



July 1, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

Today begins an exciting, new chapter for me personally and, I hope, for the College of Charleston.

I first want to commend our entire faculty for all of their efforts this past spring in providing the best teaching and classroom experience possible under very trying circumstances of historic proportion. From what I have seen from afar, your efforts were nothing short of inspiring. And I am proud to join such a caring and dedicated community of scholars.

Being a historian of epidemiology and demography is very different than being an active participant in a global pandemic. My appreciation for those of centuries past who experienced such chaos firsthand has grown exponentially. The everyday toll on our emotional, physical and fiscal wellbeing is unrelenting. However, we can also turn to history for hope: Humanity finds a way. The big question is when. This waiting, of course, is a test of our resilience. But from what I have seen of our campus community, I know we can and will persevere.

As your new provost, I plan to hit the ground running. I know this past year has been one of tremendous transition on campus. I am deeply indebted to Fran Welch, who did a remarkable job serving as the interim provost. Her accomplishments, which are too numerous to name here, would be the envy of a provost with a 20-year tenure. Thank you, Fran, for your leadership and impressive work.

Of course, she did not do it alone, and neither will I. She had a great team around her and she relied heavily on a talented faculty for ideas and execution. Like her and many of the best examples of leadership, I am a collaborator by nature, so I look forward to working closely with all of you on a wide range of projects and initiatives. As you have heard President Hsu say numerous times, this university possesses so much potential. That is what I saw when I

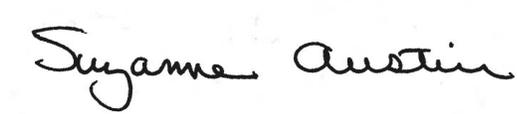
interviewed for the position, and that is what I continue to see now. Together, we will unlock that potential and unleash more of it.

As your provost and executive vice president of academic affairs, I will be transparent, honest and clear. We are best when we can trust each other, and I plan to earn your trust by my actions and commitment to honest and open dialogue, whether on curriculum, budgeting or exciting new initiatives.

I look forward to meeting many of you in the coming weeks and months and I am excited to partner with you in achieving our shared vision of making the College of Charleston a model institution of higher education on the national stage.

I will end with one of my favorite lines from one of my favorite writers, the Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez: “It is not true that people stop pursuing dreams because they grow old, they grow old because they stop pursuing dreams.” That logic, I believe, holds true for our institution as well, and I am excited to be here and to ensure that the College of Charleston keeps pursuing dreams for another 250 years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Suzanne Austin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Suzanne Austin**

PROVOST and EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT  
DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

**COLLEGE of CHARLESTON**

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