

THE PATH TO LEADERSHIP 2012

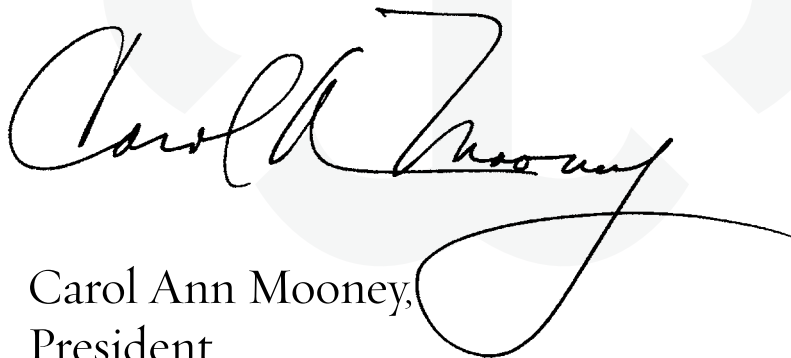
A Strategic Plan for Saint Mary's College

SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE • NOTRE DAME, INDIANA



■ THE PATH TO LEADERSHIP 2012

This Strategic Plan was presented to and approved by the Saint Mary's College Board of Trustees on October 12, 2007.



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A Strategic Plan for Saint Mary's College

PROLOGUE

In my College Forum address in August, 2006, I announced to the College community my intent to initiate a Strategic Plan for the next five years. Throughout the fall I held a series of listening sessions (12 one-hour sessions) to gather the impressions of the faculty, staff, administration, and students of Saint Mary's College concerning the work of the College. Every full-time employee was invited to attend one of the sessions. The information learned at these sessions informed my thinking as I began the strategic planning process.

A committee was formed in September, 2006. It included the President's Cabinet, four faculty members, a member of the Board of Trustees, the Director of Institutional Research, the Chief Information Officer, a staff representative, and a student representative.¹ This core group broke into three sub-committees with additional members added. The sub-committees were: Academic Initiatives, Student Initiatives, and Resource Planning. The results of their efforts are contained in the following document.

The title of this plan, "The Path to Leadership," was not a starting point, but rather came to me as I approached the final draft stages of the report. I have stated publicly that Saint Mary's College must strive to be nationally recognized as a top liberal arts college. I realize this is an ambitious goal, and one that will not be achieved in the next five years or perhaps even in the next ten years. But by keeping this as the overarching goal and the desired result of our efforts, I believe it will focus our work to keep Saint Mary's College on the "Path to Leadership." Achievement of that goal will make Saint Mary's not only the nation's leading Catholic women's college, but one of the country's leading colleges.

As at most colleges and universities, there are many demands on the time, energy, and efforts of everyone who works at Saint Mary's as well as on the many generous volunteers and donors who contribute in so many ways to Saint Mary's College. This plan will help us sort through those demands and prioritize our efforts over the next five years.

Even the best plans need to change as circumstances change. This plan is intended to be flexible and to be reviewed at least annually. During each annual review we will assess our progress and the continuing importance of the tasks not yet completed. At that time, we will have the opportunity to amend the list of goals and to add to, or subtract from, the list. In other words, this is intended to be a living plan and not one that is carved in stone at the time of its publication. The annual review will be conducted by the original Strategic Planning Committee in consultation with and with communication to the entire College community.

¹ Since then, we have welcomed a new Vice President and Dean of Faculty and a new Chief Information Officer to Saint Mary's. They have also been consulted about this Strategic Plan.

The final draft of this document was written by me and I take full responsibility for its contents. This report is my vision for Saint Mary's College for the next five years.

