

Jamaica Plain Resident Named as Dean of the Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts, and Humanities

Appointment Comes as Simmons Acquires University Designation

Boston, Mass., August 29 – Simmons, one of the first institutions of higher education in the United States to focus on preparing women for leadership, announced today the appointment of Dr. Brian Norman as Dean of the Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts, and Humanities. The appointment comes as Simmons College announces it will become Simmons University effective September 1, 2018.

In his new position, Dr. Norman will work with faculty, students, and the Simmons community to build a new interdisciplinary college befitting the legacy of Gwen Ifill and her model of professional excellence, civic engagement, intellectual curiosity, and commitment to inclusive community. This future will build on Simmons historic commitment to women’s education and its long record of thoughtful integration of liberal arts and professional education under the founding mission of nurturing women’s independence.

“I am particularly inspired by naming the new college after Gwen Ifill,” Norman said. “Her life exhibits a deep curiosity about the world and a desire to shape it that comes from a liberal education. The Simmons community has done important thinking about how that tradition can thrive in the 21st century and I am excited to be aboard.”

Before joining Simmons University, Dr. Norman served as Associate Vice President of Faculty Affairs and Diversity and a Professor of English at Loyola University in Baltimore, MD. In addition to teaching a wide range of courses in literature and culture, Dr. Norman founded Loyola's program in African and African American Studies. Most recently, he served as a research fellow at the Dresher Center for the Humanities at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Dr. Norman is a distinguished scholar of American and African American literature who has written or edited several books, including his most recent: *Neo-Segregation Narratives: Jim Crow in Post-Civil Rights American Literature* and *Dead Women Talking: Figures of Injustice in American Literature*.

“We are delighted to welcome Dr. Norman as the inaugural dean of the new Gwen Ifill College,” said Helen Drinan, President of Simmons University. “Dr. Norman is a celebrated scholar who understands the relationship between literature and social change. He underscores our values that Simmons College is at its best when students are first, and he is an important addition to our reimagined academic structure and Simmons’ future goals.”

Dr. Norman is a native of Newberg, Oregon, and he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Environmental Studies, Women’s Studies, and French from Pacific Lutheran University, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in English from Rutgers University.

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About Simmons University

Simmons University (www.simmons.edu) is a nationally recognized private college located in the heart of Boston. Founded in 1899, Simmons is the only undergraduate women's college in Boston, and maintains a history of visionary thinking and a focus on social responsibility. Follow Simmons on Twitter at [@SimmonsUniv](https://twitter.com/SimmonsUniv) and [@SimmonsNews](https://twitter.com/SimmonsNews).