

TOP STORIES

First for Adelphi

New president is only woman to lead the LI school

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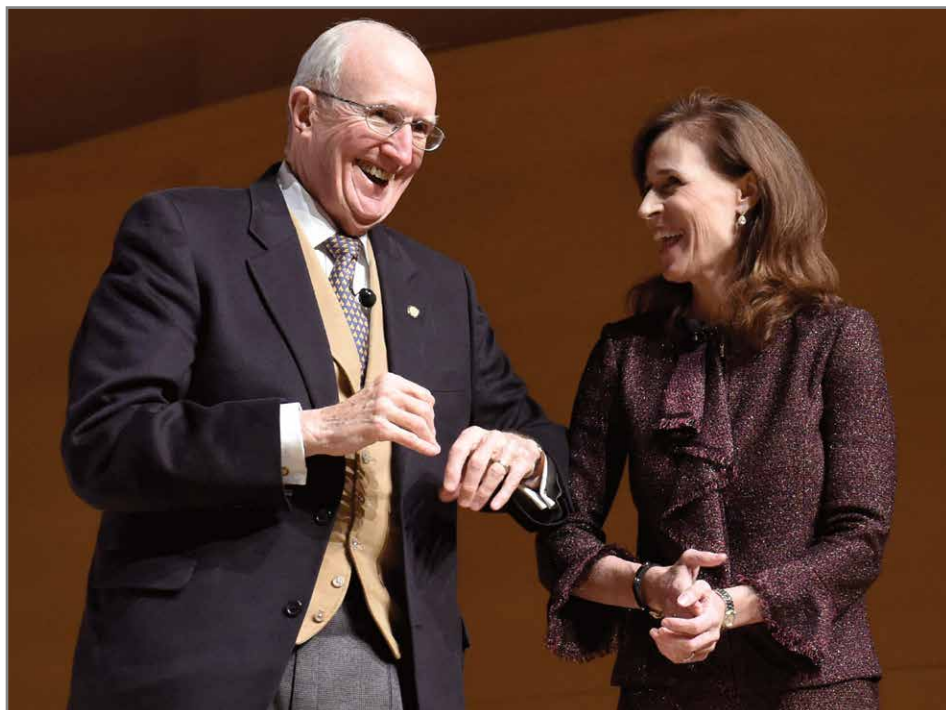
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Christine M. Riordan, the provost of the University of Kentucky named yesterday as the 10th president of Adelphi University and its first female leader, says the school is a “hidden gem” with the makings of a model metropolitan center of higher learning.

“I think we can and should be a university that the rest of the world looks at and says, ‘We want to be just like them,’” Riordan said after she was introduced to hundreds of students, faculty and alumni who packed the Garden City school’s Performing Arts Center and gave her a standing ovation.

Riordan, 49, will take over leadership of the 7,600-student university on July 1, 2015. Robert A. Scott, who was appointed president in 2000 and has overseen enrollment gains and endowment increases during challenging economic times for many private colleges across the country, announced in March that he would leave the post at that time.

Scott, 75, who was cheered and applauded by those gathered in the arts center, will remain on campus as a faculty member. He said he plans to take a sabbatical and return to teach a course in ethics.



Adelphi University's president, Robert A. Scott, with his successor, Christine M. Riordan, whose selection, effective in July, was announced yesterday.

“This is a historic moment for the university,” Robert B. Willumstad, a financial executive who chairs the university’s 30-member board of trustees, said before introducing Riordan.

She clearly emerged as the top candidate among more than 100 applicants and was the unanimous choice of search committee members and the board of trustees, he said.

Riordan has a five-year contract, said Lori Duggan Gold, vice president for communications. The university, as a matter of policy, does not disclose terms of employee compensation. It is expected that Riordan will live in the president’s house in Garden City, Duggan Gold said.

The move to Adelphi will be a significant change in many respects — especially from leading a large, public flagship university with more than 30,000 students and 16 colleges to taking the helm of a far smaller private school in the crowded higher-education marketplace of metropolitan New York City and Long Island.

The change also comes at a time when high tuition costs, huge student debt and many universities’ fiscal struggles are in the spotlight, even as institutions compete for students domestically and overseas.

“What we will be doing next is having a series of conversations related to a strategic plan for Adelphi



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Christine M. Riordan

2014. Adelphi University, president-elect

2013-present. University of Kentucky, provost

2008-13. University of Denver, dean of Daniels College of Business and professor of management.

2005-08. Texas Christian University, associate dean for external relations; Luther Henderson Chair in Leadership and professor of management in The Neeley School of Business.

1995-2005. The University of Georgia. Founding director of the Institute for Leadership Advancement; associate professor and assistant professor of management in the Terry College of Business.

1995. Georgia State University. PhD, with major in organizational behavior and minor in human resource management.

1989. Georgia State University. Master of business administration.

1987. Georgia Institute of Technology. Bachelor of textile engineering.

University,” Riordan said. “The first thing we will be doing is focusing on the major trends that exist in higher education, and then focus specifically on those that are unique to Adelphi.”

Willumstad said the president-elect “understands what this institution is about,” citing Adelphi’s low faculty-to-student ratio and personal attention to education. “She understood that ... but also the challenges we face in the future.”

As the University of Kentucky’s provost, Riordan was the chief officer responsible for all academic operations, which constitute about \$1 billion of the university’s total operations. When she was appointed in May 2013, a spokesman there said her salary was \$420,000 a year.

Adelphi officials praised initiatives during Riordan’s time in Lexington, including expansion of residential live-and-learn programs, new admissions marketing techniques, focus on student retention and refinement of a responsibility-centered financial system.

“The search committee was impressed with her focus on cross-disciplinary collaboration and integration, and her emphasis on innovative experiential learning,” said N. Gerry House, co-chair of the search committee.

From 2008 to 2013, Riordan was dean of the Daniels College of Business at the University of Denver in Colorado. The Atlanta native earned a PhD and master of business administration from Georgia State University and a bachelor of textile engineering from the

Georgia Institute of Technology.

Riordan is married to Robert D. Gatewood, author of “Human Resource Selection” and a professor emeritus at the University of Georgia. The couple have two teenagers and a bulldog named Georgia.

Adelphi junior Dilara Islam, 20, who was a member of the search committee, said she is impressed by Riordan’s “passion for education” and thrilled her school will have the first female leader in its 118-year history. “She wants to take Adelphi to the next level,” said the mathematics major from Queens.

During Scott’s tenure, Adelphi’s undergraduate enrollment has grown by 63 percent, its endowment has tripled and it has received two of the largest gifts in its history.