



Lewis & Clark College names Barry Glassner, sociologist and best-selling author, its 24th president

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Bill Graves, The Oregonian



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Lewis & Clark College's new president, Barry Glassner, a sociologist and executive vice provost at the University of Southern California, says he loves Portland. The college has "a very impressive and very unique combination of professors who are accomplished researchers and accomplished scholars and at the same time involved and dedicated to the college's students," he says.

Barry Glassner, a nationally-known sociologist and author who helped raise the profile of the **University of Southern California**, has been named president of **Lewis & Clark College** in Portland.

Glassner, 58, USC's executive vice provost and author of the best-selling "The Culture of Fear," a book used in university classrooms across the country, will take the helm of the Oregon's second-largest private college on Oct. 28.

Those who have worked with him say he is confident, engaging and a skilled leader ready for the Lewis & Clark presidency.

"What is going to be important to him is building academic excellence and seeing the academic reputation of the college move up," said C. L. Max Nikias, the incoming president of USC who supervised Glassner as provost.

Glassner said he loves Portland, which he's visited often over the years, and is impressed by Lewis & Clark's faculty, students and academic heft. He said he's making a long-term commitment to help the college build on its strengths and position itself for a bright and more prominent future.

"My priority this year is to get to know as many people and programs as I can, on campus and off," he said. "This is an exciting time for the future of higher education."

He replaces Thomas Hochstettler, who left last August to take a position with American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. Provost Jane Atkinson has served as interim president.

A 12-member search committee led by Jay T. Waldron, a Portland attorney who serves on the Lewis & Clark College Board of Trustees, scoured the country for more than a year, drawing on more than 250 applicants before finally choosing Glassner in a unanimous vote.

"Our goal in a new president was to hire someone who not only was the right fit, but also one who would connect with the Portland area and with the Lewis & Clark alumni and faculty and students," Waldron said, "and Barry is that guy."

During his leadership at USC, Glassner showed a capacity to deeply engage with faculty and students, fund raising and the community, Waldron said.

He earned a reputation for fostering collaboration among various university schools and disciplines and between the university and its alumni and community. One of his most successful projects was leading "**Visions and Voices: The Arts and Humanities Initiative**," said Nikias, and Glassner agreed.

The initiative brings together faculty in arts and humanities from across the university in producing hundreds of events, including films, plays, dances, concerts and lectures, both on campus and off. Last year the events drew 27,000 students and members of the public.

Glassner also was instrumental in creating new interdisciplinary bachelor's, master's and minor degree programs among USC's five schools of art --

theater, music, cinema, architecture and fine arts. A student, for example, now might earn a degree that combines music and cinema or theater and architecture. Glassner said one of his favorites is a master's degree involving all five art schools for mid-career journalists who want to be art critics.

One of Glassner's obvious strengths is building bridges, which he has demonstrated in bringing people together in many other ways, said Amelia Wilcox of Portland, a clinical neuropsychologist and president of the Lewis & Clark Board of Alumni.

Earlier in his career, he got the Los Angeles Jewish community more engaged at USC as founding director of the **Casden Institute for the Study of the Jewish Role in American Life**. In books such as "The Culture of Fear" and the more recent, "The Gospel of Food," both of which debunk unwarranted fears that distract Americans, Glassner bridges the worlds of academia and popular culture.

In addition, he's written commentaries for The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and other national publications and appeared on national television programs such as "The Today Show," "Good Morning America" and "The Oprah Winfrey Show."

"He has done more than anybody to bring his field alive and illuminate understanding of the national issues of the day through a lens everybody can look through," Wilcox said.

Glassner has worked at USC since 1991, the last six years as executive vice provost. Prior to that, he worked as a sociology professor at Syracuse University and the University of Connecticut. He devoted his earlier years to more scholarly work on the sociology of deviancy, such as drug addiction, and then broadened his studies to American culture with works for the general public. His wife, Betsy Amster, is a literary agent. They have no children.

Glassner grew up in Roanoke, Va., where he became such an accomplished magician in high school that he was able to pay for part of his college by doing magic tricks. He also has interests in hiking, the arts and sports, including Blazer basketball.

"He just immerses himself in a range of really interesting topics," said **Morton Schapiro, president of Northwestern University** in Evanston, Ill., who became a close friend of Glassner during his years at USC. "He's really into film, into music, into literature. He has very eclectic tastes."

USC administrators say Glassner's work has helped raise the national profile of the 33,000-student university over the last 15 years, making it among the largest and most selective private universities in the country.

Glassner said his leadership career at USC has prepared him well to lead Lewis & Clark College. His friend, Schapiro, agrees.

"He's going to be a real gift, not only to the college community there, but also to the whole city," Schapiro said. "He's a wonderful guy. You're really going to like him."

-- **Bill Graves**

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