

Office of the Provost

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21-22

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A Year in Review



Saint Mary's  
University  
*of* MINNESOTA

# From the Office of the Provost

This academic year was the second consecutive wherein Saint Mary's University of Minnesota faced the global health crisis caused by COVID-19. Still, we were able to offer college classes on ground and we shifted graduate and professional program courses as necessary. We continued to work together and by association under pandemic conditions. Our strategic plan, approved by the board in October 2019, remained our guidepost as we began implementing phase two. As last year, we pledged as a community to remain "steadfast and resilient" throughout these difficult times. Through all of this, we advanced a number of initiatives and delivered a quality education indicative of our Lasallian Catholic identity.

## Some highlights of the academic year include:

Phase two of the strategic plan saw initiative 6: Saint Mary's Future Model. The work was so broad that we created three teams to achieve this vision: 6A (Develop growth strategy in the Rochester area), 6B (Optimize academic operations), and 6C (Global online strategy). More about each is below.

- **Develop growth strategy in the Rochester area:**
  - Create sustainable academic and related programming (events, conferences, forums, meetings, etc.) to serve students and the community at our Rochester Campus
  - Create vibrant life in and use of our facility in Rochester through a variety of programming
  - Create partnerships that strengthen our ability to offer highly market-relevant programs, increase enrollment, grow experiential learning opportunities, increase friendraising and fundraising, and serve the community
- **Optimize academic operations:**
  - Migrate to a coordinated university-wide academic calendar that meets the needs of faculty and students
  - Increase and streamline summer programming through expanded offerings
  - Optimize course schedules to offer the right courses at the right time and create greater flexibility for learners of all ages

- Create pathways for continued education at the College and Schools of Graduate and Professional Programs
- **Examine global online strategy:**
  - Focus on online program management partnerships
  - Optimize efficiencies
  - Establish a revenue and funding model for an internal online program management
  - Evaluate infrastructure, organization, and online training for faculty and students

## This year, we also welcomed new academic leadership, including:

- Matt Nowakowski, Ed.D., Vice Provost for Faculties and Academic Affairs
- Amy Heinz, O.T.D., Dean of Health and Human Services
- Darren Row, Ph.D., Interim Dean of the Sciences

With the impact of the pandemic still affecting operations, we continued incentivizing faculty to complete a three module, 12-week program in online teaching certification and nearly 120 faculty have done so. This is in addition to a similar number last year; we now have approximately 250 faculty certified by Saint Mary's to teach online.

In the 2021-22 academic year we updated faculty handbooks that have been posted on the Provost page of our website. The college faculty took the initiative to make further updates that were approved at the February board meeting. Our academic partnerships expanded to include the University of San Diego accepting our certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship as part of a master's degree they offer. This year we also created a partnership with St Mary's University of Twickenham/London for our college students to spend a fall semester studying abroad. The program builds on the successful Theater in London semester we have offered for many years and now is open to all Saint Mary's undergraduate students. Further, we launched the Doctor of Nursing Practice in Nurse Anesthesiology, which has been exceeding enrollment expectations, and we enrolled the first class of our residential B.S. in Nursing at the College. ➤

# From the Office of the Provost

As we continue to align resources and efforts to achieve goal 5 of the strategic plan, we consolidated SGPP commencement ceremonies to one on each of two days in January and June at Orchestra Hall in downtown Minneapolis. The January 2022 commencement was in-person and live-streamed from that beautiful location which reflected both the solemnity and celebration of the occasion. Other initiatives as part of goal 5 include the selection of a new Student Information System (SIS), Jenzabar, which will be fully implemented by June 2023.

Finally, we received a \$1.18 million Robert Noyce grant to support the university's new inclusive STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Teacher Education Pipeline (ISTEP) project. ISTEP is designed to increase the number of secondary STEM teachers (or teacher candidates) from diverse backgrounds committed to teaching in high-need schools in southeastern Minnesota.

So, even in the midst of a second pandemic year, we made progress together and by association. Inspired and guided by our Lasallian Catholic mission and the strategic plan, we are creating a future full of hope. The pages in this brief report speak in more detail about the accomplishments of this past year which were achieved by dedicated, self-giving, and mission-driven teams of people working together.



