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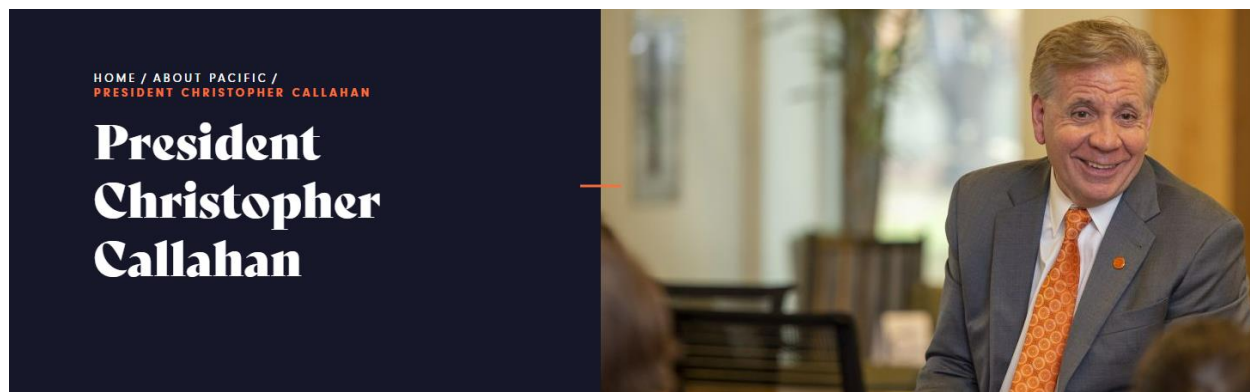
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Mary Wardell-Ghirarduzzi joins Pacific as its inaugural vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion

MAR 16, 2021



Mary Wardell-Ghirarduzzi

Mary J. Wardell-Ghirarduzzi, the chief diversity executive at University of San Francisco and a national thought leader on diversity issues, today was named the inaugural vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion at University of the Pacific.

Wardell-Ghirarduzzi, who has served as vice provost of diversity and community engagement at USF since 2011, will join Pacific on July 1, serving on the university's Cabinet as a direct report to the president. She also will receive a faculty appointment at Pacific and hold the dual titles of vice president and chief diversity officer.

Pacific President Christopher Callahan, who created the new position shortly after his July 1 arrival as a central part of his focus on diversity, equity and inclusion at California's first university, called Wardell-Ghirarduzzi the ideal leader for the new position.

"Dr. Wardell-Ghirarduzzi is a leading national voice in higher education on diversity, equity and inclusion issues, a leader who is highly strategic, collaborative, empathetic and student centric," Callahan said. "She brings with her an impressive record of achievements at University of San Francisco. Our Pacific students, faculty, staff, leaders and communities around all three campuses will benefit tremendously from her many skills and talents."

The university's student body is remarkably diverse, with students of color making up the majority of its 6,200 students. Pacific was California's first university to admit women and has diversity and inclusion as one of its six core values.

Wardell-Ghirarduzzi will be working closely with students, faculty, staff and university leaders on Pacific's campuses in Stockton, Sacramento and San Francisco and with diversity directors recently appointed at all 10 of the university's schools and colleges.

"We live in a complex, interconnected world where diversity, equity and inclusion, shaped by globalization and technological advance, form the fabric of modern society," Wardell-Ghirarduzzi. "Yet the values of diversity, equity and inclusion are most powerful when we

understand how our past histories inform our present community needs. This requires empathy and a commitment to ongoing learning about ourselves as well as learning about others.”

“I’m honored to lead these essential responsibilities as the inaugural vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion to prepare our students for cultural humility and to empower our workforce and communities for equity and liberation as Pacific becomes the leading student-focused university in the nation.”

At USF, Wardell-Ghirarduzzi led initiatives that resulted in one of the most ethnically diverse student bodies in the nation and one of the best for success of students from underserved communities. She also created and led more than a dozen new DEI initiatives and designed new diversity courses.

Wardell-Ghirarduzzi also is an affiliate faculty member at the Race and Equity Center at USC and is president of the northern California chapter of the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education.

Wardell-Ghirarduzzi also has been a community leader at USF and across the San Francisco Bay Area.

She has been president of the San Francisco Public Library Commission since 2014, overseeing a \$160 million, 28-library system. Under her leadership, the library was named National Public Library of the Year in 2018, launched the nation’s first library-based social worker team, tackled racial and health disparities and created new partnerships with the National Parks Service and the Golden State Warriors.

San Francisco Mayor London Breed named her a 2018 Human Rights Defender for Gender Equality and in 2017 she was named one of the Bay Area’s Most Influential Women by the San Francisco Business Times. She also has been honored by the San Francisco Human Rights Commission and the African American Historical Society.

The Pacific appointment is a return home for Wardell-Ghirarduzzi, who attended Pacific through the Community Involvement Program, a comprehensive scholarship and retention program designed for underserved first-generation college students from Stockton. While studying at Pacific, she also served as a program coordinator for the university's Upward Bound program designed to create college pathways for high school students from underserved communities.

"My parents arrived in Stockton in 1954 as migrants leaving behind the segregation of the South to give their children hope and a better future," Wardell-Ghirarduzzi said. "My family believed and invested in me and Pacific believed and invested in me."

"Today, Pacific is uniquely equipped and ready to make a bold and courageous contribution towards a more inclusive and equitable society through our rigorous academic programs and deep community engagement initiatives in Stockton, Sacramento and San Francisco. I am so excited to return home and make a difference."

The 1989 Pacific graduate also holds a master's degree in intercultural counseling and social justice education from San Diego State University and an EdD in organizational leadership from Pepperdine University.

Before her current position at University of San Francisco, Wardell-Ghirarduzzi served for three years as the university's dean of students. She came to USF from the Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles, where she served as dean of student affairs for eight years. She started her career at California State University at San Marcos, rising to assistant dean of students.

Wardell-Ghirarduzzi is the latest new member of Pacific's leadership team. [Callahan joined the university last summer as president after 15 years as a dean and vice provost at Arizona State University.](#) Christopher Ferguson, an enrollment strategist from Occidental College, started in September as [Pacific's vice president for enrollment management](#). A new vice president for student life is expected to be announced next month.

MARY WARDELL-GHIRARDUZZI INTRODUCTION



[Read Mary Wardell-Ghirarduzzi's CV](#)