

Meredith Woo

Meredith Woo — noted scholar, liberal arts advocate, experienced administrator and global leader for women's education — was named the 13th president of Sweet Briar College on Feb. 6, 2017, following a unanimous vote of the College's board of directors. She will succeed Phillip C. Stone, who will retire in May 2017.

Woo served as the Buckner W. Clay Dean of the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences at the University of Virginia (2008-14). As dean, she oversaw 11,000 undergraduate students, 1,600 graduate students and 800 full-time faculty, and was a noted innovator and reformer of its graduate programs, international partnerships and fundraising operations. Annual philanthropic support for the College nearly tripled under her leadership.

Most recently, Woo has been stationed in London directing the global higher education program for the Open Society Foundations. This program is responsible for creating and supporting more than 50 liberal arts colleges in the former Soviet bloc. During her tenure, she is credited with helping to provide university-level education for refugee populations in the Middle East, South Asia and Africa.

Prior to UVa, Woo was the associate dean for social sciences at the University of Michigan and a professor of political science. She was a visiting scholar at the Ministry of Finance in Tokyo. She also taught at Northwestern University in Illinois and Columbia University in New York.

Woo holds a Ph.D. in political science (with distinction) as well as an M.A. in international affairs, both from Columbia University, and a B.A. in history (magna cum laude) from Bowdoin College in Maine. Her specialty is international and comparative politics with a focus on East Asia. A native of Seoul, Korea, she speaks Korean and Japanese and is proficient in Chinese, Spanish and Portuguese. She has authored or edited six books and numerous scholarly articles, and she is the executive producer of an award-winning film, which premiered at the Smithsonian Institution in 2006.

Woo is married to historian Bruce Cumings, the Gustavus F. and Ann M. Swift Distinguished Service Professor of History at the University of Chicago. Their son, Ben Cumings, 23, is a recent graduate of Bowdoin College and an aspiring actor.