Brian Schmisek, Ph.D.  
Provost and Dean of Faculties

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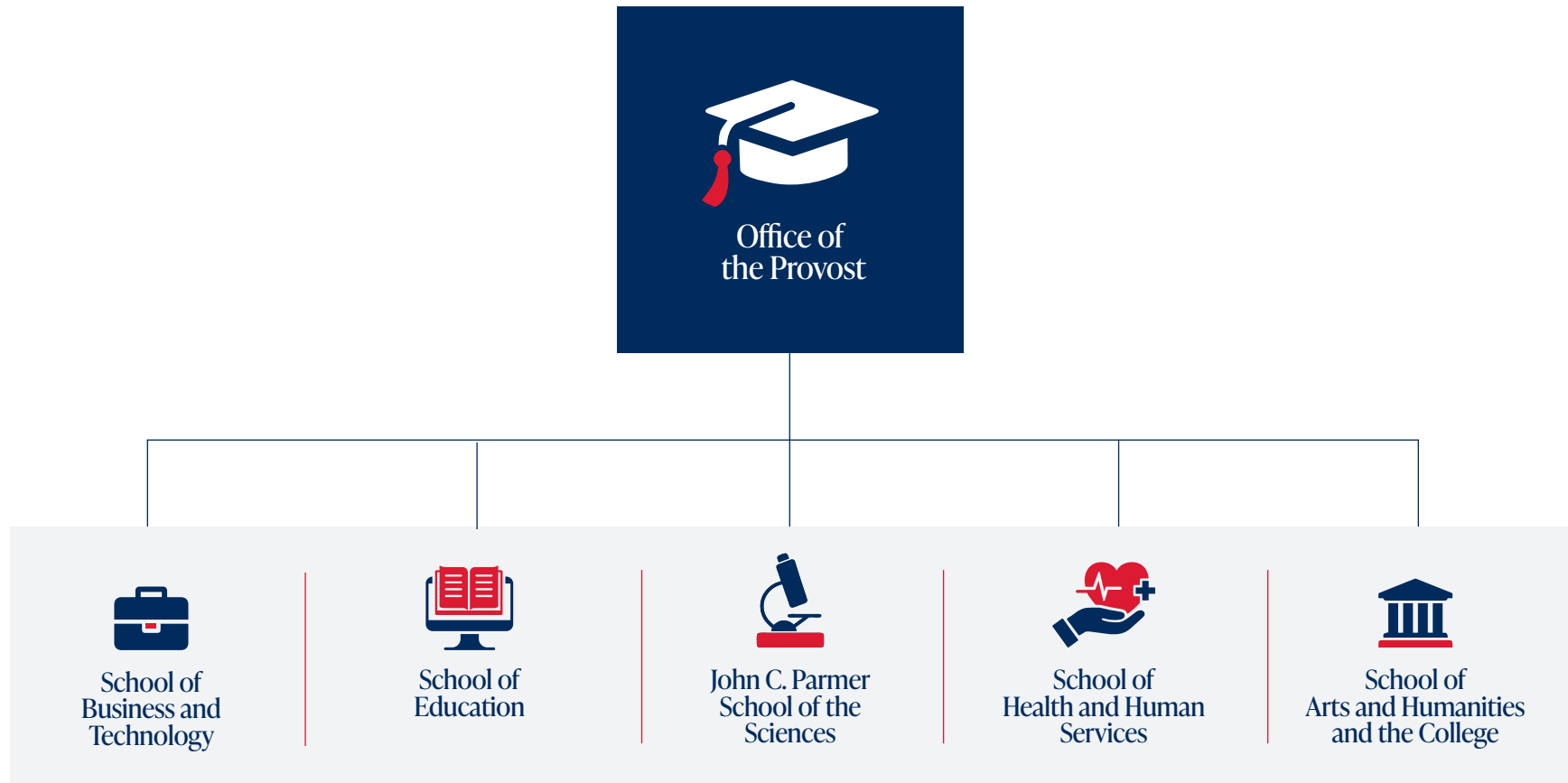
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# Schools and the College







# School of Business and Technology

The School of Business and Technology continued on a trajectory of innovation and growth. Our faculty and staff have remained focused on delivering a high-quality educational experience to students across locations and degree levels.

