartmouth educates the most promising students from the broadest swath of society and prepares them for a lifetime of learning and responsible leadership. Dartmouth faculty—dedicated to teaching and the creation of knowledge—respond with research and innovative thinking to the most pressing challenges of our time, and the university supports all its members in the vigorous and open debate of ideas. Dartmouth encourages a culture of integrity, self-reliance, and collegiality and instills a sense of responsibility for each other and for the broader world.

1. Based on data in PLANSPONSOR's 2025 DC Recordkeeping Survey published June 25, 2025.
2. As of December 31, 2024, TIAA paid out \$5.9B in total annuity income. This figure represents all annuity income, including guaranteed and additional amounts, for all of TIAA's annuity products.
3. As of December 31, 2025, assets under management (AUM) across Nuveen Investments affiliates and TIAA investment management teams were \$1,506 billion.

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