On Campus

Ed Reform Expert Susan Fuhrman Named President of Teachers College

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“I learned everything I needed to know at Teachers College,” says Susan Fuhrman ’77TC. Now, she’s bringing that knowledge back as the College’s tenth president. She is the first woman to hold the position.

Fuhrman made her mark as an education policy expert in the 1980s, when she was among the first proponents of establishing tough statewide standards for the nation’s schools. An authority on education reform, school accountability, and the government’s role in shaping education, she has been dean of the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education for the past 11 years.

Fuhrman joins Teachers College on August 1, succeeding Arthur E. Levine, who announced in December that he would step down as president after 12 years to direct the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation in Princeton, N. J. Fuhrman earned her PhD at Teachers College, where she was mentored by future U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala, then a TC professor.

At Penn, Fuhrman is credited with having elevated the national stature of the education school in part by developing its urban and international education programs. She also boosted externally funded research, expanded the faculty, and launched partnerships with several underserved public schools in West Philadelphia. Fuhrman is known for setting rigorous standards for scholarly research.

“Teachers College and all education schools need to focus course work and research on questions in the field,” she says. “In particular, we must focus on instruction and other aspects of what goes on in classrooms to determine what truly works best with students.”

A former public school social studies teacher, Fuhrman is the founding leader of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE), a venture among five

universities that studies how education policy plays out in classrooms. Fuhrman hopes to involve TC faculty and students in the consortium’s work.

“I’d like to see TC become a much bigger presence,” she says. “I’d like us to engage in much more holistic, concerted, comprehensive efforts to help city schools and, to the extent that New York City is willing, be a partner. We have an enormous amount to offer and an enormous amount to learn.”



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