



February 13, 2020

To the Hollins Community,

I am thrilled to report that the Board of Trustees has unanimously elected Mary Dana Hinton to become the 13th President of Hollins. A native of North Carolina and a graduate of the all-girls St. Mary's School in Raleigh, Mary went on to get her undergraduate degree in psychology from Williams College. Mary is the President of our sister women's college, the College of Saint Benedict in Saint Joseph, Minnesota, where she has been an extraordinarily successful leader for the past five and a half years. Saint Ben's is a vibrant college for women with approximately 1,700 undergraduates, and it is ranked in the top 100 liberal arts schools in U.S. News & World Report.

At Saint Ben's, Mary led a deeply collaborative process for their five-year strategic plan, and she was a champion for the redesign of the general education program. She added new leadership opportunities for students, including the creation of the new Fleischhacker Center for Ethical Leadership in Action. Mary is a proven and enthusiastic fund-raiser, having secured the two largest gifts in Saint Ben's history and overseen a 24% increase in the Annual Fund. Mary is an able and thoughtful administrator, who has been as successful in creating balanced budgets as in helping to create the more diverse and inclusive communities that we all need.



Before serving as President of Saint Ben's, Mary was the Chief Academic Officer at Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh, New York, and earlier was Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs at Misericordia University in Dallas, Pennsylvania. At both institutions, she led their strategic planning processes, diversity initiatives and helped to build community support for new opportunities and changes that were right for those individual campuses.

Mary's administrative and academic experiences prepare her perfectly to lead Hollins. When we started this search, we hoped to find a candidate who was a sitting president, who was passionate about women's education and the liberal arts and who was excited about building the trust and collective effort needed to support new programs for Hollins' future. We found all of that, and we also found a remarkable woman. Mary is simply a gem. She exudes competency and strength, with a quiet dignity. She is eloquent and warm. She's sophisticated and yet down-to-earth. She is so thoughtful about students and optimistic about the opportunities Hollins can seize. She is simply a person you want to be around.

Mary is a recognized leader nationally in higher education, serving as a member of the board of directors of the two most highly regarded associations for liberal arts colleges: The American Association of Colleges and Universities and the Council of Independent Colleges. She is also a sought-after speaker.

Before entering her career in higher education, Mary served as the Executive Director of Replications, a non-profit devoted to replicating successful public schools by transmitting their culture to new schools. In that position she facilitated the opening of 22 public schools in New York City and Baltimore. Mary holds a Ph.D. from Fordham University in Religion and Religious Education and taught undergraduates during her years at Misericordia and, periodically, while serving as the President at Saint Ben's.

I would like to thank the Presidential Search Committee, chaired by trustees Linda Lorimer '74 and Debbie Meade, which has worked so hard during these last six months. I was privileged to join the group of three outstanding faculty members (Darla Schumm, Rachel Nunez, and Amy Gerber-Stroh), Student Government President Reilly Swennes, EVP and COO Kerry Edmonds, and trustees Clark Baruch, Cynthia Hale, Dudley Macfarlane, Suzy Redpath, and Savon Sampson, who undertook an extensive national search that has brought us Mary Hinton.

And I want to offer our heartfelt thanks to Nancy Gray for her deep commitment to Hollins that brought her back to serve as our Interim President for this academic year. Perhaps the highest endorsement of our 13th president comes directly from Nancy, who noted Mary will be "the authentic, collaborative, and experienced leader Hollins needs at this time."

We look forward to welcoming Mary's entire family, including her husband Robert Williams, a fellow Williams College graduate, and their three children: Daughter Hallela, a junior at Grinnell, son Hillel, a first year student at Oberlin, and daughter Hosanna, a high school sophomore. Mary's mother resides in Clarksville, Virginia.

Mary will be on campus on Friday, February 21 to meet faculty, students and staff, and I can't wait for alumnae and friends of Hollins to meet her once she takes up her duties on August 1 of this year.

Sincerely,



Alexandra Trower
Chair of the Board of Trustees, Class of 1986