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NEWS

For immediate release

Merribeth Bruning concludes service as dean of Huckabee School; Jeff Root named to interim leadership role

By Trennis Henderson

July 28, 2016

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. — Dr. Merribeth Bruning, dean of Ouachita Baptist University's Michael D. Huckabee School of Education since 2006, has resigned effective Aug. 1 to accept a similar position as dean of education at Anderson University in Indiana.

Dr. Jeff Root, dean of Ouachita's School of Humanities, has been named interim dean of the Huckabee School of Education for the 2016-17 academic year in addition to his other responsibilities, according to Dr. Stan Poole, vice president for academic affairs.

"I'm very grateful for the 10 years I have served at Ouachita," said Dr. Bruning. "I've seen a lot of positive change and believe the School of Education is in good hands with the leadership of Interim Dean Jeff Root and the excellent colleagues I have worked with over the years" in the departments of education and kinesiology & leisure studies.

"I have enjoyed the wonderful students at Ouachita who are and will be positive difference makers," she noted, adding that she also is "looking forward to working with colleagues at Anderson University, a faith-based school affiliated with the Church of God in Anderson."

Dr. Bruning holds her Bachelor of Science, Master of Arts in Education and Doctor of Education degrees in elementary education from Ball State University in Muncie, Ind. During her years at Ouachita, new programs established under her leadership include a minor in education and public policy and a travel study program in the United Kingdom for teacher education students as well as the dedication of the Paul and Mary Root Education Seminar Room in McClellan Hall.

"Dr. Bruning has served as dean for the past decade, a period when the school has experienced growth in majors, a successful accreditation visit, updated curricula and improved facilities," said Dr. Poole. "We're grateful for her leadership and congratulate her on this new opportunity."





According to Dr. Jeff Root, "It has been a pleasure to work with Dr. Bruning as a fellow dean for the past decade. She is a true professional, always working to stay current with the ever-changing world of education. I have been impressed with how she represented her programs in education but also had a heart for the university as a whole. Dr. Bruning believes in the mission of Christian higher education and her students have been well prepared to make a difference in their careers."

Noting that "it is an honor to serve an interim dean of the Huckabee School of Education," Dr. Root added, "The faculty is outstanding and covers a wide range of majors, from teacher education to kinesiology & leisure studies emphases in pre-professional studies, recreation, fitness, and recreation and sports ministry. In each area, we have experts in their fields who thoroughly enjoy working with college students. These are strong programs, and I look forward to working with the faculty and students in each one."

Dr. Root has served as dean of the School of Humanities since 2002. He previously served as Ouachita's director of public relations. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Ouachita as well as a Master of Arts in history from the University of Arkansas and a Doctor of Education degree in mass communications and higher education from Oklahoma State University. He has served as chair of the Arkansas Humanities Council and currently is president of the Arkadelphia Board of Education.

"Dr. Root's love of students, his commitment to Ouachita and his contributions to quality education at every level are apparent to all who know him," said Dr. Poole. "With strong programs and personnel, and with Dr. Root's seasoned leadership, we're confident that this will be a productive and successful year for the Huckabee School of Education."