



“Announcing the 14th President of Colorado College” Video

December 9, 2020

Jeff Keller '91, P'22

Presidential Search Committee Chair, Trustee

Hello, I'm Jeff Keller, vice chair of the Colorado College Board of Trustees; a 1991 Colorado College graduate; parent of current CC student; and chair of the presidential search committee. The process to select Colorado College's 14th president began earlier this year when the search committee of trustees, faculty, students, staff, and alumni assembled to gather input from the CC community. The request for their feedback centered on the characteristics we should seek for the college's next president. More than 100 students, faculty, and staff participated in virtual meetings with the search committee and our search consultant, Shelly Storbeck of Storbeck and Associates. In addition, 700 members of the CC community, including alumni and families of CC students, provided input through an online survey. The findings that resulted from the feedback gathered made it clear that CC's next president must be committed to maintaining and advancing the college's sustained academic rigor and distinctive educational approach; broad creativity and innovation; and an unfaltering commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and antiracism initiatives. President Jill Tiefenthaler left the college in an excellent position, allowing us to attract a talented pool of candidates for her successor and applicants who possess and model the characteristics we value and must perpetuate. Despite challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic, the search's pace was not compromised, and today we are pleased to share with you that the search has concluded with great success. Now, I will turn it over to Susie Burghart, Class of 1977, and chair of Colorado College's Board of Trustees.

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Susie Burghart '77

Chair, Board of Trustees

Thank you, Jeff, for heading a successful search for Colorado College's next president. The hard work and determination of the entire committee, and the contributions of the CC community, have been invaluable in identifying an extraordinary and brilliant leader to become our next president. I am pleased to share exciting news. Today, the Board of Trustees of Colorado College voted to approve L. Song Richardson to become Colorado College's 14th president. Currently, she is the dean and chancellor's professor of law at University of California, Irvine School of Law. She is a dynamic and charismatic leader who will make CC even more extraordinary. Dean Richardson is a legal scholar who said yes to practicing law as a state and federal public defender and as assistant counsel to the NAACP legal defense fund; she said yes to becoming a professor of law and legal scholar; and she said yes to becoming the only woman of color to lead a top 30 law school. She also said yes to dedicating herself to some of the greatest challenges of our time, researching implicit racial and gender bias and their influence on decisions, perceptions, and judgments. She's a leading thinker on race and policing and has been honored for her contributions to legal education through mentoring, teaching, and scholarship. Today we are thrilled that she said yes one more time — this time to becoming the 14th president of Colorado College, beginning on July 1, 2021. We couldn't wait any longer to introduce Colorado College President L. Song Richardson to all of you, and she joins us virtually with this message.

L. Song Richardson

Colorado College's 14th President

No one is more surprised than I am to be speaking to you as your next president. You see, I wasn't expecting to leave UCI Law, a school that I absolutely adore and whose vision and mission I believe in. Like many leaders in higher education, I receive countless offers to apply to other leadership positions, but I never pursued any of them. None of them resonated with me. But that all changed in August when I was contacted about Colorado College.

Everything I read, learned, and watched about CC spoke to directly to my core values and beliefs. Whether it's your commitment to students and their success, your innovative approaches to teaching and learning through the Block Plan, your willingness to take strategic risks, your focus on antiracism, equity, and inclusion, and so much more, I was intrigued, even though I didn't want to be, because I wasn't looking to leave UCI Law. But your vision, mission, and values match my own.

Throughout the entire search process, I was fortunate to meet members of your extraordinary community, including students, staff, faculty, alumni, and trustees. Each time, my excitement about CC grew. And now, I'm so looking forward to meeting many more of you and hearing about the challenges we face as well as your vision and dreams for CC's future.

Moving forward together in these times won't be easy. But nothing that's worth it ever is. I know this from my own personal journey.

When I was growing up, I always felt like an impostor. If someone had told me that I'd end up being a lawyer, a litigator, a law professor, a dean, and now the president of an incredible liberal arts college, I would have told them that it was impossible. Actually, I would have laughed my head off.

Why? Because I spent most of my childhood as a concert pianist, and had to practice at least four hours on school nights and eight to 10 hours on weekends. That didn't leave time for friends – and I was painfully shy. When I had to speak in class, my voice and hands would shake so much, people thought I was about to cry. Believe me, I wanted to.

But, while I was in college, I decided I wanted to become a civil rights lawyer — in part, because of my own college experiences, which made me hyper-aware of my race as a half Black, half Korean woman, and in part because of the life-changing experience I had working with civil rights lawyers who taught me to believe in our ability to create a better and more equitable world. I decided that I wasn't going to let my debilitating fear of public speaking stop me from achieving my dream of being a civil rights lawyer.

So, in law school, I created my own Block Plan, although I didn't realize that was what I was doing. I read everything I could about public speaking and put myself in situations where I was forced to speak even though it was extremely uncomfortable. And I failed a lot. But I learned something each and every time. And finally, I was able to harness my anxiety, and to view it as a strength instead of a weakness.

I tell you this story because it's one I share with my students all the time. I understand what it's like to feel like an impostor, to believe that one can't succeed, to think that failure is a problem. I share with them that it's important to say yes to opportunities, to embrace failure, to be open to new ideas and experiences and to place oneself in uncomfortable situations. Only by getting comfortable with being uncomfortable and by embracing struggle will they learn what they are truly capable of achieving and live up to their potential.

I feel exactly the same way about the opportunities we have here at CC.

