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**Dr. Neval Erturk Appointed to Lead Converse University Research
as Associate Provost for Research and Engagement**

SPARTANBURG, S.C. (February 1, 2022) - Award-winning teacher, scholar, and Professor of Biology Dr. Neval Erturk has been appointed Associate Provost for Research and Engagement at Converse. In this inaugural leadership role, Dr. Erturk will lead the university's efforts to direct, expand, and guide research, scholarship, and creativity to support the Converse mission.

“As a teacher, colleague, and researcher, Dr. Erturk provides an inspiring example for the ways that scientific thinking can guide institutions of higher learning,” said Interim President Boone Hopkins. “Her passion for supporting faculty colleagues and especially for helping junior colleagues and students develop rich research agendas and receive grant funding has greatly enriched all the STEM disciplines on our campus. We are excited to see her impact campus-wide in this new leadership role.”

Dr. Erturk will be responsible for overseeing Converse's research compliance entities, policies, procedures, and educational programs that support research and related activities, including aligning the office's goals with the University's strategic priorities. In collaboration with the academic deans and the grant office, Dr. Erturk will encourage the development and implementation of high-quality research initiatives and establish and maintain a culture of responsible conduct of research among faculty, students, and staff. She will also provide strategic support during the process of grant application, and promote adherence to all governmental, university, and sponsoring agency regulations during the research process including compliance with all SACSCOC (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges) and other applicable accrediting bodies.

An active participant of inter-institutional research initiatives in South Carolina and a champion for research at Converse, Dr. Erturk believes research complements teaching, and regularly works with students on original research. She has served as a mentor to faculty and students while building bridges with regional institutions and statewide organizations.

In the last 15 years, Dr. Erturk has served the research community in different roles. She chaired the Student Awards Committee of the South Carolina Upstate Research Symposium and the Science Review Committee of Piedmont III Regional Science Fair, served on the Educational Board of Intel International Science and Engineering Fair, and volunteered as an interpreter for international participants from Turkic speaking countries (Azerbaijan and Turkey). Dr. Erturk has been a member of

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the inter-institutional review committee of SCICU Faculty Sponsored Research for the last 15 years and has chaired the committee since 2019. She received a Plaque of Recognition from the South Carolina Upstate Research Symposium for supporting the research and scholarly efforts of faculty and students in the Upstate in 2012, and a Certificate of Recognition from the South Carolina Academy of Science for her excellence in the support and development of talent and research in the State of South Carolina in 2011.

In recognition of her teaching and research with the undergraduate students at Converse, Dr. Erturk received the South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (SCICU) Excellence in Teaching Award in 2008. In 2012 she was recognized with the Scholarly and Creative Achievement Award by Converse for "being at the forefront of mentoring student research" as well as her STEM Outreach activities to the local high school students, many of which led to national awards for the students. She was also a recipient of the 2012 *Student Service: Above and Beyond Award* for her service to students, the 2018 Ibrahim Janajreh Young Innovator award by InnoVision, and is recognized as a National Role Model in Faculty Researcher category by the Minority Access Incorporated in 2017.

During her 15-year tenure at Converse, Dr. Erturk has secured \$1,582,500 in grants in support of undergraduate student and faculty research and teaching, and the purchase of biomedical laboratory equipment. In October 2020, Dr. Erturk spearheaded an effort that secured a \$750,000 (5-year) grant from South Carolina IdEA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence (SC INBRE) sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to support biomedical research at Converse. This grant led to \$370,000 of additional funding to further independent faculty research, enhance the university's experimental facilities and laboratories with new supplies, essential gear, and test subject facilities, and support associated operational costs.

In 2019, Dr. Erturk led a collaborative team at Converse from the Nisbet Honors Program, the Office of Research and Engagement, Campus Technology, the Office of Communications and Marketing, and the Office of Internships and Career Services to establish the RISE (Research, Internships, Arts, and Experiential Learning) Annual Symposium, which celebrates student scholarly activities and achievements across all areas of study, including the arts, humanities, education, natural and mathematical sciences, and social and behavioral sciences. In 2021 she partnered with the Office of Institutional Grants, the Office of Research and Engagement, Campus Technology, the Office of Communications and Marketing, and the Office of Internships and Career Services to develop and deliver a series of workshops for the professional development of faculty, staff, and students at Converse University. Both programs are sponsored through a Converse University Creativity, Community, and Cultural Enrichment (C3) Grant.

Along with her role as a Professor of Biology, Dr. Erturk serves as the Director of Undergraduate Research and the Director of Science, Technology & Research Scholar (STARS) Program, which encourages high school students to pursue their love of science and interest in the STEM fields and allows local high school students to explore the STEM fields while participating in hands-on research with individual mentoring by Converse professors. Dr. Erturk teaches a wide variety of courses in biology at Converse including Genetics, Cell Biology, Research Methods in Biology, Molecular Biology of the Cell, Biology of Cancer, and introductory biology courses. In addition to her new role

as Associate Provost for Research and Engagement, she will continue to teach part-time in the Biology department and oversee the administration of Converse's SC-INBRE grant sponsored by the National Institutes of Health.

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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