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MARJORIE HASS SELECTED AS NEW PRESIDENT OF CIC

WASHINGTON, DC – Marjorie Hass, president of Rhodes College in Tennessee and former president of Austin College in Texas, has been selected as the next president of the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC). She will succeed Richard Ekman, who has led CIC for 21 years, in the summer of 2021.

In announcing the appointment, Katherine Bergeron, chair of the CIC Board of Directors, said “I am delighted to welcome President-elect Hass as the first female president in the 65-year history of CIC. She is a visionary, dynamic, and entrepreneurial leader whose rich experience in financial management, program building, and leadership development will mark a new era at the Council.”

Ekman agrees that Hass is a superb choice to lead CIC. “President-elect Hass has both the experience and the vision to advance CIC’s support of member institutions during this time of challenge, transformation, and opportunity in independent higher education.”

Hass said she is eager to build on CIC’s strengths and Ekman’s legacy. “This is a moment for bold action and meaningful leadership on behalf of independent higher education. It is not hyperbole to say our country’s future as a global educational leader and democratic standard bearer is at stake. CIC’s role is unique in its focus on building capacity at every level and within every sphere of independent colleges and universities. Areas of particular urgency include: building the leadership pipeline, strengthening financial models, education for democratic citizenship, and transformative action for equity, access, and inclusion,” Hass said.

Hass served on the CIC Board of Directors from 2012 to 2016, including service as vice chair for resource development on the Board’s Executive Committee from 2014 to 2016. She is a frequent presenter at the annual CIC Presidents Institute and most recently served as faculty in CIC’s New
Presidents Program. She has also been active in the leadership of other prominent higher education associations, serving as a board member of the Association of American Colleges & Universities and as former chair of the board of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

Hass, a philosopher by training, holds a PhD from the University of Illinois and has published widely on the philosophy of language, logic, and feminist philosophy. She is also an award-winning teacher, who served for more than 16 years on the faculty—then as provost—of Muhlenberg College, a position she held until she was named president of Austin College in 2009.

As president of Rhodes College since 2017, Hass led a comprehensive and inclusive strategic planning process, positioning the college for success in the next decade. She made access and equity a college-wide priority, appointing the college’s first chief diversity officer and vice president for strategic initiatives, increasing diversity within her cabinet and the student body, establishing a first-of-its-kind partnership with the Posse Foundation, and supporting the development of an ambitious multi-year action plan for inclusion, diversity, access, and equity. Strengthening the college’s ties to its home city of Memphis, Hass secured an endowment to establish the Lynne and Henry Turley Memphis Center and expanded opportunities for students to participate in service, internships, and research. Under her leadership, applications increased by more than 20 percent and Rhodes has been named one of the nation’s most innovative liberal arts colleges by US News & World Report, a best value college by The Princeton Review, and Tennessee’s best liberal arts college according to Niche.

While serving as president of Austin College, she paired a strong vision for its future that included a culture of academic excellence and a commitment to educational access for talented students regardless of financial background, with a strategic approach to securing the resources needed to achieve that vision. Her accomplishments include considerable growth in the size and strength of the college’s applicant pool as well as increased retention; major steps to improve the environmental sustainability of the institution; and a significant improvement in the college’s financial position.

Katherine Bergeron led the presidential search with the following members of the CIC Executive Committee: Roslyn Clark Artis, president of Benedict College; Elizabeth Davis, president of Furman University; Arvid C. Johnson, president of University of St. Francis; Michael C. Maxey, president of Roanoke College; Elizabeth J. Stroble, chancellor of Webster University; and H. James Williams, president of Mount St. Joseph University. The search process was supported by Ann Die Hasselmo, Jennifer Kookon, and Jay Lemons of Academic Search.

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The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) is an association of 765 nonprofit independent
colleges and universities, state-based councils of independent colleges, and other higher education affiliates, that works to support college and university leadership, advance institutional excellence, and enhance public understanding of independent higher education’s contributions to society. CIC is the major national organization that focuses on services to leaders of independent colleges and universities and state-based councils. CIC offers conferences, seminars, publications, and other programs and services that help institutions improve educational quality, administrative and financial performance, student outcomes, and institutional visibility. It conducts the largest annual conferences of college and university presidents and of chief academic officers in the United States. Founded in 1956, CIC is headquartered at One Dupont Circle in Washington, DC. For more information, visit www.cic.edu.