

CONTACT INFORMATION:**Fiona Scruggs****Director of Communications & Marketing****413-644-4968**fscruggs@simons-rock.edu**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — October 1, 2024****Dr. Victoria Farris announced as Keynote Speaker
for Symposium on Social Justice and Inclusion 2024**

GREAT BARRINGTON, MA— Dr. Victoria Farris has been announced as the speaker for the 2024 Symposium on Social Justice and Inclusion.

Dr. Farris is a lifelong New Yorker on a mission to facilitate a more inclusive world. She is described as a disrupter, a truth teller, and a justice seeker, working to shine light onto truths that can be hard to recognize. Her research focuses on understanding, from the perspectives of people of color, and what white people can do to disrupt and dismantle systems of racism. Dr. Farris has developed a framework for effective

allyship that outlines an action-based guide for disrupting racism on individual, group, and organization levels.

Dr. Farris is also an activist, coach, hypnotherapist, doula trainee, mom, and devoted practitioner to mindfulness. She loves to play in the intersections of personal development, healing, wellness, and systemic oppression and serves both individual clients as a coach and healer, and organizations as a facilitator and consultant. Dr. Farris also co-hosts the Reconnecting with Pleasure podcast, where she talks about cultivating a pleasure-centered lifestyle as a form of resistance and liberation. Dr. Farris has spent over a dozen years working in higher education prior to launching her consulting and coaching business in 2017. She has a bachelor's degree in psychology from Marist College, a masters in higher education and student affairs from the University of Connecticut, and a doctorate in higher education management from the University of Pennsylvania where she earned double distinction for her dissertation research on disrupting racism. She loves to have critical conversations, pull oracle cards, and continue to find ways to facilitate healing so we can all experience more liberation.

The Symposium on Social Justice and Inclusion is an annual program sponsored by the Council for Inclusive Community (CIC). It provides designated time and space for the Simon's Rock community to deconstruct barriers to action on important social justice issues — in the classroom and in day-to-day life, using a theme. The 2024 theme is "Standing on Business."

"This year we find ourselves facing the perils of an unjust system of oppression and one that is laced with fear and disregard for the individual experience. We find ourselves protesting, fighting, and struggling to find the words and the footing to forgive one another, help one another find peace, and love one another," said the Dean of Students and Equitable Community Dr. Sarah Porter-Liddell. "The news regarding the Supreme Court's decision on affirmative action in admissions considerations, the anti-DEI legislation sweeping the nation, the on-going and changing list of LGBTQIA2S+ discrimination laws, the climate change crisis, international war, and a host of domestic and international challenges loom above us in a way that leaves us with crippling fear that is pushing many of us to fight for change. Because of this, it is easy to become fatigued by the intensity of the issues facing us today."

The theme of this year's Symposium hopes to inspire the following questions: What do we do now? How do we remain resilient and hopeful in the face of losses and what feels like powerlessness? How can we move forward?

"*'Standing on Business'* is a term that means doing exactly what you say you're going to do. 'Standing on Business' means that you have made a decision, made a plan, and you are invested in seeing that plan through to the end," said Dr. Porter-Liddell. "When you are standing on business, you are making a firm statement, a commitment to investing in yourself, your community, and committing to something that probably feels larger than anything you've ever done before."

The Symposium Keynote Lecture will take place Monday, October 14th at 6:30pm in the McConnell Theater at the Daniel Arts Center.

About Simon's Rock

[Bard College at Simon's Rock](#) is the only college in the country specifically designed for highly motivated students ready to enter college after the 10th or 11th grade. Simon's Rock offers a challenging program in the liberal arts and sciences, taught exclusively in small seminars by supportive, highly trained faculty, who are leading scholars in their fields. The College grants degrees in more than 35 majors. The Princeton Review's *Best 380 Colleges* rates academics at Simon's Rock higher than Harvard and Princeton.

[Bard Academy at Simon's Rock](#) is the nation's first two-year boarding and day program designed to prepare 9th and 10th graders to start college early. A student entering Bard

Academy as a high school freshman will earn an Associate of Arts degree from Bard College at Simon's Rock after only four years and a Bachelor of Arts degree after only six years. The Academy curriculum is designed and taught by students' future college professors who are leading scholars in their fields.

[The Bard Queer Leadership Project](#) (BQLP) is a revolutionary, new Bachelor of Arts degree program designed for, and by, LGBTQIA+ college students to elevate LGBTQIA+ students and college graduates into leadership roles in school and across the workforce while serving as a space for actualizing educational practices designed for students to thrive. The centerpiece of BQLP is a four year dual major B.A. degree combining Queer Leadership with a second academic field.

For more information, visit simons-rock.edu and bardacademy.simons-rock.edu

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