



CONTACT INFORMATION:

Emily Berge-Thielmann

Writer & Digital Content Producer

413-644-4113

eberge@simons-rock.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — August 28, 2023

**The Bard Queer Leadership Project to Host First Queer Leaders Vision Forum
with Jim Fielding and Schuyler Bailar**

GREAT BARRINGTON, MA—The Bard Queer Leadership Project (BQLP), which welcomed its first cohort of students this semester at Simon's Rock, will host its inaugural Queer Leaders Vision Forum with Jim Fielding, author of *All Pride No Ego*, and Schuyler Bailar, inspirational speaker and first openly transgender NCAA Division swimmer. Provost John Weinstein (he/him) and Director of the Bard Queer Leadership Project, Carla Stephens (she/her), will be in conversation with Fielding and Bailar. This forum will mark the start of the Bard Queer Leadership's school year and the first of many events to come for the BQLP.

Jim Fielding (he/him) is a respected retail and media industry veteran whose expertise combines storytelling, product innovation, merchandising, and consumer experiences. Jim currently serves as a partner at Archer Gray, an independent media company, and president of its Co-Lab Division. Having led consumer products groups at the world's largest media companies, including Disney, Dreamworks, and Twentieth Century Fox, Jim has built diverse cultures and visionary teams that excelled in competitive global markets. He served as president of Disney Stores Worldwide for four years, transforming its global consumer experience. He also served as CEO of Claire's Stores, Inc., a leading jewelry and accessories retailer. Jim's early experience spanned leading global retail companies, from The Gap to Lands' End. He mastered all aspects of vertical specialty retail, including supply chain, product design, store operations, and visual merchandising.

An active community leader and philanthropist, Jim serves on the board of directors for the Indiana University Foundation and was a founding member of the Dean's Council for the Hamilton Lugar Global and International School. Jim is a founder of the Queer Philanthropy Circle, the nation's premier fundraising and advocacy group for the queer community. He also participates in the Women's Philanthropic Leadership Circle and the Black Philanthropy Circle. Jim has served as a board member for GLSEN, Make-A-Wish International, and American

Red Cross, as well as an executive-in-residence for IU Ventures and Indiana University's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. He has endowed several scholarships at IU to support overseas study, international internships, and advocacy leadership training.

Schuyler Bailar (he/him) is an educator, author, and activist who made history as the first transgender athlete to compete in any sport on an NCAA Division 1 men's team. Originally recruited to swim for the Harvard women's team, Schuyler made the difficult choice to transition while potentially giving up the prospect of being an NCAA Champion. His story has appeared everywhere from *60 Minutes* to *The Washington Post*. Schuyler's tireless advocacy has earned him numerous honors, including LGBTQ Nation's Instagram Advocate for 2020. In 2021, Schuyler released his first middle-grade novel, *Obie Is Man Enough*. And in 2022, Schuyler created LaneChanger.com, a learning series that makes gender literacy education accessible to every team, school, and company.

The event will be held on Thursday, September 7, at 7 p.m. in the McConnell Theater at the Daniel Arts Center on campus. The event is free and open to the public. It can also be accessed via livestream following this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83216412050>

About Simon's Rock

[Bard College at Simon's Rock](#) is the only college in the country specifically designed for highly motivated students ready to enter college after the 10th or 11th grade. Simon's Rock offers a challenging program in the liberal arts and sciences, taught exclusively in small seminars by supportive, highly trained faculty, who are leading scholars in their fields. The College grants degrees in more than 35 majors. The Princeton Review's *Best 380 Colleges* rates academics at Simon's Rock higher than Harvard and Princeton.

[Bard Academy at Simon's Rock](#) is the nation's first two-year boarding and day program designed to prepare 9th and 10th graders to start college early. A student entering Bard Academy as a high school freshman will earn an Associate of Arts degree from Bard College at Simon's Rock after only four years and a Bachelor of Arts degree after only six years. The Academy curriculum is designed and taught by students' future college professors who are leading scholars in their fields.

[The Bard Queer Leadership Project](#) (BQLP) is a revolutionary, new Bachelor of Arts degree program designed for, and by, LGBTQIA+ college students to elevate LGBTQIA+ students and college graduates into leadership roles in school and across the workforce while serving as a space for actualizing educational practices designed for students to thrive. The centerpiece of BQLP is a four year dual major B.A. degree combining Queer Leadership with a second academic field.

For more information, visit simons-rock.edu and bardacademy.simons-rock.edu.

###

