

Hartford Seminary changes name to reflect focus on interreligious peacemaking

by [Mark Wingfield](#) in the [November 17, 2021](#) issue



(Photo by Shana Surek/Hartford International University for Religion & Peace)

One of the nation's oldest seminaries has changed its name and removed the word seminary in the process.

Hartford Seminary, established in 1833 by a group of Congregational ministers, now is known as Hartford International University for Religion and Peace. The school is located in Hartford, Connecticut.

A news release from the school said the name change is the culmination of a two-year strategic planning initiative. Hartford wants to be positioned as "a global leader in interreligious education, peace studies and religion research," it added.

Hartford already was unique among most seminaries because of its interreligious emphasis. Its faculty and curricula reflect Christian, Jewish, and Islamic emphases.

Hartford recently made a notable hire with the addition of Amy-Jill Levine, a Jewish New Testament scholar who is a well-known author and speaker in both Jewish and Christian circles. She previously taught at Vanderbilt University Divinity School.

Hartford also is known for its affiliated research units, including the Hartford Institute for Religion Research, created in 1981.

“We already operate more as an international university than a seminary, and our name should reflect that,” explains a statement on the school’s website. “The term ‘university’ is considered to be more academically rigorous. External research conducted with prospective students indicates that students overwhelmingly correlate ‘international university’ with a wide variety of programs and initiatives, more opportunities for global involvement, a better quality of educational experience, prestige and more marketable graduates.”

In 1902, Hartford Seminary became the first seminary in America to allow women to enroll. In 1990, it was the first nondenominational theological institution in North America to name a female president. The next year, the school achieved another first for a Christian seminary: hiring a Muslim to its core faculty. —Baptist News Global