

# THE CHARLOTTE W. NEWCOMBE FOUNDATION

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[www.newcombefoundation.org](http://www.newcombefoundation.org)

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September 29, 2016

## The Charlotte W. Newcombe Foundation announces next Executive Director

**Princeton, NJ** – The Trustees of The Charlotte W. Newcombe Foundation are pleased to announce that Dr. Gianna Durso-Finley has been selected from among 130 applicants to serve as the Foundation’s next Executive Director, effective December 14. She will succeed Dr. Thomas N. Wilfrid, who, along with Program Officer Diane C. Wilfrid, will be retiring after nine years at the Foundation.

The Charlotte W. Newcombe Foundation is an independent foundation that began in 1979 as the result of a bequest from the estate of Mrs. Newcombe, a Philadelphia philanthropist. The Foundation continues Mrs. Newcombe’s support of students as they pursue degrees in higher education by maintaining scholarship and fellowship programs that are in keeping with her lifelong interests. Currently, the Foundation funds a major national fellowship program in the humanities and social sciences at the doctoral dissertation level, and two major scholarship programs for undergraduates. Individuals do not apply to the Foundation directly, but by contacting a participating college or, for the doctoral fellowships, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation.



Since 1981, the Newcombe Foundation has awarded more than \$65 million toward 39,500 scholarships and fellowships, and its corpus has grown from the original bequest of \$16 million to more than \$45 million. It has also stimulated and supported the development of 106 Newcombe-endowed Scholarship Funds at sixty-four colleges and universities, which now have a combined market value of nearly \$22 million. For further information, see the Foundation’s Website at [www.newcombefoundation.org](http://www.newcombefoundation.org).

Dr. Durso-Finley is Professor of Sociology and Assistant Dean for the American Honors program at Mercer County (NJ) Community College, where she has been employed since 2001. She has previously served MCCC as Director of Institutional Research and Assessment. Dr. Durso-Finley holds an A.B. (*cum laude*) in Anthropology from Princeton University, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Sociology from Brown University. Her scholarly research has focused on gender equity at work, labor relations in transition, universal learning design in higher education, and the impact of pedagogy on students’ worldviews. She has served as a site evaluator for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, where she specialized in evaluation of strategic planning and assessment. Dr. Durso-Finley recently traveled to Cuba with sociology students and to China, where she worked with a Chinese educational foundation to give full-length classroom demonstrations of engaging pedagogy to help prepare students for international study. In addition, Dr. Durso-Finley is currently on the Advisory Board for the Wrestlers in Business Network, a non-profit organization which supports youth wrestling in Trenton, New Jersey.

According to Dr. Robert M. Adams, a Trustee of the Foundation since its inception in 1979, "As Trustees of a foundation that makes grants for scholarships and fellowships in higher education at points where need and opportunity intersect, we are delighted to welcome Gianna Durso-Finley as our new Executive Director. Dr. Durso-Finley brings years of experience in higher education, as a social scientist, teacher, administrator, and evaluator. Her deep commitment to helping students succeed in higher education is combined with articulate clarity about the problems and possibilities involved."

Trustee Dr. J. Barton Luedeke, President Emeritus of Rider University, added, "I have known Dr. Durso-Finley for over ten years. I have great respect for her integrity, work ethic, sound judgment, initiative, and collaborative style. Her appointment assures the Foundation of continuing strong leadership and of future success in the service of our partner institutions and their students."

Upon accepting the Trustees' offer, Dr. Durso-Finley said, "The mission of the Charlotte W. Newcombe Foundation is compelling, and I have tremendous respect for the accomplishments of the Foundation team. I am excited to work with the Foundation's distinguished Trustees to preserve and expand the Foundation's mission at a time when helping to provide access to affordable higher education is more important than ever."

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