## Creativity and Connection at the College

The Business and Communication Department at the College settled into an open and collaborative new space in Aquinas Hall. The building has truly brought our vision to life. It is a vibrant, energetic space that has facilitated high levels of interaction between students, faculty, and the business community. The new home of the Kabara Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies, along with the makerspace, multimedia lab, and several computational labs, are highlights of our new space, bringing students and faculty from many disciplines together to innovate and create.

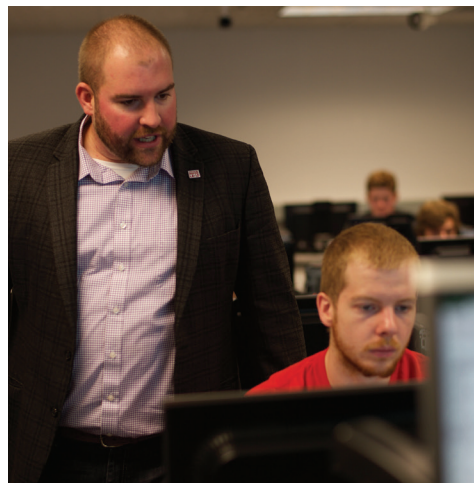
## Saint Mary's Accelerators

We continued to launch new "Saint Mary's Accelerators," and now offer

a total of 13 graduate certificates in everything from artificial intelligence to nonprofit management. An additional six certificates are set to launch within the next academic year. The Saint Mary's Accelerators have proven to be instrumental in helping students obtain new credentials more quickly and affordably. Many students have chosen to apply their certificate to a full master's program in the same or a different discipline. Students have been able to communicate their new skills to current and future employers through our top-tier digital badging strategy.

## Commitment to Excellence

The School of Business and Technology celebrated both our MBA as well as our non-MBA master's programs which were ranked No. 1 in the state of Minnesota by U.S. News & World Report, 2022. This is the first time we submitted rankings for the non-MBA master's programs (M.A. in Human Resources, M.A. in Organizational Leadership, M.S. in Business Intelligence and Data Analytics, M.S. in Accounting, and M.S. in Project Management). We are thrilled to have the quality of our programs, faculty, and students recognized on a national scale.





## School of Education

Saint Mary's School of Education faculty and staff are pleased to summarize recent initiatives and achievements that reflect our Lasallian Catholic heritage and mission, buttress our "Building a Future Full of Hope 2025" strategic plan, and advance our "regionally dominant, nationally prominent" initiative.

The School of Education was awarded a \$1.19 million Robert Noyce grant by the National Science Foundation to recruit and retain teacher candidates from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds to STEM education fields. Dr. Jack McClure was named Principal Investigator on the five-year project.

Assistant Dean Michael Hahn and Program Director Jack McClure spearheaded a proposal to launch an Executive Educational Doctorate (Ed.D.). The 39-credit online program is sure to boost enrollment by targeting working professionals.

In the spirit of advancing Pope Francis' Global Compact on Education (2020), Dean Michael Lovorn launched a new Educational Administration Specialist (Ed.S.) cohort program at the American Creativity Academy in Kuwait. Courses began in spring 2022, making Saint Mary's the only U.S. Catholic university with a leadership cohort in a K-12 school in the Persian Gulf region.

Finally, the School of Education hosted official accreditation visits by both the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensure and Standards Board (PELSB) and the Board of School Administrators (BOSA) in 2021. Both bodies recognized and commended our high-quality, student-centered programming. Both visits resulted in a renewal of our accreditation status. Professor Emeritus Melissa Luedtke and Program Director Craig Sundberg led these respective efforts.





# John C. Parmer School of the Sciences

## Facilities

After several years of being dispersed to various locations across campus, the biology, chemistry, and physics faculty returned to the space they occupied prior to the major renovation of the science buildings into part of what is now Aquinas Hall. Additionally, mathematics and computer science faculty are now in the same building as their colleagues in the natural sciences.

## Enrollment

The Department of Biology, the Department of Chemistry, and the Department of Mathematics, Computer Science, and Physics have all continued to experience increases in the number of majors declared. Over the past three years, the John C. Parmer School of the Sciences has increased major declarations by over 50%.

Semester	SP2019	SP2020	SP2021	SP2022
Declared Majors in the Sciences	181	211	236	277

## Research

Faculty in the sciences continue to advance the reputation of Saint Mary's through peer-reviewed professional publications, citations in news articles, grant funding, and participation at conferences and on panels.

