



University of Pittsburgh

Office of the Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor

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Patricia E. Beeson
Provost
Senior Vice Chancellor

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Dear Colleagues:

Together with Chancellor Gallagher, I am pleased to announce that Dr. Elizabeth (Betsy) Farmer has accepted my offer to become the next Dean of the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work beginning August 1, 2018. Dr. Farmer succeeds Dr. Larry E. Davis who has served as Dean since 2001.

Dr. Farmer is currently a Professor and the Associate Dean for Research in the School of Social Work at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). Before joining the faculty at VCU in 2012, Dr. Farmer established a successful academic career as a faculty member at Pennsylvania State, Case Western Reserve, and Duke Universities. She holds a PhD in Sociology from Duke, and she will bring her emphasis on collaboration and interdisciplinary excellence to the School of Social Work at Pitt.

At VCU, Dr. Farmer has led the School of Social Work to become more research-focused and engaged with the campus and the community. She established and manages the School's Office of Research, helped revitalize the School's doctoral curriculum, and has been significantly involved in recruiting and mentoring junior faculty. She also initiated a number of cross-disciplinary, community-engaged projects, including the School's Adopt-A-Classroom program, and worked with colleagues and community collaborators on trauma-informed services and systems. Dr. Farmer's extensive and diverse record of leadership, infrastructure development, and mentoring within the university and the broader community positions her well to leverage and enhance the multifaceted work of Pitt's School of Social Work.

Prior to entering academia, Dr. Farmer spent several years working in community-based treatment settings, including serving as a treatment foster parent, respite care provider, and group home parent. Her experience drove her research interest in improving treatment and care for youth with mental health problems, and she has received significant funding from the National Institute of Mental Health to carry out her work. While at Duke, she and her team developed "Together Facing the Challenge," a nationally recognized, evidence-based approach to treatment foster care. The program continues to grow, and today is being implemented in approximately 20 states across the nation. During her 26 years in academia, Dr. Farmer has engaged in a wide range of research and evaluation initiatives focused on improving services, treatment, and outcomes for youth served by the child welfare, mental health, and education sectors.

From our conversations, and feedback from colleagues in the School of Social Work, I am convinced that Dr. Farmer understands the opportunities we have to move the School of Social Work forward by both harnessing traditional strengths and building upon the assets of the larger University. She is unequivocally committed to social work values and to enhancing social work research and education. She will draw upon her passion for advancing the fulfillment of human potential, in addition to her administrative, research, and practice expertise, to lead the School of Social Work into its second century.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Farmer as the next Dean of the University of Pittsburgh's School of Social Work. For those who would like to congratulate her, she may be contacted at: efarmer4@vcu.edu. I have great confidence that Dr. Farmer's leadership will advance the School and help the University of Pittsburgh continue to lead in the city and across the world.

Sincerely,

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

Patricia E. Beeson