



CONTEMPLATIVE SCIENCES CENTER
UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA



Dear Friends,

We're writing to let you know that the Contemplative Sciences Center (CSC) at the University of Virginia is entering a new chapter. David Germano stepped down as executive director of the CSC and is returning full attention to his scholarship as professor in the department of Religious Studies and director of the Tibet Center at UVA.

It was largely David's vision, together with a substantial gift from Paul and Sonia Jones, and support from University leadership, that established the CSC in 2012. With the CSC Advisory Board's generous support and thoughtful guidance, along with dedication from a talented staff, the CSC has advanced a conception of individual and collective flourishing that centers contemplation. Particularly, the CSC has helped UVA and broader communities understand the benefits of contemplative practices in enhancing the well-being of students, staff, and faculty by guiding them to integrate these practices into their daily lives. Beyond UVA, the CSC has forged national and international partnerships developing resources on student flourishing for institutions of higher education and worked with elementary schools nationwide to incorporate wellness practices into their curricula, while studying the impact of these interventions in the groundbreaking *Flourish* curriculum. This impressive array of research initiatives and student programs is a testament to David's efforts, and we are deeply grateful for his work.

To open this new chapter, we warmly welcome Martin Davidson as interim executive director of the Contemplative Sciences Center. Martin is the Johnson and Higgins Professor of Business Administration at UVA's Darden School of Business and the school's senior associate dean and global chief diversity officer. Martin has done much to promote flourishing and contemplative work at Darden as a professor in the Leadership and Organizational Behavior Area, and as a teacher in the Executive Education and Lifelong Learning program. His thought leadership has changed how his students—ranging from undergraduates and MBAs to senior executives—approach diversity in their organizations. His book, *The End of Diversity as We Know It: Why Diversity Efforts Fail and How Leveraging Difference Can Succeed*, introduces a research-driven roadmap to help leaders more effectively create and capitalize on diversity in organizations.

Martin, a long-time collaborator with CSC, has served on its Executive Circle since 2014. His introduction to contemplative practice occurred 30 years ago in New Mexico, when his wife, Rachel Bagby, invited him to join her at a 10-day silent retreat for social activists of color. He remembers that sitting silently felt like he had returned to his natural state. This began his three-decade embrace of contemplative practice, which infuses his teaching and research on difference and diversity as well as his daily practice with Rachel.

As part of this role, Martin will lead preparations for the launch of the **Contemplative Commons** — a 57,000-square-foot building that will be completed in late 2023. The building, located at the heart of UVA Grounds by the Dell Pond, is designed to bring students and faculty from different schools and disciplines together, foster collaboration, and experiment with new ways of teaching and learning.

Martin is well-prepared to take on this role for the center, the mission of which is to advance the study and application of human flourishing at all levels of education—K-12, undergraduate, graduate, professional, and lifelong. This mission has taken on a new urgency in the face of a mental health crisis among college students and heightened anxiety fueled by the climate crisis, political discord and polarization, and the potential threats associated with developments in artificial intelligence.

We look forward to this next chapter for the Contemplative Sciences Center as we continue to work to advance the study and application of flourishing at all levels of education.

Please direct any questions, comments, or reflections to Martin at mdav@virginia.edu or to Kayti Sewell at kayti@virginia.edu.

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