## External Review of the Sciences

In fall 2021, the John C. Parmer School of the Sciences participated in an external review. The reviewer analyzed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges for the school and each of the departments within it regarding enrollment, curriculum, faculty, facilities and resources, and marketing materials and website. Recommendations from the reviewer will continue to be evaluated and prioritized.







# School of Health and Human Services

## Continued Growth and Innovation

Consistent with the Saint Mary's mission, the SHHS programming aims to provide access to education for a wide variety of learners from various backgrounds — and generates graduates who are in demand within the workforce. Programming at all levels remains strong, with planning and execution of new options continuously underway.

## Specialty Accreditation and Booming Enrollment in the Master of Social Work (MSW) Program

With the support from colleagues, Dr. Mallory Knipe, Chair of the Social Work Department, spearheaded the final steps to ensure the accreditation site visit was a success. With nearly 300 currently active students in the program, the Council on Accreditation designation will attract even more prospective students.

## New Program Launches in Nursing

- **The Doctor of Nursing Practice in Nurse Anesthesia (DNP)** was approved by the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Education programs. The inaugural DNP cohort began in the fall with 21 students, along with the last class of incoming master's-level students. Another cohort of 33 doctoral students will start fall 2022.
- **The B.S. in Nursing Pre-Licensure Program (BSN)** was approved by the MN Board of Nursing in June 2021. Sr. Agnes Mary Graves, RSM, DNP, Jack and Mary Ann Remick Chair of Nursing, led the launch of the first inaugural class of first-year nursing students. Efforts continue to build community partnerships for clinicals and student learning opportunities, in addition to preparing for the incoming fall 2022 cohort.

## Suite of Mental Health Programs Thriving and Expanding

- **Doctor of Psychology in Counseling Psychology (Psy.D.)** participated in a re-accreditation site visit by the American Psychological Association (APA) held in December 2021. The program received a positive accreditation review with a ten year renewal. The program is especially proud of Dr. Signe Nestingen, Psy.D. professor and director of clinical training, for



- receiving the U.S. Navy's Impact Influencer Award for her work with the U.S. Navy Medical Recruitment Program.
- **M.A. in Counseling and Psychological Services** had its largest incoming class of 127 new students in the fall with offerings in Minneapolis, Rochester, and a fully remote cohort option. Enrollment for the dual program option with the certificate in addiction studies or the early entry option to Psy.D. continues to grow.
- **M.A. in Marriage and Family Therapy program** serves as just one example of the SHHS programming that has maintained compliance with specialty accreditation throughout the global pandemic, including 100% practicum placements and sustained enrollment.
- **Undergraduate psychology at the College** experiences continued demand with over 80 declared majors — in addition to serving programs that require psychology courses and several students pursuing a minor in the field.
- **B.S. in Applied Psychology** launched a new fully online bachelor's completion program spring 2022 with transfer pathways from community and technical colleges.



# School of Arts and Humanities and the College

## Highlights for 2021-22

**New London Program:** A partnership with **St Mary's University Twickenham** was established to offer undergraduates of all majors an opportunity to study abroad in London for a fall semester. In addition, the majority of international students absent from Saint Mary's for over a year due to COVID-19 restrictions were able to return and resume their studies.

For the first time, all spring 2022 undergraduates completing the **Integratus** general education program graduate with a transcribed interdisciplinary minor (Environmental Sustainability, Global Diversity and Social Justice, Creativity and Inquiry, or Self, Society, and the Sacred).

In their **Integratus Capstone classes**, these seniors also engaged in projects in the local community, building a local network with community partners like Habitat for Humanity, The City of Winona Sustainability and Resources Office, The Winona Public Library, and the Interfaith Council.

Integratus Capstone courses incorporate several high-impact practices, including collaborative and community-based learning, in a culminating project that integrates and applies what they have learned throughout the program.

Other high-impact practices that have been successfully implemented throughout the Integratus program are first-year seminars, diverse and global learning, and e-portfolios.

