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Board of Trustees Officially Appoints Dr. Matthew Giordano Fourth President of Villa Maria College

BUFFALO, NY – Nine months after being named interim president, Villa Maria’s Board of Trustees has officially named Dr. Matthew Giordano the College’s fourth president. Giordano is the first male, lay-person president in the College’s history. His appointment is effective immediately.

“The Board is pleased to announce that Dr. Giordano will continue his leadership role as Villa Maria College’s permanent president,” said Catherine Grantier Cooley, partner, Hodgson Russ, LLP, and chairperson of the Villa Maria College Board of Trustees. “Since accepting the role of interim president, Dr. Giordano has proven himself to be a strong and strategic leader who is dedicated to College’s mission and vision, and the overall success and growth of the institution.”

Giordano assumed the role of interim president in July 2018. Under his leadership, the College launched two new academic programs: game design and computer software development, as well as scholarship eSports. Each of these programs were developed in response to the increased demand for jobs in these industries within the Western New York area and beyond. Furthermore, under Dr. Giordano, college leadership created a new strategic plan which will guide the College and its growth through 2021. He has introduced new models of governance at the College, nurturing a collegial atmosphere among the faculty and employees. Giordano has also engaged with several community leaders and elected officials to develop partnerships and support for the institution.

“It is an extraordinary privilege to be named the fourth president of Villa Maria College, an institution that has served our community with distinction for almost 60 years. Villa’s Catholic, Felician mission, as well as its values of transformation and respect, completely align with my own beliefs and with my convictions about higher education,” said Giordano. “For 14 years, I have witnessed Villa’s transformative power on a daily basis, seeing firsthand how it changes and improves the lives of the students and families it touches through its exceptional academic programs and community outreach. I am thrilled to lead the College as it builds off of this enduring legacy to create an even brighter future and as it plays a critical role in the continued resurgence of Western New York.”

Giordano succeeds Sister Marcella Marie Garus, C.S.S.F, who retired from the College in June 2018 after serving for 40 years as president.

Prior to accepting the role of interim president, Giordano served as vice president for academic affairs from 2012 to 2018. During that time, he played a pivotal role in planning and implementing the College's visionary plan, resulting in major enrollment growth and increased retention, launching new academic programs, including an honors program, and helping to secure grant funding in support of student success, including a \$1.8 million Title III grant. He has overseen all aspects of academic leadership at the College; highlights include increasing the number of faculty, starting online learning, overseeing assessment, and significantly enhancing student success efforts.

Between 2009 and 2012, Giordano served as the chairperson of the liberal arts department at Villa Maria and has been a faculty member in English at Villa Maria from 2005 to 2012. He was a visiting lecturer in English at Florida International University from 2004-2005.

Giordano has a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Philosophy from Binghamton University and both a Master of Arts and Ph.D. in American literature from the Ohio State University. He successfully completed the Executive Leadership Academy of the Council of Independent Colleges and the Felician Leadership Institute in 2018.

Giordano is originally from Rochester, NY and is married to Jennifer Desiderio, a professor of English at Canisius College and has three daughters. Giordano resides in Snyder, NY.

About Villa Maria College

Villa Maria College is a private, Catholic college, founded in 1960 by the Felician Sisters. Located in Buffalo, NY, Villa Maria is the premiere student-centered college in Western New York characterized by an unyielding commitment to student success.

Offering Bachelors and Associates degrees in 19 different academic programs, Villa Maria's strength lies in studio-based education, a 9:1 student to faculty ratio, and educators who bring their real-world experience into the classroom. Students learn and grow with a culturally diverse population that lives its core values instilled by the Felician Sisters. Students participate in intercollegiate athletics in eight sports as the Villa Vikings and are involved in nearly 20 clubs and organizations on campus. Villa Maria is home to the Achieve Program for Students with Learning Differences, and an academic success center, which provides robust academic support for all students.

For more information on the college, call 716-896-0700 or visit www.villa.edu.

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