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## **Converse College to Become Converse University July 1, 2021**

### ***The Name Change Acknowledges Converse's Long-Held University Status and Positions the Institution to Lead the Charge for Educational and Economic Excellence in the Region***

SPARTANBURG, S.C. (June 30, 2021) - On July 1, 2021, Converse College will acknowledge its long-held university status with an official name change to Converse University, in a major step towards targeted growth and competitive advantage in South Carolina's higher education market.

"For more than 130 years, Converse has held true to its mission: to empower its students to become transformative leaders who see clearly, decide wisely, and act justly," said Converse President Krista L. Newkirk. "Just as when Converse was founded, South Carolina and the nation today need transformational leadership to take us into the future. As we become Converse University, we have never been in a better position to lead the charge for educational and economic excellence in our region and beyond."

Universities can significantly contribute to the growth of local, state, and regional economies through contributions to a highly skilled workforce, as well as through entrepreneurship and innovation. As the labor market in South Carolina continues to grow, Converse continues its history of developing a workforce that employers can depend upon to fill highly skilled roles in STEM fields such as healthcare, business (including data analytics), and life sciences, as well as in-demand roles in government, education, and the arts. As a doctoral university, Converse is positioned to attract out-of-state and international students to the Upstate, enhancing the diversity of South Carolina's workforce and connecting the dots of the region's emerging role in the global market.

The Converse Board of Trustees announced in February 2020 that the historic Spartanburg institution would make the transition from the name Converse College to Converse University to recognize the school's 55-year history of offering strong master's programs, its recent accreditation as a doctorate-granting institution, and its sizable international student population. Along with the February 2020 university announcement, Converse declared that it would add a co-educational undergraduate residential program alongside the Converse College for Women and continue to expand its international programs. These efforts will ensure a thriving future for Converse as it continues to build on its history of academic excellence.

With the transition to university complete, President Newkirk will pass the baton to Dr. Jeff Barker as she makes a move to become President of the University of Redlands in Redlands, California. Dr. Barker most recently served as Converse's Provost and will take the helm later in July to guide the university into the future during the 2021-2022 academic year. This fall, as Converse welcomes its largest incoming undergraduate class in Converse history, Dr. Barker will draw on his more than 20 years of experience at Converse to oversee the transition that will position the university to attract exceptional students from all over the United States and internationally.

### *About Converse University*

Converse University empowers students to become transformative leaders who see clearly, decide wisely, and act justly. Converse was founded in 1889 by citizens of Spartanburg, SC, who aimed to create an educational experience for women, and in fall 2020 it welcomed its first undergraduate co-educational incoming class. The University encompasses the School of Humanities, Sciences, and Business; the School of the Arts; the School of Education and Graduate Studies; and the Converse College for Women. Converse students experience deep scholarship, transformative mentorship, experiential learning, and wonderful support for and belief in each other. Through this unique formula, Converse is a creator of opportunity for its students through a personalized education that also includes the professional and technical skills graduates need to be successful in their careers.

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