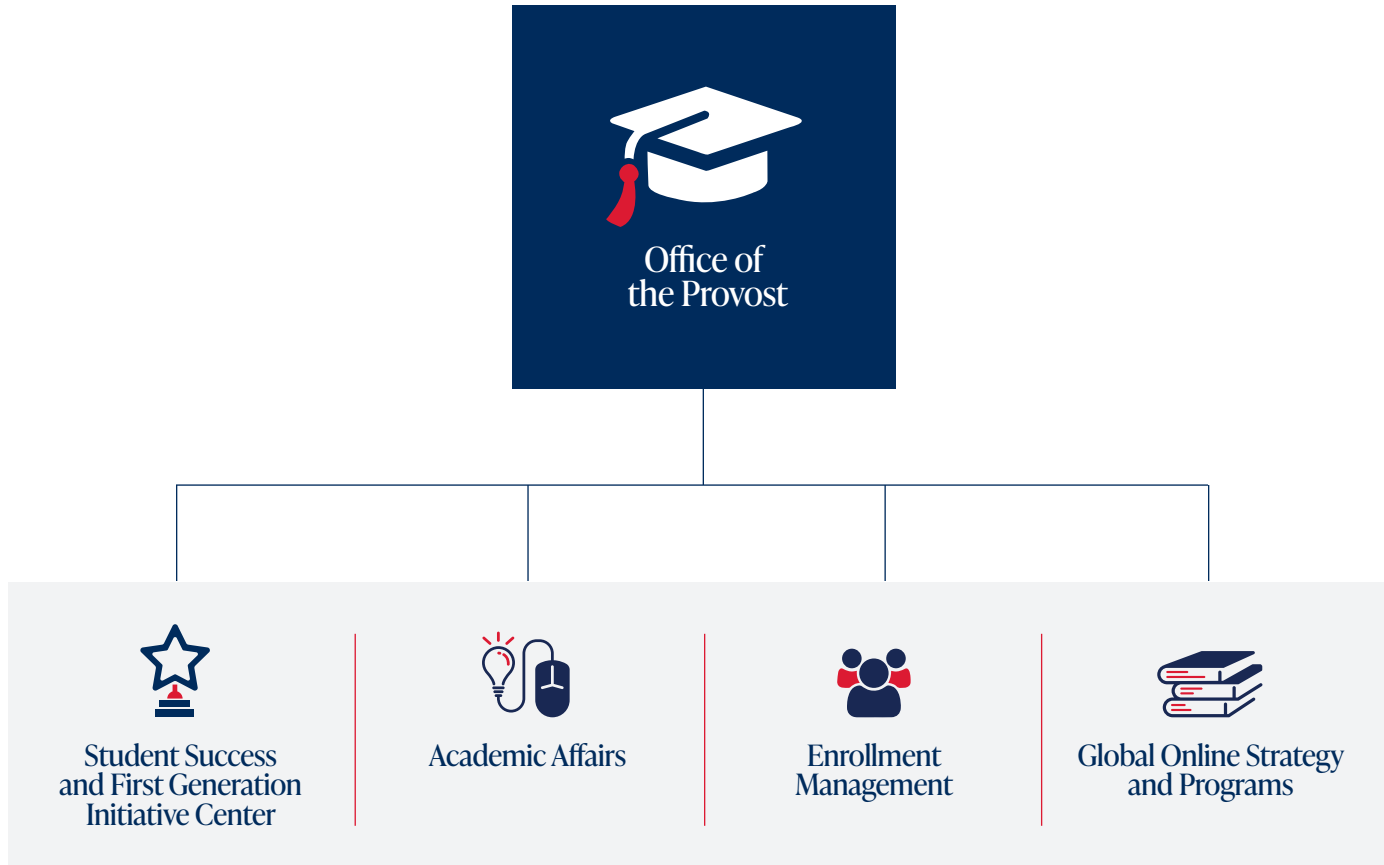
The **Language, Literature, and Culture Department** began enrolling students in their new health humanities major, with 13 majors and 15 minors enrolled. The department is publishing its annual edition of *Mosaic*, the creative arts and literature magazine of the undergraduate college.

Significant progress has been made reopening public **theatre, dance, and music** performances with 36 events presented this academic year.





# Supporting Units





# Student Success and First Generation Initiative Center

This year, the Student Success and First Generation Initiative Center continued to improve departmental efficiencies and limit barriers to students' success.

