



Rhodes Community,

Welcome to the first week of the semester!

It is absolutely wonderful to have everyone back on campus. As we begin another exciting semester, I hope your summer was restorative and enjoyable. A great deal has happened at Rhodes over the summer, and I am pleased to share a few of these highlights with you.

New Faces

First, we have been busy admitting and welcoming the Class of 2027. This is an exceptional group of students. Out of our incoming class of 484 students, 46 percent ranked in the top 10 percent of their class, with 75% in the top 20 percent, and they have a median unweighted GPA of 3.77. They come from 37 states and 15 countries. Eighteen percent are first-generation students, and 34 percent will represent Rhodes on the athletic fields and courts. Forty percent of all incoming students, including international students, are students of color, with 34 percent of all domestic students being students of color. This is the most diverse group of students in the history of the College. We are also honored to welcome twelve new transfer students. We cannot wait to see all that these outstanding new students will accomplish during their time at Rhodes.

We also welcomed a distinguished group of 22 impressive [new faculty](#) to the Rhodes family. We are excited to see how their expertise and talent will enrich our community and inspire our students.

Office Hours for Students

I am once again inviting students to meet with me during my student office hours, either individually or in small groups of up to five people. It's a great time to share your ideas with me or voice any concerns you have. You may schedule a time [here](#).

National Rankings

Rhodes continues to shine nationally as rankings organizations and publications have once again recognized us in the following categories over the last few weeks:

- *Money* magazine: Best Colleges in America 2023 (based on quality, affordability, and student outcomes)
- *Forbes*: America's Best Small Employers
- *Fiske Guide to Colleges 2024*: One of the "best and most interesting colleges" in the United States, Canada, and United Kingdom (recognized for strong programs in economics, English, international studies, history, chemistry, biology, business, and psychology, as well as internships, fellowships, and study abroad programs)
- College Rover: #2 on list of Top 100 Most Beautiful College Campuses
- Princeton Review 2024, *The Best 389 Colleges*: (recognized for campus beauty, Greek life, students studying the most, and best value)

Awards and Grants

Rhodes received an \$800,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation to establish a new Institute for Race and Social Transformation. The institute will serve as an intellectual hub for research and curricular development focusing on racial equity, discrimination, and justice in Memphis and the Mid-South region. Read more about the three-year grant [here](#).

[Dr. Shana Stoddard](#), associate professor of chemistry, has received the 2024 Ruth Kirschstein Diversity in Science Award from the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB), her second recognition this year from a national organization.

At last week's Convocation, we honored the incoming first-year class and recognized [Dr. Stephen Haynes](#), professor of religious studies, as this year's recipient of the Jameson M. Jones Award for Outstanding Faculty Service. I also want to

commend RSG president Claire Kiernan and Dr. David McCarthy, recipient of the Clarence Day Award for Teaching, for their inspiring addresses to our new students.

Entrepreneurial Excellence

Rhodes was named one of the nation's most innovative national liberal arts colleges by *U.S. News & World Report* prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and students were immersed in educational and mentoring opportunities related to entrepreneurship. We are excited to relaunch those initiatives, including the Rhodes College Student Entrepreneurship Club and the annual Rhodes College Business Plan Competition. To support these activities and ensure both educational and entrepreneurial excellence, Eric Mathews, a member of the Rhodes Class of 2002 and chief executive officer of Memphis-based start-up incubator [Start Co.](#), has been selected as entrepreneur-in-residence. You can read more [here](#).

New Dining Options

We are pleased to offer new dining options. The meal swipe policy at the Lynx Lair has been changed to offer more flexibility. Our new freestyle dining approach allows diners to swipe once and dine freestyle from any, or all, of the Lair's dining concepts. We hope this new freestyle dining approach will offer flexibility to those who like to mix and match options. We also have two new concepts at the Rat. Our Simply Oasis station offers meals crafted with food allergic guests in mind, and there is a new Rice Bar, an extension of the popular Wok Way station. We have listened to your feedback and are pleased to bring these new options to you.

Upcoming Events

We are excited about celebrating the College's [175th anniversary](#) this fall, and we hope you will join us in the celebration. Information about activities and events can be found [here](#). The anniversary website will be updated with more stories and events throughout the semester. I hope you will mark your calendar to include these activities in your fall plans. Please note that Family Weekend and Homecoming are both being held a little earlier this year to coincide with our home football schedule. You can read more about the schedule for those weekends [here](#).

As we enter an exciting and busy semester, I look forward to seeing you on campus and coming together to reflect upon all this great college has meant to so many over the past 175 years. This is an exceptional and special community...it is truly a place like no other! I am honored to work alongside you every day.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Collins

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