



**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**
www.converse.edu

Contact:
Holly Duncan
Office: 864.596.9704
holly.duncan@converse.edu

Converse University Announces Dr. Joe Wilferth as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

SPARTANBURG, S.C. (August 22, 2022) –Following a highly-competitive, national search, Converse University has appointed Dr. Joe Wilferth as its new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Dr. Wilferth will begin his tenure at Converse on October 1, 2022.

Dr. Wilferth comes to Converse from Linfield University in McMinnville, Oregon, where he was Dean, College of Arts & Sciences and Professor of English. Prior to his role at Linfield University, Dr. Wilferth served in progressively responsible administrative and academic roles at University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, which included Interim Vice Provost, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Head of the Department of English.

“Dr. Wilferth is an experienced leader who values clear and consistent communications, who champions an integrated model of liberal arts, civic, and professional education, and who advances shared responsibility alongside the faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees, collectively focusing on student success and curricular innovation,” said Boone Hopkins, Converse president. “He will join our community at a time of evolution and growth at Converse University, as the University further centers its actions, energy, and resources around its mission to empower its students to become transformative leaders who see clearly, decide wisely, and act justly. Dr. Wilferth’s selection as our Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs was enthusiastically supported by our faculty, staff, and students, and I am thrilled that he will be joining us to help lead Converse forward during a pivotal time for our institution.”

Across his academic career, Dr. Wilferth has contributed to campus master planning, led strategic planning processes, found success and exceeded goals as a fundraiser, expanded opportunities for grant-related activity and funded research, and launched new undergraduate and graduate programs. He is also a committed and proven ally who works to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion.

“I’m honored to be joining the Converse University family, particularly as Converse provides an outstanding education to its students,” said Dr. Wilferth. “As I looked at Converse from afar, I saw a very talented group of faculty, a dedicated staff, a tremendous and effective leadership team, and real enthusiasm about the university's future. I also recognized the campus's resilience, innovation, and forward momentum. My subsequent experiences on campus and while touring the Spartanburg area confirmed that Converse provides an exceptionally strong education, prioritizes the success of its students, and is poised for growth. It will be a privilege to serve as Converse’s Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.”

Dr. Wilferth earned a Ph.D. in English: Rhetoric and Writing from Bowling Green State University, a Master of Arts in English from Southeast Missouri State University, and a Bachelor of Arts in English from DePauw University. In addition to his administrative and leadership experience, Dr. Wilferth has an extensive teaching background, which is complemented by research and publications in the areas of rhetorical studies, visual culture, the environmental movement, and environmental literature in the US. He is a past summer fellow with the Rhetoric Society of America.

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.

END