It won't be easy to become one of the most diverse, equitable, and innovative liberal arts institutions in the country. But, your motto is learning through hard work. You've lived this too. You launched an antiracism initiative long before it was "cool" and "trendy" to do so. You set ambitious goals for yourself, such as the Building on the Block Plan and Addendum, and met them. You committed yourself to increasing educational access to CC's remarkable program and created additional funding opportunities for students. I could go on and on.

I recognize that times are hard right now. We are living through a global pandemic, and our nation is dealing with centuries of anti-Blackness and racism. People are questioning the value of a liberal arts education. We are facing threats to our democracy. Artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies are providing both opportunities and challenges for our future.

I am excited to be joining CC at exactly this moment because I cannot imagine a school better equipped to address all of these challenges and to take advantage of all of the opportunities these challenges will permit.

You've been incredibly successful because you know who you are, and you stay true to who you are. Because of your culture of being innovative problem solvers, I'm confident that we'll become the nation's leader in the areas of equity and inclusion, educational access, sustainability, and preparing our students to be future leaders and changemakers.

I'm confident that together, we will show the world what a liberal arts education for the 21st century should look like. I look forward to creating that future with you. Together, we will be unstoppable.

Sakina Bhatti '22

Colorado College Student Body President

Hello everyone, my name is Sakina Bhatti, and I'm currently CC student body president. I want to just take a minute to welcome Song Richardson to the CC community on behalf of students. I'm sure that I can speak for everyone in saying that we are beyond excited to have you join our community as president. Representing CC students in the search for the next president has been a truly amazing experience. Over several weeks the search committee got to know Dean Richardson, and I'm confident that the CC community will come to appreciate our future president as much as we on the committee have. Her knowledge, charisma, and commitment to students all make Dean Richardson exactly what CC needs right now. Her passion for understanding racial and gender bias are particularly fitting, as we educate students to address the challenges of our time. Her leadership will further CC's commitment to being an antiracist institution and to being one of the leading liberal arts colleges in the country. So once again, welcome to Colorado College, President Richardson!

Ryan Bañagale '00

Director of Performing Arts and Professor of Music

Hello, I'm Ryan Bañagale. As both a faculty member and a proud alumnus of Colorado College, I am over the moon — not only that our committee unanimously selected Song Richardson to be our next president, but also that she has taken up the charge with every bit of enthusiasm that accompanied our exchanges throughout the process of this search. On behalf of the other faculty members on the search committee, I want to share just a few outstanding qualities of our new president, qualities that make her the

unquestionable choice to lead CC into the future. Song Richardson's past administrative work has created and sustained meaningful dialogue on difficult issues such as race and social justice, leading to important shifts in institutional culture to the benefit of all. This work is informed by her status as a leading scholar on racial stereotyping and prejudice in criminal justice and legal contexts. In addition to this, she is an outstanding teacher and an engagingly effective communicator, as you witnessed during her introduction just moments ago. A forte of president Richardson, not only for the present moment, but also for the future, is her understanding that solutions to many of the current challenges facing humanity will come from multi-disciplinary creativity and collaboration. In this regard, perhaps her greatest strength is the value she places on learning and working across differences with empathy and an open mind. I am eager for her to become part of our community as we continue our work to build the strongest Colorado College possible.

Rochelle Dickey '83, P'19

Acting Dean of Students and Acting Vice President for Student Life

Hello, my name is Rochelle Dickey. I'm acting dean of students and acting vice president for student life. I'm also a Colorado College alum, and the parent of a 2019 CC graduate. As a student at Colorado College, I could never have imagined that we would have a president who shares my identity as a Black woman. At that time, it was even hard to imagine a female-identifying president, and I'm so honored that I've been at the college as we've welcomed our first female-identifying president, Kathryn Mohrman. It was a tremendous honor to then work with Jill Tiefenthaler, and now I am incredibly excited that L. Song Richardson is stepping into the role as our 14th president. Song brings so much to the table and it was wonderful to hear her share her journey and multifaceted identities, not only — as in her own words — a double woman of color, but as a preeminent scholar and lawyer, a social activist, a teacher, an advocate, a fundraiser, an award-winning community builder, a researcher, and a concert pianist (and I love that she brings that artistic touch). Song Richardson inspires me, just as she has inspired so many others, and I know she'll inspire all of us here at Colorado College to be the best that we can be. I am fortunate and proud to be here at Colorado College at this point in time as we take this historic step of welcoming L. Song Richardson as our new president, and it's always a point of pride to call myself a Colorado College alum and CC parent. I can't wait to see my son's reaction to this news!

Robert G. Moore

Acting Co-President of Colorado College

Mike and I want to express what a privilege it is to be serving as Colorado College's acting co-presidents. We will continue in these roles until president Richardson's term begins on July 1. Leading up to that start date, we will be working closely with her to ensure a smooth transition. We greatly appreciate the incredible support and guidance of our faculty, staff, students, parents, and alumni have given us during this time. We will continue to count on you as we work toward welcoming President Richardson to Colorado College in July.

Mike Edmonds

Acting Co-President of Colorado College

Robert and I join Susie and Jeff in expressing our gratitude to the search committee and to the entire CC community. We believe Dean Richardson will be an exceptional president for the next chapter in Colorado College's story, and we could not be more excited that she will be leading the college in this

role. Colorado College's future is bright. The challenges our community has confronted this year and the many measures of progress we have achieved, even in the face of adversity, are making us stronger. Dean Richardson is fortunate to join this community and we are so fortunate that she will be our next leader. Please join us in welcoming our next president, L. Song Richardson, to Colorado College.