The VCU School of Education ushers in a new era this summer, as it welcomes its new dean, Dr. Andrew Daire, to campus. A passionate and enthusiastic leader, who combines a background in counseling with expertise in leadership and research, Daire officially begins his tenure at the School of Education on June 1.

“I think the best way to describe how I feel is extremely excited, but also with a strong sense of humility and responsibility,” Daire said. “I recognize how important this role is and the impact I can have, not only in the School of Education but also in the Richmond community.”

In keeping with that style of transformative leadership, which values individual development and inspirational motivation, Daire plans to take a hands-on, personal approach in his new role in the School of Education.

“As a leader, you need to really get to know the people you are working with,” he said. “When you understand and value everyone on your team, you also know how to motivate them. And it’s not just a top-down approach. I want to create a culture where you — whether you are faculty, staff or a student — also see the value in motivating others.”

A big believer in the value of community engagement as well, Daire cites VCU’s universitywide commitment to service as a key factor in his decision to come to Richmond.

“I believe that urban-serving universities have a responsibility to their surrounding communities. That’s where the impact of our teaching, research and service really should be seen.”

Selected following a rigorous, six-month-long national search process, Daire joins VCU following a nearly two-year stint at the University of Central Florida, working his way up to an associate dean role in its College of Education and Human Performance during his more than 13-year association with the Orlando-based university.

While in Florida, Daire also co-founded (and served as executive director for) the UCF Marriage and Family Research Institute, designed to progress research and clinical initiatives to better support couples, marriages and families. To this day, he credits his time at the institute with helping him discover his leadership style.

“I realized that, as a leader, the personal and professional development of your team is just a little bit more important than the work you do,” he said. “The thing is: I’ve found that when you put your team first, it actually brings the quality of your work up to a much higher level as well.”

In his new role with the School of Education, Daire is eager to experience everything else Richmond has to offer as well. An avid chef and a water enthusiast, he should find himself right at home in the River City.

“I’m excited to figure out what the water scene there in Richmond is like: what people do on the river,” Daire said. “We’re also looking forward to being in a location where you have access to so many different things — D.C., Virginia Beach, snow skiing in the mountains, plus the rich history of Virginia. There’s going to be a lot of things to explore.”

Dear VCU School of Education alumni and friends,

Teach. Research. Transform.

These three words appear on a prominent banner that we hung on the front of Oliver Hall this January. The banner’s central image, a teacher and her student, and the accompanying message, “Teach. Research. Transform,” represents the work we do in the School of Education.

Certainly there is little explanation required for TEACH and for RESEARCH. These two are central to our ongoing commitment to make schools and workplaces better for all. Through the research that guides our decisions and actions, we in the School of Education teach both young children and adults in a variety of settings. Teach and research are activities both traditional and ongoing and guide much of the work of the School of Education.

TRANSFORM, however, is somewhat apart, and along with being aspirational, it is also challenging. To transform is to view differently, to reconfigure, to reshape, to move from old ways of thinking to new ones. Through our work in the School of Education, in the community, in our classrooms and in our centers, we aspire to that transformation. As our society confronts technological advances, economic changes and renewed challenges to poverty, we are charged to prepare professionals for a world where new methods, new outcomes and new skills are needed. As you will read in this issue, transformation embraces new ways of thinking about, among other topics, race in education, gender equity, learning disability and childhood poverty.

Transforming education is, of course, transforming ourselves, a difficult and yet important task. It makes our daily work in the School of Education both exciting and daunting, and if we rise to the occasion, we will not only teach and research, we will transform. Here in the School of Education, it is a charge to all of us, and our pledge is to meet that challenge.

Best,

Leila Christenbury
Interim Dean and Commonwealth Professor
Issue of race in education sparks lively dialogue at School of Education panel event

Title IX, sexual violence focus of SOE “It’s On Us” conference

Endowed professor to retire after 28 years with School of Education

School of Education thanks long-time Advancement Council chair
The School of Education Alumni Council and five of the school’s student organizations joined forces this February to collect donations for less-fortunate students at Richmond’s G.H. Reid and George Washington Carver elementary schools.

Large brown bins placed throughout Oliver Hall collected supplies from Feb. 1-15. Among the items gathered were books, notebooks, pencils, school supplies, toiletries and a variety of winter clothes, such as coats, scarves, gloves and socks.

The idea for the campaign stemmed from a discussion in a council meeting in January. Council members Sobeyda Rivera and Veronica Rivera, both teachers in Richmond Public Schools, recognized the need to help local students, and the Alumni Council, behind Holt’s leadership, answered the call to action.

“Our Alumni Council president eagerly embraced the idea of the council’s supporting an initiative to provide school supplies, winter clothing and other necessities to students that need them,” Dr. Diane Simon, senior associate dean for student affairs, said.

From there, the council reached out to the student organizations, who quickly jumped on board, mobilizing efforts to set up the donation bins, create flyers to promote the drive and encourage faculty, staff and students to participate.

Participating student organizations included:

- National Science Teachers Association (President: Shannon Fasing)
- Counselor Education Student Networking Association (President: Sydney Ellis)
- Educational Leadership Doctoral Student Association (President: Meg Horner)
- Association for Aspiring Leaders in Education (President: Heather Coleman)
- LaunchPAD (President: Amanda Hall)

Alumni Council, student organizations team up to help children in need

Yet again, we are one of America’s Best Graduate Schools! U.S. News & World Report ranks the VCU School of Education as the 23rd-best public graduate program in the country and the 33rd-best overall school of education in the newly-released 2017 rankings.

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