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Date: 2 December 2022

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Bethlehem University Community,

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Iman Nader Saca as Vice President Designate for Academic Affairs effective 1 January 2023.

As Vice President Designate, Dr. Iman Saca will work closely with Dr. Irene Hazou, our current Vice President for Academic Affairs, to ensure a smooth transition in the integral work of the academic office. Dr. Iman Saca will assume full responsibilities of the Vice President for Academic Affairs on 1 September 2023.

For over 20 years, Dr. Iman has been a leading scholar and interdisciplinary educator in Archaeology and Anthropology and an advocate for cultural protection, preservation, and promotion. Dr. Iman received her Ph.D. and M.A. in Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She completed her B.A. in Archaeology at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. A native of Bethlehem, she attended Saint Joseph Girls School and Talitha Kumi for High School.



Dr. Iman's research interest focuses on interdisciplinary education, community participation, cultural heritage preservation, and the prehistory of the Levant. Her research interests lie at the intersection of anthropology, community archaeology; oral history; lived experiences; intergenerational heritage education; community participation, and heritage protection. Dr. Iman's scholarship and research advocate for active participation of all sectors of society as a decolonial praxis - to decolonize history, land, and heritage and for indigenous people to unearth, document, and tell their own stories, locally and globally. On a community and institutional level, she builds bridges to work together to find concrete, creative ways to protect their heritage, both tangible and intangible, from loss, destruction, and appropriation.

Until summer 2022, Dr. Iman served as the Chairperson of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice at Saint Xavier University (SXU) in Chicago for seven years and is a full professor of Anthropology. She is the founding Director of Middle East Studies at SXU. For her excellence in leadership, pedagogical praxis, and teaching, Dr. Iman was awarded in 2016 for Excellence in Teaching at SXU. Before teaching at SXU, Dr. Iman taught as a Visiting Professor at Yale University and the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute.

She has published several academic articles and written a book on the art of Palestinian embroidery, *Embroidering Identities: A Century of Palestinian Clothing*. Her most recent publication, *Community Archaeology: Protection, Preservation, and Promotion of Archaeological Heritage Sites in Palestine* in a New Critical Approach to the History of Palestine Routledge publication, advances the emerging

field of Community Archeology. She has a new joint article to be released this month in *Community Heritage in the Arab Region: Values and Practices* Springer publication.

A distinguished archaeologist as one of only a few Arab Palestinian women archaeologists worldwide,

Dr. Iman was involved in numerous archaeological research and excavation projects. Dr. Iman was part of the leadership team engaged in the Al-Zubarah archaeological project in Qatar. She was pivotal in listing the Archaeological site on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Her work as Director of community archaeology brought in the local community as active participants in the process, contributing to the success of the listing. Dr. Iman participated in the nomination process of the Village of Battir to the UNESCO World Heritage List in Palestine. Currently she is an international consultant and expert on the Jericho World Heritage nomination file. Dr. Iman was the Director of the Community Archaeology Initiative at the site of Hisham's Palace in Jericho, Palestine; she also excavated and led community educational engagement initiatives at the site of Tell Zeidan in Raqqa, Syria. Dr. Iman was one of the founding core members of the Department of Antiquities of Palestine in the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquity.

In addition to her scholarly and higher educational leadership pursuits, Dr. Iman co-founded the *Palestinian Heritage Center* (PHC) in Bethlehem. Through the PHC she has curated various cultural exhibitions, including an exhibition on Palestinian traditional dress and headdresses at the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute. She has presented and given talks at national and international academic and public conferences on the archaeology of the Near East, heritage education, community archaeology, and community involvement in heritage preservation.

Dr. Iman is currently on the steering committee of the *Palestine Archaeology and History Project*, an exceptional Palestinian scholarly project, writing the history of Palestine from prehistoric times until the present day. She also sits on the board of the Arab American Business and Professional Association and is involved in multiple Arab American initiatives in Chicago.

Dr. Iman is deeply committed to investing in and building Palestinian institutions at home and abroad, particularly Palestinian institutions of higher education and heritage preservation. Throughout her esteemed career as a scholar and educator, she has simultaneously woven together the thread and fabric for community building, empowerment, and equitable education for all.

Please join me in congratulating Dr. Iman Saca on her appointment and in warmly welcoming her into the Bethlehem University learning community.

Sincerely,



Br. Peter Bray, FSC, EdD
Vice Chancellor