



SIENA HEIGHTS
UNIVERSITY

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Siena Heights University Names New President

Adrian, MI — Douglas B. Palmer, Ph.D. will become the 11th president of Siena Heights University effective July 1, 2023.



The Board of Trustees announced the appointment on Friday, March 3 in support of Palmer.

“It is with great enthusiasm we share the news that Dr. Doug Palmer has accepted the position of President of Siena Heights University” said Harry “Dusty” Steele, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. “Doug is a mission-driven inspiring leader who values teaching and learning with a strong commitment to academic excellence. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we welcome Doug and his family to our community.”

Palmer is currently serving as President of Culver-Stockton College in Canton, MO. While at Culver-Stockton, some of the key achievements under Palmer’s leadership included:

- Achieved a 10% new student enrollment increase from 2020-2022.
- Developed a major gift to house the Tri-State Development Summit, a regional economic development initiative, at the College.
- Launched Pell Grant Promise program offering free tuition to local Pell Grant recipients.
- Exceeded goals in giving, including new records for Day of Giving and overall gifts in 2022.
- Established a new major in Agricultural Business Management, including funding an endowed scholarship from a new donor.
- Created and launched a new strategic plan for the college.
- Promoted creation of first-year learning communities for all new students.
- Added new co-educational sports: skeet and trap shooting.
- Established Great River Research Center – an interdisciplinary research center focused on economics, politics, social and cultural life of the Upper Mississippi River

Sister Peg Albert, O.P., Ph.D. said, “I am so happy that we have a person of such great quality and vision to serve Siena Heights University in the years to come. Dr. Palmer will step into the presidency with confidence and experience to lead Siena Heights into the future. He is committed to ensuring that Siena Heights provides a world-class education and experiences to the students, faculty, staff, and the community that we serve. He will do a wonderful job.”

Albert announced her plans to retire at the start of the 2022-2023 academic year. Her last day will be June 30, 2023. Albert will complete her 17th year with Siena Heights University at her time of retirement. The university worked with the search firm Hyatt-Fennell to conduct a national search along with a search committee that included faculty, staff, students, members of the Adrian Dominican Sisters, and members of the Siena Heights Board of Trustees.

“We Adrian Dominicans join the Siena Heights University community in delight that Dr. Palmer will be the institution’s next President,” said Sister Elise D. García, OP, Prioress of the Congregation. “We believe he has the heart and spirit as well as the dynamic leadership qualities needed to guide Siena into a vibrant future for the good of its students, faculty and staff – and all the people they will serve as competent, purposeful and ethical women and men.”

Prior to being the president at Culver-Stockton College, Palmer was the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Walsh University in North Canton, Ohio. Palmer has a strong belief that a high-quality, private education should be accessible for all students. He was a non-traditional student himself, earning his bachelor’s degree from the University of North Carolina at Asheville following an enlistment as an active-duty soldier and paratrooper in the U.S. Army. He used the G.I. Bill to fund his undergraduate education and subsequently earned a full tuition scholarship to pursue graduate work in history at the University of Oregon. He completed his Ph.D. in History at The Ohio State University where he won a prestigious Fulbright Scholarship to study in the Netherlands. He was also awarded the Presidential Fellowship given to the 25 top dissertation writers in the university.

“I am honored to be entrusted by the Adrian Dominican Sisters and the Trustees of Siena Heights University to contribute to the mission of educating students to be competent, purposeful, and ethical. I’m especially inspired by Siena Heights’ commitment to access for all to higher education whether traditional students, working adults and online students. My family and I are all excited to become part of the Adrian and Siena Heights communities,” said Palmer.

Palmer and his wife, Cathy, are both natives of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and have three boys. They will be relocating to Michigan to begin his presidency with Siena Heights University on July 1, 2023.

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About Siena Heights University

Siena Heights University is a Catholic university founded and sponsored by the Adrian Dominican Sisters. Siena Heights is a coeducational North Central accredited institution founded in the liberal arts tradition, offering associate’s, bachelor’s, and master’s degrees. The university is headquartered in Adrian, MI., with degree completion centers in Battle Creek, Benton Harbor, Dearborn, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Monroe, and Online. For more information about Siena

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