



THE RECTOR AND VISITORS OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

September 15, 2017

Dear Members of the University Community,

We are delighted to announce that James E. Ryan, Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, will become the University of Virginia's ninth president. We believe that Jim is the ideal person to lead the University into its third century and are pleased to welcome him, his wife, Katie, and their four children to the Grounds.

For Jim, this will be a homecoming. Prior to his time at Harvard, he was the Matheson and Morgenthau Distinguished Professor at the University of Virginia School of Law. He served as academic associate dean from 2004 until 2009 and founded and directed the UVA Program in Law and Public Service. Jim and Katie met in their time as students at the Law School, from which they both graduated in 1992.

The first in his family to attend college, Jim earned an A.B., *summa cum laude*, at Yale University and attended UVA Law on a full scholarship, graduating first in his class. These experiences forged Jim's devotion to education – and crystalized his academic focus on the ways in which law impacts educational opportunity. After graduating from law school, Jim clerked for United States Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist and worked as a public interest lawyer before returning to Charlottesville to join the Virginia faculty. He has served as Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education since 2013.

You can learn more about Jim's background and his thoughts on a variety of issues at presidentelect.virginia.edu.

We believe that the next 15 years will be critical in determining the future of higher education in the United States and the role of the University of Virginia in that future. As a leading public institution, we fully embrace the public service mission that we have to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world to develop citizen leaders in all fields of endeavor and to contribute to the common good in solving the most challenging issues of our time. We know that Jim shares a passion for this purpose. We are confident that he is the perfect leader for this institution at this precise time in history. And we intend to support him in every manner we can in achieving our shared vision.

In a piece published in the May 2017 issue of *UVA Lawyer*, Harvard President Drew Faust wrote the following about Jim: "Jim is warm, open, wise, funny, humble and maybe the best public speaker I know. (See his reflections on "[5 Essential Questions in Life](#)" on YouTube.) He is almost infinitely patient with people, but impatient in his urgency to make a difference. He is also speedy — completing the Boston Marathon in under three hours as he 'runs for teachers' each year. Every time I see him, I learn from Jim, and he inspires all of us to join in his dedication to education as the most powerful vehicle of justice and human betterment."



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We would like to express our deep appreciation to the members of the Special Committee on the Nomination of a President for their tireless efforts in making this announcement a reality, and to the entire University community for its thoughtful and enthusiastic engagement throughout the search process. With today's announcement, the work of this search committee is now concluded.

We are ecstatic that Jim has accepted this call to service and eager for the University community to get to know him.

Best Regards,

William H. Goodwin, Jr.
Rector Emeritus

Frank M. Conner III
Rector

Co-Chairs, Special Committee on the Nomination of a President