

To: The Hollins Community

From: Judy Lambeth '73, Chair of the Hollins University Board of Trustees

I am thrilled to report that the Board of Trustees has unanimously and enthusiastically elected Pareena Lawrence to become Hollins' 12th President when our wonderful President Nancy Gray retires on June 30, 2017.

In launching the search, the trustees' goals were clear: we were intent on recruiting a President who is devoted to women's education and the liberal arts and someone who is a proven leader and strategic thinker. We wanted to find an individual who embodies the values we hold dear at Hollins and can also inspire us to advance the institution still further.

Pareena has all these qualities. She was a "stand-out" among the scores of candidates we considered. We did not limit our search to those in higher education; we considered candidates who were in business, government, and other non-profits. As it turned out, we found the best person right on a liberal arts campus. Every member of the Search Committee was impressed with Pareena's track record of leadership on two college campuses, her creativity in advancing undergraduate education, and her passion for women's education. She has boundless energy, positive spirit, and deep affection for students.

Our new president will bring a wealth of personal and professional experiences to Hollins. Pareena, who is 49, was born and reared in India. It was there that she attended a girls' school which she credits with changing her life and spurring her passionate belief in the power of a woman's college. She graduated with honors in economics from the University of Delhi in 1987 and moved to the United States in 1989 to pursue her Ph.D. in economics at Purdue University. She has lived in this country ever since and is a U.S. citizen.

In 1994 Pareena joined the faculty of the Morris campus of the University of Minnesota, which is the four-year liberal arts college of the university system (Morris is informally considered Minnesota's public honors college; about 40% of its students go on to graduate school.) Pareena worked her way through the professorial ranks there, becoming a full Professor of Economics and Management in 2008. Her research has focused on international development, with special attention to women's circumstances. She regularly involved students in her research, including field work abroad. A revered teacher, she won the outstanding Teacher Award for the Morris campus and then the outstanding Teaching Award for the entire University of Minnesota system.

Administration at Morris credits Pareena with strong leadership capabilities even in the early stages of her career. She chaired the Economics and Management program and also the Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies program before becoming Division Chair for the Social Sciences. At Morris, the Division Chair functions like a Dean/Associate Dean would elsewhere. These titles alone, however, do not adequately convey how she became the "go to" person when the campus sought innovations.

Currently, our President-elect serves as the Provost and chief academic officer of Augustana College. Augustana is a 156-year old, nationally ranked liberal arts college in Illinois. Pareena's responsibilities have gone beyond the traditional role of Provost: she was a primary architect of the College's ambitious Strategic Plan; she has overseen innovative

student services; she has pioneered new career development initiatives; and she has been a very successful fundraiser and external ambassador for the college. Hollins will benefit from her understanding of the finances of higher education as an economist. Her various administrative roles have equipped her to deal with the array of challenges and opportunities that arise on a college campus.

It is especially important at Hollins that the President take delight in students. This is clearly the case with Pareena: when we asked her what she liked to do for a vacation, she beamed in talking about accompanying 80 students to China last month. She is the kind of person who holds student “office hours” in the campus café and invited ten international students to her home for Thanksgiving last week.

The Search Committee was particularly impressed by Pareena’s leadership. As Hollins Professor Bonnie Bowers, a member of the Search Committee, observed, “At two different institutions, Pareena has shown that she can work collaboratively with multiple constituents to articulate and implement strategic plans that have led to demonstrably positive outcomes and that have arisen organically from the institutions’ core values.”

Trustee Alex Trower, who served on the Search Committee, captured the excitement about our new president when she commented, “Pareena embodies all that is a Hollins woman: smart, articulate, warm, energetic, caring, engaged and completely aligned with our mission...She has the ability to execute with excellence while always looking ahead toward a great vision and strategy—this is what Hollins needs as we enter our next 100 years with strength and momentum.”

Pareena is married to Todd Lawrence, a financial advisor for individuals. He and Pareena have two sons: Aaron is a college sophomore and Josh is a junior in high school.

We can’t wait for you to meet Pareena next year, either on campus or when she visits alumnae around the country!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy Lambeth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Judy Lambeth '73
Chair of the Board of Trustees
Hollins University