



March 30, 2009

Dear Friends in Christ,

It is with great pleasure that I announce the appointment of The Rev. Dr. Katherine Hancock Ragsdale '97, as Episcopal Divinity School's sixth president and dean. An EDS graduate whose life work and ministry exemplify EDS' mission, Katherine's gifts, skills, and experience closely match the criteria established by the Search Committee, both in terms of the current challenges and opportunities at EDS and the personal attributes we are looking for in a new leader.

The Search Committee and the Trustees see in Katherine the right combination of a person of immense faith, demonstrated organizational and team leadership ability, a passion for academic excellence and quality theological education, formidable development skills, and the ability to be a strong, articulate, and inspiring voice for the mission of EDS, both within the Episcopal Church and beyond. From among the many gifted candidates interviewed, Katherine Ragsdale overwhelmingly stood out as the one best equipped and called to lead EDS into this next exciting and promising chapter of our life and mission. The Trustees commend the Search Committee for their work in bringing this candidate forward.

Katherine currently serves as president and executive director of [Political Research Associates](#) and vicar of [St. David's Episcopal Church](#), in Pepperell, Massachusetts. Political Research Associates is a progressive think tank devoted to supporting movements that are building a more just and inclusive democratic society. She facilitated PRA's successful transition from a founder led organization to one that has grown and thrived following the founder's retirement in 2004. During her tenure, PRA has both broadened its donor base and worked with foundations to launch several new programs.

With her service as part time vicar of a small parish, Katherine exemplifies the bi-vocational model of leadership that, for many, is the future of the church. Today, approximately 19% of Episcopal parishes are served by part time clergy and there is every indication this number will grow. Her experience will guide us as we continue to evaluate and shape our curriculum and our approach to formation and worship so that we can continue to train and form transformational leaders for the growth of progressive parishes across the country.

Please join me in welcoming Katherine to EDS. She begins work July 1 and hopes to meet many of you at our seminary dinner on July 11 in Anaheim.

Faithfully,

Brett Donham, Chair
Board of Trustees