## 2021-22 Highlights

- Continued implementation of unit strategic plan.
  - Merged the Office of Advising with New Student Experience to align with retention efforts.
  - Remodeled offices, applied for and received capital improvement funding for furniture improvements.
- Implemented a reimagined New Student Orientation and Registration in-person and virtual sessions.
  - Increased first-time student, first semester to second semester retention rate by 1.9% (90.8% - 2021, 92.7% - 2022)
- Seasonal NODA Intern to support New Student Experience programs in the summer months.
- Enrolled in virtual reality tutoring pilot through VREdu and Facebook. VREdu is an extension of GoBoard, a free online tutoring whiteboard, available to all students at Saint Mary's.
- Piloting embedded tutoring for C150, General, Organic, and Biochemistry (GOB) for Nurses.
- Offered Peer Learning Assistance for the Minneapolis campus. The focus being to provide time management, prioritization, and academic routine skills to students returning to an academic setting.
- Revised the readmission process to include a multi-departmental and holistic internal process for application review and processing.
- Hosted 12 adviser trainings, workshops, and seminars attended by faculty and staff from the Winona Campus and SGPP.
- Coordinated selection of Stemify for math placement and will administer the placement exam and monitor follow-up testing.





## Academic Affairs

The Office of the Vice Provost for Faculties and Academic Affairs worked to support our ongoing efforts in flexibility in the access and delivery of a Lasallian Catholic education in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Significant efforts were directed at creating policy and procedures that enabled students and faculty to have the best educational experiences possible through on-ground, blended, and online delivery. The Institutional Review Board has developed a new IRB application process with cloud-based software “Cayuse Human Ethics.” The Office of the VPFAA also successfully completed a complete revision of the SGPP faculty handbook, which provided significant updates to the faculty governance structure at SGPP.

Academic Affairs hosted a university-wide faculty “Advance Day,” bringing together undergraduate, graduate, and professional faculties across Saint Mary’s campuses. The topic for the day was “Academic Community in a Post-COVID-19 World” and featured presentations led by Drs. Signe Nestingen, Carolyn Ayres, and Jack McClure of Saint Mary’s. In cooperation with college faculty mentors, the Office of the VPFAA re-launched a year-long faculty orientation and mentoring program on the Winona Campus.

### Curriculum and Assessment

*Over the last year, the staff of Curriculum and Assessment worked to:*

- Streamline processes for University Program Planning, End of Year and LifeCycle Reporting, and Program Reviews (at SGPP).
- Facilitated in collaboration with program directors, chairs, deans, and curriculum committees in the development and approval of over 30 new and redeveloped programs.
- Designed and built over 40 courses, proposed and initiated a revised Prior Learning Assessment program and process for increased access and revenue.
- Proposed a university-wide Assessment Plan and initiated Curricular Analytics as a process to gain efficiencies in academic programming.

### Accreditation and Compliance

The Accreditation and Compliance office successfully led completion of Higher Learning Commission’s (HLC) accreditation milestone “Year 4 Assurance Review”, consisting of an 89 page report, 500+ pieces of evidence, and a full HLC team review, resulting in Saint Mary’s continued good standing with its institutional accreditor. Saint Mary’s report achieved the highest possible rating: we successfully “met” all HLC Criteria for Accreditation and had no interim monitoring or follow-up reporting required. Saint Mary’s HLC accreditation grants us the authority to offer postsecondary credentials in the U.S. and participate in federal financial aid programs. On-going work continues in the development and engagement in a HLC quality initiative project.

### Unification Initiative

To promote efficiency and effective budget stewardship, Saint Mary’s Libraries streamlined procedures for acquisitions, course reserves, billing, reference statistics, and e-resource evaluation, eliminating redundancies and standardizing practices across campuses.

### Libraries

Saint Mary’s Libraries are preparing to launch a new SuperSearch interface as well as a new single sign-on technology (OpenAthens) that will improve the off-campus access experience and enable the libraries to gather granular usage data to inform resource purchases and cancellations.

Teaching-Instruction librarians have revamped the Teaching Fellows Workshop to address cross-campus faculty needs, updated searching tutorials in support of the new SuperSearch interface, and are creating a comprehensive dissertation research guide.

### University Writing Services

Winona’s Professional Writing Consultant is launching a new marketing initiative to reach parts of the student population who have never used the Writing Center before. The director is also reviving the Writing-Rich Curriculum at the college-level to ensure that every department infuses writing throughout its curriculum to graduate exemplary 21st century communicators.



# Enrollment Management

Enrollment challenges continued for most of higher education in the 2021-22 academic year. Decreases nationally in both traditional and non-traditional markets impacted Saint Mary's with declines in overall enrollment at both the Minneapolis and Winona campuses. Good progress was made on new programs that bodes well for future years for Saint Mary's.

