Dear Members of the AUP Community,

The Board of Trustees of The American University of Paris is most pleased to announce that, after a rigorous international search, it has appointed the University’s 13th President. As of September 1, 2022, **Professor Sonya Stephens** will assume the presidency from President Celeste M. Schenck as President Schenck retires from AUP after 13 years of transformative leadership.

For the last five years, Stephens has held the presidency of Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts, from 2016 as acting President and from 2018 on a permanent basis. Before that she was Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty (2013–16). She is an exceptional academic leader and an internationally recognized scholar of 19th-century French literature, who has long devoted herself to advancing liberal arts higher education. Her work constructing communities across cultures and identities is evident in both her academic trajectory and numerous leadership roles.

One of her many achievements at Mount Holyoke is the development and implementation of a bold strategic plan, which ensured the college’s long-term financial stability through comprehensive fundraising strategies and a 60% increase in the college’s endowment. She also oversaw a comprehensive self-study reaccreditation process and the construction of an ambitious new $50 million community center. Throughout her tenure, she was committed to issues of diversity, equity and inclusion, launching the annual BOOM! (Building on Our Momentum) conference and hiring the college’s first Vice President for Equity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer.

Professor Stephens is a fluent French speaker and has traveled extensively in France. An expert in 19th-century French literature and its relation to visual culture, she is the author of *Baudelaire’s Prose Poems: The Practice and Politics of Irony* and has also edited several books, including *A History of Women’s Writing in France* and *Translation and the Arts in Modern France*.

She holds a doctorate in French from the University of Cambridge and a master’s degree in French studies from the Université de Montréal, where she was a Commonwealth Scholar. She earned her bachelor’s degree in modern and medieval languages from the University of Cambridge. She began her career as a faculty member at Royal Holloway, University of London, where she chaired the Department of French and led the creation of the School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures. She also served as chair of the Department of French and Italian and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education at Indiana University Bloomington.

We look forward to honoring President Schenck during these next six months for her extraordinary contribution to AUP over the last 13 years, culminating in AUP’s 60th Anniversary Gala on May 21.

As we all welcome Professor Stephens to AUP, the Board of Trustees eagerly anticipates an exciting and progressive future working with our 13th President to lead AUP further in its mission and to see AUP recognized as Europe’s premier university in American liberal arts education.

Most sincerely,
Doris Daughney
Chair of the Board of Trustees
The American University of Paris