



University of Pittsburgh

Office of the Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor

801 Cathedral of Learning
4200 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
412-624-4223
Fax: 412-383-9640

Patricia E. Beeson
Provost
Senior Vice Chancellor

May 10, 2017

Dear Colleagues:

After 21 years of exceptional service, Gerald D. Holder has informed me of his decision to step down from his role as the US Steel Dean of Engineering and return to the faculty in the fall of 2018. I accept his wishes with reluctance and with heartfelt gratitude for his extraordinary vision and his unwavering commitment to the Swanson School of Engineering and the University of Pittsburgh.

Through a focus on innovation and excellence, Dean Holder has led a transformation of the Swanson School of Engineering into a leader in engineering research and education, consistently ranked among the top engineering programs at public universities. His focus on innovation and excellence is seen in every aspect of the School's mission. From research and teaching to engagement and global outreach, the School has built a record of accomplishment that is reflected in both the success of its faculty and graduates and in the number of individuals and companies that have reached out to partner with and support the School.

The story of the growth of the Swanson School under his leadership is well known: a doubling of student enrollments, tripling of the number of PhDs granted, and escalating student qualifications and placements; along with a 75 percent expansion of the faculty, tripling of annual sponsored research, and a cumulative total of \$400 million in funded research.

Telling as these numbers may be, they do not fully convey the innovation and spirit of entrepreneurship that Dean Holder has nurtured and the lasting impact he has had on the School and the University. From the establishment of a top-ranked department of bioengineering, to the integrated first-year curriculum that has become a national model, to the Engineering Education Research Center and the joint institute with Sichuan University, the Swanson School has been in the vanguard of advances in engineering and engineering education. And with nearly three-quarters of the faculty hired while he has been dean, the culture that he has worked to instill will remain long after he steps down.

Dean Holder's ability to foster collaboration and engage partners has been instrumental to his and the School's success. The John A. Mascaró Learning Center, the Gertrude E. and John M. Petersen Institute of NanoScience and Engineering, and the Center for Energy are lasting examples of the power of the partnerships that he has forged. Beyond this, thousands of students and faculty will benefit from the support of the many generous individuals that commit substantial resources in the form of scholarships, fellowships, and professorships. Total giving to

the School has topped \$250 million during Dean Holder's tenure, and his philanthropic success was highlighted by John A. Swanson's \$43 million naming gift in 2007 – the largest gift by an individual ever to the University at the time.

An ardent supporter of the connection between diversity and excellence, Dean Holder has led the School's efforts to embrace diversity and inclusion and has established structures to support these efforts, including the Office of Diversity. As dean, he appointed the School's first African American and its first female associate deans and, under his tenure, the School experienced a doubling of the number of underrepresented minority graduate students, a fifty percent increase in the number of female students, and more than 75 percent increase in the number of women on the faculty.

Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of his successful term as dean has been his commitment to supporting the success of others, be they students, faculty, staff, or outside colleagues. Nationally, he is known among his academic peers as "the Dean of Deans" for his leadership, mentorship, and impact on the profession. Here at Pitt, he is also known for his generous support of his colleagues throughout the University.

It has been my distinct pleasure to work with and learn from Jerry, both in his role as dean and through his participation in the activities of our Council of Deans, and I am pleased that he will continue his academic career at the University of Pittsburgh. Please join me in congratulating him on his success and that of the Swanson School under his leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patricia E. Beeson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Patricia E. Beeson