

Dr. Marie desJardins Named Dean of Simmons College of Organizational, Computational, and Information Sciences

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. Marie desJardins, as Dean of the College of Organizational, Computational, and Information Sciences (COCIS). The appointment comes as Simmons College announces it will become Simmons University effective September 1, 2018.

In her new position Dr. desJardins will work with faculty, students, and the Simmons community to build a new interdisciplinary college to integrate computational disciplines, traditional and digital information sciences, and the business school, approaching entrepreneurship and leadership in a new, more robust way. The future of COCIS will build on Simmons' historic commitment to women's education and its thoughtful approach to empowering women to be leaders in their fields, particularly in STEM-based industries. The disciplines represented within COCIS align well with Dr. desJardins's experience in artificial intelligence research, computing ethics, computing education, and diversity in computing.

"Today's global economy is increasingly centered around information and computation, and this trend continues to accelerate," desJardins said. "Simmons is incredibly forward-looking and unique among institutions of higher education in its decision to combine the School of Business, the School of Library Sciences, and the newly formed Division of Mathematical and Computational Sciences under one roof. The synergy created in this highly interdisciplinary College—as well as our collaborations with the other newly formed Colleges and partners in the Boston area and beyond—will enable us to work towards solutions to some of the most important and critical challenges facing society, from reducing the spread of "fake news" and political propaganda, to minimizing bias in machine learning applications, to safe deployment of autonomous systems."

Prior to joining Simmons University, Dr. desJardins worked as a Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in UMBC's College of Engineering and Information Technology, where she oversaw multiple assessment activities, including leading a successful re-accreditation of four undergraduate engineering and computing undergraduate programs. A career educator, Dr. desJardins's work at UMBC included program development, creation and implementation of campus policies for advising, enrollment, classroom renovation and space management, and administrative management of UMBC activities related to student and faculty affairs. She has published over 100 scientific papers in journals, conferences, and workshops in the areas of artificial intelligence and computer science education.

"Dr. desJardins is a remarkably qualified candidate for this new dean position at Simmons University," said Helen Drinan, President of Simmons University. "Her knowledge and expertise in information technology, computer science, and educational administration, along with her proven leadership skills, well prepares her for this key role on campus. We welcome Dr. desJardins to the Simmons community and look forward to her leadership in helping our institution achieve its ambitious goals."

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).