## Enrollment

- 30+ admitted students to the new nursing program at the College.
- Filled all available slots for the 3+2 PA program with Mayo Clinic School of Health Sciences, with the strongest academic incoming class ever.
- 4% increase in health and human services enrollments at the Minneapolis Campus.

## Admissions and Recruiting

- Created fully personalized recruiting publications and outreach for first-year and transfer student recruiting at the Winona Campus. This personalization extends to all printed materials, as well as all digital communications. Prospective students for the Winona Campus also have a personal URL that is populated with content specific to their interests.
- Email communication strategies were improved at the Minneapolis Campus. These improvements allow easier adaptation and customization through multiple recruiting cycles in the adult graduate and undergraduate markets.
- Transfer credit policies and processes have been simplified and updated across the university to provide more transparency and better customer service to prospective students.

## Retention

- Increased the college-wide retention rate from 82% to 86% in a year where retention rates dropped up to 15% at many other universities.
- Financial Aid Outreach
  - Financial aid award packages were modified this year to make award packages more understandable to students. Award packages were

also delivered earlier this year to all students than in the last five years.

- The Financial Aid Office continued extensive outreach to current students to help provide additional funding to students in need.

## Registrar

- Registration
  - Course schedules were simplified and unified to reduce the number of course conflicts students encounter and to ease the creation of workable schedules for students.





# Global Online Strategy and Programs

The Office of Global Online Strategy and Programs continues to embrace innovation supporting the student experience and enabling high-quality online teaching and learning experiences across schools and programs.

## Global Online Initiative and Online Program Portfolio Growth

As Saint Mary's continues to develop internal capabilities and capacity, the online program portfolio continues to grow. Today, Saint Mary's offers 37 fully online programs. To continue supporting future online growth, the Global Online Initiative has conducted an initial assessment across multiple functional areas, aided by input from the University Professional and Continuing Education Association (UPCEA) and Ruffalo Noel Levitz. The outcome of these initial assessments has informed the initial strategic recommendations and investments.

## Center for Excellence Learning and Teaching (CELT) and Online Product Development and Innovation

The office of CELT continues to focus on sharing best practices in teaching and learning. This past year in partnership with the Offices of Character and Virtue, Inclusion and Human Dignity, and Mission and Ministry, the CELT implemented several faculty development programs including the newly formed Diversity and Human Dignity workshop series and two events creating awareness of indigenous peoples' experiences with acclaimed Director Leya Hale of *Bring Her Home*.

The launch of the new Straighterline partnership allows Saint Mary's to offer self-paced, competency-based online learning options and provides new

academic pathways helping bachelor's completion students save time and money in completing their degrees.

Building on its partnership with Credly, Saint Mary's continues to build its portfolio of digital badges. New digital badges issued to faculty engaged in the new Inclusion and Human Dignity workshop series and



the Teaching Fellows program provide faculty with tangible artifacts to acknowledge their development. To date, the CELT has certified more than 225 faculty in online instruction. Additionally, Saint Mary's has awarded 3,300 student digital badges, providing students with continued opportunities to amplify their skills to employers and leading to job offers.

## High School Pathways

The High School Pathways team continues to enhance the student experience while optimizing operational efficiencies through new centralized program offerings and support services. The program realignment allows Saint Mary's to engage with high school partners and students and enables new dual credit opportunities. To that end, two new high school programs were piloted — the Catholic Virtual Academy and a new online Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) option. With four new high school partners secured, engagement with high schools continues to grow along with distinct student enrollments and credits, which increased 48% from fall 2020 to fall 2021.

## Instructional Technology

The complete migration to the new Canvas Learning Management System (LMS) in January 2022 continues to enhance the online student experience. Canvas is a best-in-class LMS that 90 percent of surveyed students report finding “very easy to use and mobile-friendly.” The office of Instructional Technology continues to offer ongoing LMS and teaching technology tools training opportunities through a new reIMAGINE Learner Engagement series providing technology tools and exemplars to support faculty in the continued enhancements to student engagement.







# Mission

Enriched by the Lasallian Catholic heritage,  
Saint Mary's University of Minnesota awakens,  
nurtures, and empowers learners to ethical lives  
of service and leadership.

