

# Important Update from Simmons College President Helen Drinan on the Future of Simmons



BOSTON (May 14, 2014)

Dear Simmons Community:

I am writing to our entire Simmons College community — students, parents, faculty, staff, trustees, and alumnae/i — to update you on the significant accomplishments we have achieved, and on plans to move Simmons forward in the extremely demanding, competitive, rapidly changing marketplace of higher education.

Despite the challenging environment, this year has been one of tremendous success. I am proud of the substantial progress we have made, together, in raising the national visibility of Simmons, in nearing the completion of the largest fundraising campaign in our history, and in successfully launching outstanding new online graduate programs in nursing and social work that are attracting new students from 40 states across the country.

Our April 23 Simmons Leadership Conference with keynote speaker Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, our May presence at the 4th National Congress of Vision 2020, and our participation in U.S. Department of State programs and the upcoming Women in Public Service Project Institute with Smith and Mount Holyoke colleges are all impressive initiatives that have significantly raised the visibility of Simmons. They have placed Simmons on a larger stage, a stage that will allow us to shed the mantle as one of Boston's "best kept secrets."

I am proud of our solid financial performance during the last five years which has delivered an operating surplus after covering expenses and depreciation. Our financial success is, in part, the result of rigorous, disciplined expense management made possible by the very hard work and commitment of faculty, staff, and administrators.

As we have throughout our history, Simmons continues to evolve to meet

the changing needs of students in a complex world and to be competitive in the new environment of higher education. Today, like all colleges offering traditional undergraduate and graduate programs, we are confronted with the need to make our programs relevant and distinctive, and to deliver them in a way that will meet students' demanding schedules, learning styles, and family budgets.

The pace of change at Simmons has been brisk this year and we need to maintain this pace next year as change and transition are the "new normal" within higher education. With the momentum and success we have achieved to date, I believe Simmons can pursue big opportunities in the future, if pursued with intense effort and focus. Over the next years, we will:

- Transform our excellent traditional undergraduate program into a premier, distinctive experience built on a platform of leadership development, which reflects our expertise and John Simmons's mission for the college.

- Provide thousands of adult students across the country with greater access to a Simmons degree.

- Achieve further significant visibility outside of New England.

- Increase our national reputation for producing top graduates in key professions.

- Recruit students from new international locations.

These exciting opportunities will require investments in academic programming; new positions filled by new people with new skills; salary increases for faculty and staff who will realize these opportunities; and more marketing and advertising to tell the world about Simmons's success.

While investing in our future, we must continue to build Simmons as a sustainable organization. We are committed to stewarding the College, and to regular review and redeployment of our human and financial resources. We will maintain our strategy of selective reduction in spending and, where indicated, selective reduction in positions. Hence, we must expect change as part of an ongoing strategy to remain competitive and to maximize the growth opportunities that are unique to a college. This shared mindset of change will be essential in order for us to evolve and thrive as an organization.

At the May Board meeting, the trustees approved a 3% salary increase effective January 2015. The trustees fully recognize the community

sacrifice of going without salary increases since January 2012, and they are appreciative of the commitment that faculty and staff have made to transform Simmons. Trustees recognize how important it is to reward and retain high performing faculty and staff, and they understand how difficult it is to redefine and realign our personnel needs in ways that will enable Simmons to grow and compete in the future.

The trustees are pleased with the pace of transformation, and recognize the importance of investing to position Simmons for the future. Thus, they also have made available new resources to help fund significant investments in new academic programming for undergraduate students, a salary increase and increased marketing and advertising for undergraduate and graduate programs. They reviewed the revenue projections from new online programs and feel confident that Simmons will continue to see enhanced revenues in the longer term.

These next years will be both challenging and stimulating for us all. They will be years of hard work to ensure that Simmons is a vibrant, relevant university where students from across the country experience a transformative education that links passion with lifelong purpose. I am energized by these opportunities and challenges and I hope you all are as well.

[Helen G. Drinan](#), President Simmons College Boston, Massachusetts  
May 14, 2014