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CONTACT:

Keith Pierce, APR
Queens University of Charlotte
piercek@queens.edu
704-337-2452

Queens University of Charlotte Appoints First Woman and First Minority to Serve as Chief Information Officer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (Apr. 5, 2022) – In a historic first for Queens University of Charlotte, Kenitra Horsley has been promoted to chief information officer, (CIO) the first woman and the first minority to serve in the role.

Horsley, who came to Queens in 2019 as deputy CIO and director of enterprise systems, has served in the CIO position on an interim basis since Nov. 2021.

"Kenitra has done an outstanding job as interim chief information officer," said Mary Alice Boyd as chief financial officer and vice president of administration. "Her keen insight and exceptional leadership have proven to be extremely valuable to this crucial role."



Kenitra Horsley

As for being the first woman and first African American to hold the position at Queens, Horsley said, "I'm grateful for those that have come before me and those that helped me along the way. I'm also proud of the work that I have done and the role model that I have been and will be to other women. I'm encouraged that more women are being given opportunities to move into leadership positions."

Horsley's interest in information technology began in a high school computer programming class.

"I found the work challenging yet fun," she said. "So, when it came time to choose a major I decided to give computer science a try."

Before long, the Baltimore native discovered she had a knack for technology and earned two prestigious scholarships including the Benjamin Banneker Scholarship from the University of Maryland, College Park and a working scholarship from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. Horsley earned tuition support while studying computer science and working as an analyst at the CIA over breaks.

"During each break, I learned something new and was able to apply what I was learning to solve real-world problems," she explained. "That was the official start of my career in IT and the rest is history."

At Queens, Horsley will provide leadership and vision for the use of information technology tools on campus. She will work collaboratively to set and execute the strategic direction of the university's information technology function.

"My priorities include security – ensuring we have controls and sound processes that enable us to protect Queens' data in the everchanging cyberspace; digital transformation – leveraging technology to reduce friction in the delivery of student services and campus operations; and disaster recovery, continuity of operations and operational excellence – keeping a focus on continuous improvement in the delivery of IT services. I'd like to improve the level of support we provide to faculty both in the classroom and in their overall use of technology to engage students in the learning process."

Her advice for other African American women who aspire to enter the IT field?

"Know yourself," she said. "Know what you are capable of and always set goals so when obstacles arise you can remind yourself of where you're headed; establish a support network of mentors, peers, and role models; commit to being a lifelong learner, learning not just technical skills but soft skills such as communication, teamwork and problem-solving."

Prior to coming to Queens, Horsley served as director of IT and risk management at VT LeeBoy, Inc. an international manufacturer of road construction and maintenance equipment, headquartered in Lincolnton, NC. She also served as director of applications development at Davidson College from 2005 to 2008. She holds an MBA from The Johns Hopkins University Carey Business School and an undergraduate degree in computer science from the University of Maryland.

"What really inspires me about queens is the people. Our people have a can-do attitude, we support one another and are committed to making a positive impact on the next generation," Horsley said. "I believe Queens is evolving and will be quite a different university in just a few years. I also believe that technology will be the enabler and a vital part of that evolution which has already begun."

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About Queens

Queens University is a private, coeducational university located in Charlotte, N.C. The university serves nearly 2,500 students with 43 major and 63 minor undergraduate degree options and 12 graduate degrees. Students represent 44 states and 70 foreign countries. As part of the university's vision to promote educational experiences that nurture intellectual curiosity and promote global understanding, nearly two-thirds of traditional undergraduates participate in study abroad experiences and 100 percent take part in internships. The U.S. News & World Report ranked Queens 15th among regional universities in the south in its 2022 edition of Best Colleges.