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Rhodes Community,

We are all excited to welcome you back for the spring semester! I hope each of you had a restorative winter break and that the new year will be full of good health and happiness for you and your families. Sadly, the new year has brought terrible wildfires to Southern California, and we are keeping all those impacted, and the heroic first responders battling the blazes, close in our thoughts. We have offered support to our students from that area and will provide assistance in whatever way we possibly can.

Let me express deep gratitude to our Facilities and Campus Safety teams for their dedicated work last week as we encountered our first winter storm of 2025. They did extensive planning as the storm approached, and they worked tirelessly to prepare for and respond to the inclement weather. Campus is always so beautiful with a blanket of fresh snow, so we wanted to share a few photos with you (pictured at the end of the message). Thanks to Ike Sloas and Jeff McClain for sharing these.

I want to remind our students that I continue to set aside office hours to meet with them each semester. I will be available to meet with students individually or in small groups. I love to hear students discuss their career goals and listen to their thoughts about events happening on campus. [You can sign up here.](#)

I am pleased to announce that Provost Tim Huebner and I plan to host a casual book club for up to a dozen students. We will supply the books and snacks, and we will plan to meet three times over the course of the semester. We will read *Rescuing Socrates* by Roosevelt Montás, which examines the value of a liberal education and discusses how Plato, Augustine, Freud, and Gandhi transformed his life. If you are interested in joining us, please email my office at president@rhodes.edu to sign up.

Campus Events

This is the time of year when we proudly honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. A planning committee has been finalizing events for next week to celebrate and honor Dr. King. I hope you will take the time to attend some of these events or perform an act of service in his honor. You can find a full calendar of events [here](#).

On January 29th, we will celebrate Rhodes' first-ever Arts Day of Giving! Showcasing music, art, singing, dance, and theater, this day is one of celebrating and directly supporting the creativity that thrives on our campus through our wonderful students, faculty, and staff. I hope you will join me in participating.

Grants

As we prepare to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the college's move to Memphis, Rhodes has received a one-year grant from the Council of Independent Colleges' NetVUE "Reframing the Institutional Saga" program to support Rhodes faculty, alumni, and other community stakeholders in

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Dr. Laura Kelly received funding from the Spencer Foundation Small Research Grants on Education Program to facilitate weekly bilingual book club discussions in a local elementary school. The project will start in 2025; it will provide service to the school in supporting students' reading comprehension while informing Dr. Kelly's research on Spanish-speaking children, their views of and use of their two languages. Rhodes students will participate in the research by conducting the book clubs.

Seven faculty and staff members have received grants this year from Project Pericles to promote course development, civic engagement, and social responsibility among students. Drs. Charity Clay and Charles McKinney are teaching a Spring 2025 course titled "Photography, Stories, and Memory in Memphis" that will connect Rhodes with South Memphis through an oral history and genealogy project that will train students and community members in conducting interviews, archival research, and archive creation; Dr. Eric Gottlieb is developing a Fall 2025 course titled "Voting, Fairness, and Power" on mathematical aspects of voting theory, with the aim of helping students better understand how our system of government works; Dr. Joseph Kelly is incorporating a module in his Education Studies 390 course "Teaching Humanities" to help future teachers learn how to facilitate discussion in the classroom; Dr. Hadi Khoshnevis will teach a class on "Social Movements: Oppression and Resistance" that examines theories of social movements, including climate change, immigration, race, and gender/sexuality; Iris Mercado received a Back to School for Democracy grant to support events aimed at increasing student participation in the democratic process prior to the November 2024 elections; and Dr. Amy Risley is redesigning an International Studies course on "The Politics of Migration," focusing on immigrant communities in the U.S. and contemporary immigration and refugee policies. Congratulations to all of you!

Our Lynx winter sports teams are hard at work. The women's swimming and diving team is ranked 20th in the national DIII rankings, while the men's team is ranked 33rd in the country. And conference play has begun for the men's and women's basketball teams. The men started the conference year with a 2-0 record, and the women are 1-1. [Winter sports schedules can be found here](#). If you can, please come out to a game or meet and cheer on our amazing student-athletes!

Thank you so much for being part of the Rhodes community. We look forward to a vibrant and engaging spring semester.

Jennifer M. Collins
President
Rhodes College

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