

Kim S. Phipps, Ph.D.

President of Messiah University

Overview

Kim S. Phipps, Ph.D., was named the **eighth president of Messiah College, now Messiah University**, in December 2004. She is the first woman president in Messiah's history. Prior to her appointment as president, Dr. Phipps served as interim president, provost and academic dean. She holds a Ph.D. in communication studies from Kent State University.

An advocate for academic excellence and holistic student learning, **President Phipps is an accessible leader who builds shared vision and authentic relationships with colleagues and students**, and fosters a strong, nurturing academic community as a result. As president, she demonstrates Messiah University's commitment to civic engagement by serving on numerous regional and national boards, including the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities and the Council of Independent Colleges.

During her tenure at Messiah, President Phipps has led many significant institutional initiatives including: the implementation of a School of Graduate and Professional Studies, the successful completion of five major fundraising campaigns totaling more than \$185 million, and the increase of the University's visibility throughout the region and the nation. She recently led the University through a revision of the General Education curriculum, a process that was last undertaken in the 1990s.

Given the comprehensive nature of Messiah's undergraduate curriculum and the expansion of our graduate school to include two doctoral level programs, Messiah's board of trustees, in October 2018, unanimously approved the move to university status as of July 1, 2020.

In 2018, the Messiah University Board of Trustees unanimously voted to name the campus's new admissions and welcome center (AWC) the "Kim S. Phipps Admissions and Welcome Center" in honor of President Phipps's remarkable leadership and hospitality during her tenure as Messiah's president. The building was completed in 2020, and now houses admissions, financial aid and financial services, the registrar's office and the office of alumni and parent relations.

President Phipps is a native of Long Island, New York. She and her husband, D. Kelly Phipps, J.D., have an adult daughter, Brooke, who is currently pursuing a doctoral degree at the University of Maryland.

Educational and Professional Background

President Phipps has researched and authored numerous publications related to the structure, rhetoric, and climate of higher education; the development of educational community; faculty development and identity; gender and diversity communication issues; and the complexities and nuances of religion and American political campaign rhetoric. President Phipps has spoken

nationally at numerous conferences on the topic of developing hospitable campus climates.

Before coming to Messiah, she served in a variety of leadership roles at Malone University (formerly Malone College) in Canton, Ohio, including professor and chair of the department of communication arts, acting dean of the college and associate dean for faculty development.

Civic engagement

President Phipps demonstrates Messiah's commitment to civic engagement through her past and present service on national and regional boards. This includes:

- Partners for Campus-Community Engagement (formerly Campus Compact New York and Pennsylvania)
- Susquehanna Art Museum Board of Directors
- Council for Christian Colleges and Universities
- Council of Independent Colleges
- Highmark Central Region Advisory Board
- Christian College Consortium

Honors and recognitions

In recognition of her contributions to Christian higher education and local community involvement, President Phipps has been awarded several honors including:

- Inducted into the Central Penn Business Journal's **Circle of Excellence**, a recognition for women who are "the icons of their industry and hold a sustained leadership role in their organization and the community." (2019)
- Recognized with the **Courageous Leadership Award** by [Credo](#) for the transformative nature of her presidency at Messiah University and her advocacy of private, independent higher education (2017)
- Distinguished by Christianity Today as one of **50 key leaders shaping the evangelical church** and North American society (2012)
- Received the **Athena Award** from the Harrisburg Regional Chamber/CREDC for her demonstration of excellent in her profession and commitment to mentoring women leaders (2012)
- Honored by the **Salvation Army** of the Harrisburg Capital Region for exemplary service and social responsibility (2012)

Significant Messiah University initiatives accomplished during President Phipps' service include:

Academic offerings

- The implementation of [graduate education](#) into Messiah's academic offerings. Over 30 graduate programs and certificates are now available in [counseling](#), [conducting](#), [business](#)

[and strategic leadership](#), [education](#), [higher education](#), [nursing](#) and [occupational](#) and [physical therapy](#).

- The implementation of online curriculum at both the undergraduate and graduate level.
- The addition of several new majors designed to meet the career goals of students and demands of employers, bringing Messiah's total academic programs to over 80.
- The integration of Messiah University's unique heritage, mission and identity into student experiences at both the curricular and co-curricular level. This includes first-year core courses, student leadership training, and the University's common reading program.
- 70.5% 4-year graduation rate vs. the national average of 56.8%
- Messiah University being named a National College of Distinction in 2023
- Messiah's nursing program named Best Nursing Program in Pennsylvania in 2023
- The launch of a new Doctor of Science in Physical Therapy in partnership with NAIOMT and a Master of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics/Dietetic Internship.

Resource stewardship

- Led the successful completion of significant fundraising campaigns for the University, including:
- The [Campaign for Messiah University](#) (2022), a \$75 million campaign which exceeded its goal to raise a historic \$83.4 million. The campaign encompassed several broad areas that support the University's efforts to fulfill its vision including: The Messiah Fund and scholarship aid; scholarship and program endowments; new facilities; and estate planning gifts. Among the new facilities funded by the campaign are a Bloomberg terminal-equipped finance lab; a new fitness center; a gymnasium and renovated sports center; a new admissions and welcome center named in honor of President Phipps; an enhanced campus entrance; and a renovated student health center.
- The [Campaign for Wellness](#) (2016), funding the cornerstone project of a new fitness center addition and the renovations to the University's current sports center (\$6.5 million).
- The [Centennial Campaign](#) (2010), a \$40 million fundraising endeavor that exceeded its fundraising goal by raising \$46.2 million for student scholarships and the construction of the [Calvin and Janet High Center for Worship and Performing Arts Center](#), which opened in January 2013.
- To Serve & To Lead (2004), the largest comprehensive fundraising campaign in Messiah's history, which raised \$50.5 million for student enrichment through new facilities (Boyer Hall, Larsen Student Union), academic programming, and financial aid.

Increased visibility

- Messiah hosts prominent national speakers, recently including Ken Burns, Bob Woodward, Doris Kearns Goodwin, David Brooks, Michele Norris, Henry Louis Gates, Leymah Gbowee, Juan Williams, Philip Yancey, Jon Meacham, Thomas Friedman, Mae Jemison, Jane Pauley and Kate Bowler.
- President Phipps maintains Facebook and Instagram accounts (@messiahprez) and has championed the University's creative and frequent use of social media for the purpose of building and maintaining relationships.

- The launch of a new marketing communications campaign, inviting students and others to "[see anew](#)" based on the research of the University's two-year strategic branding initiative.
- Celebrated Messiah's [Centennial](#) in 2009-2010 with a series of special events to remember the important people and initiatives of University's first century while looking ahead to the promise and possibility of Messiah's next 100 years. The Centennial year was themed: "Shared faith. Bold vision. Enduring promise."
- Hosted [The Compassion Forum](#) in April 2008, a nationally televised (CNN), unprecedented conversation with presidential candidates, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, on the integration of faith and public policy.

Strategic planning

- Recently facilitated the development of the University's new strategic plan for 2021-2024, titled "University Rising." This plan identifies four distinct themes that will guide Messiah University towards expanding its influence as an institution of educational excellence committed to Christ-centered learning for life.
- The launch of a University-wide Diversity Strategic Planning Initiative, rooted in a comprehensive, candid survey of Messiah's campus climate related to a wide range of diversity aspects in the campus community.
- Overseeing the progress on the campus Concept Plan, which guides the University's facilities and land use planning and development through the year 2050.