

***For Immediate Release***

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**Debra J. Perez Named Senior Vice President, Organizational Culture, Inclusion & Equity**

Boston, Mass., August 7, 2018 – Simmons College, one of the first institutions of higher education in the United States to focus on preparing women for leadership, announced today the appointment of Debra Pérez, Ph.D., as Senior Vice President, Organizational Culture, Inclusion & Equity.

Dr. Pérez will be responsible for expanding Simmons’ significant programs and practices underlying the college’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. She will serve as a strategic partner to the President and to her colleagues in building bridges and identifying and pursuing meaningful engagement with faculty, staff, students, alumnae/i and the Boston community. In collaboration with the Office of the Provost and the Deans, Dr. Pérez also will work to integrate inclusive excellence into the university curriculum and pedagogy, preparing faculty to teach diverse learners and preparing students to navigate diverse communities.

“This is an exciting time to be joining such a dynamic university,” said Dr. Pérez. “Simmons has a well-founded reputation as a welcoming community for all learners. Great change at Simmons is aligned with greater demands for inclusive leadership in the country. I look forward to working with the entire Simmons community to making a significant contribution to maintain and nurture an inclusive environment now and into the future.”

Founded in 1899, Simmons announced that as of September 1, 2018, it will be known as Simmons University, a culmination of a strategic planning and visioning process begun in 2011 that led it to restructure its academics into four new colleges led by four recently appointed deans: the Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts, and Humanities; the College of Social Sciences, Policy, and Practice; the College of Organizational, Computational, and Information Sciences; and the College of Natural, Behavioral, and Health Sciences.

“Debra Pérez is an experienced leader who brings a great deal to our university,” said Helen Drinan, President of Simmons. “She arrives with abundant relevant expertise, and importantly, a clear vision for how we can establish successful protocols as we promote diversity, inclusion and equity in our classrooms and throughout our campus. I am confident that under her leadership, our faculty, staff and the entire Simmons community will become a model for diversity, inclusion and equity now and into the future.”

Dr. Pérez earned a bachelor's in communication from Douglass College; a master's in social science and women's studies from the University of Kent in Canterbury, England; a master's of public administration from Baruch College; and a doctorate in health policy from Harvard University. She is currently the chief evaluation and learning officer at the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation in Palo Alto, CA.

She previously served as Vice President of Research, Evaluation and Learning at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and assistant vice president for research and evaluation at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. During her career, Dr. Pérez has been responsible for bringing diverse perspectives to research and policy decision-making, and she has developed more than a dozen initiatives designed to foster multidisciplinary research and expanding various dimensions of diversity.

She will start her new role at Simmons University on September 5, 2018.

### **About Simmons College**

Simmons College ([www.simmons.edu](http://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 [@SimmonsCollege](https://twitter.com/SimmonsCollege) and [@SimmonsNews](https://twitter.com/SimmonsNews).