SECTION I

SAINT MARY'S MISSION

It is quite common for a strategic planning effort to begin with the writing or rewriting of the organization's mission statement. That is not the case this time at Saint Mary's. The College's Strategic Planning Committee very quickly agreed that there was no need to rewrite Saint Mary's Mission Statement. The Saint Mary's College Mission Statement and its accompanying Statement of Philosophy and Purpose were the products of much hard work on the part of the entire College community in the late 1990s. Our mission and philosophy are not only well known by the members of the community but are also widely embraced by them. Indeed, the summer 2006 report from the Higher Learning Commission's reaccreditation evaluation team listed as one of Saint Mary's strengths:

“a shared commitment to the College's mission, and an extraordinary ability to articulate the mission, on the part of all constituencies: board, administration, faculty, staff, students, and alumnae.”

Because of their continuing vitality, we are proud to present our Mission Statement and Statement of Philosophy and Purpose in their unaltered forms.

Mission Statement

Saint Mary's College is a Catholic, residential, women's college in the liberal arts tradition. A pioneer in the education of women, the College is an academic community where women develop their talents and prepare to make a difference in the world. Founded by the Sisters of the Holy Cross in 1844, Saint Mary's promotes a life of intellectual vigor, aesthetic appreciation, religious sensibility, and social responsibility. All members of the College remain faithful to this mission and continually assess their response to the complex needs and challenges of the contemporary world.

Statement of Philosophy and Purpose

As a center of higher education, Saint Mary's fosters an academic climate of scholarship and learning for faculty and students alike. Through excellence in teaching and the example of its own active scholarship, the faculty challenges students to expand their horizons and supports them in their intellectual pursuits. A broad-based course of study invites students to think critically and creatively about the natural world and human culture. Acknowledging the need to prepare women for an array of careers, the College insists on a liberal arts foundation for all its students. Through their years at Saint Mary's students acquire depth and breadth of knowledge, competence



in quantitative skills and modern languages, the ability to think clearly about complex problems, and the capacity to communicate with precision and style.

As a Catholic college, Saint Mary's cultivates a community of intellectual inquiry, liturgical prayer, and social action. The College creates an open forum in which students freely and critically study the rich heritage of the Catholic tradition, raising the questions necessary to develop a mature religious life. The celebration of liturgy encourages students to explore the fullness of life and its mysteries. The College nurtures awareness and compassion for a troubled world and challenges students to promote human dignity throughout their lives. In preparing women for roles of leadership and action, Saint Mary's pays particular attention to the rights and responsibilities of women in the worlds of work, church, community, and family.

Dedicated to the personal and social growth of its students, Saint Mary's cultivates a community of students, faculty, and staff, which responds to the needs of women. In order to offer the richest educational experience possible, the College strives to bring together women of different nations, cultures, and races. It provides a residential environment where women grow in their appreciation of the strengths and needs of others. Through a host of co-curricular programs on campus and in the local community, Saint Mary's initiates students in the habits of civic responsibility. Engaging in all aspects of the college experience, students acquire the hallmarks of a liberally educated woman: keen self-knowledge, lively imagination, lifelong intellectual and cultural interests, and the ability to make socially responsible choices about the future.

SECTION II

A VISION FOR SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE

In order to effectively and efficiently plan for the future of Saint Mary's College it is necessary to have general agreement about and understanding of what one hopes the College will become. The Strategic Planning Committee began its work by developing a vision statement for the College.

For purposes of this Strategic Plan, a "vision statement" is understood to be a statement that describes what success looks like. The statement describes Saint Mary's College as we hope it will be upon successful completion of the goals we set for it. The statement does not describe how to become successful, nor is it a laundry list of the various qualities of Saint Mary's.

Vision Statement

Saint Mary's College is recognized as a leading liberal arts college. Intellectually ambitious women receive a residentially based liberal arts education complemented by strong professional and

pre-professional programs. Successfully grounded in its Catholic and Holy Cross identity, Saint Mary's is diverse, welcoming the wider articulation of the truth that diversity makes possible.

SECTION III

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Saint Mary's College is proud of the excellent job it does of educating young women. It is a place of aspiration, a community that hungers to be better. The goals and recommendations set forth in this new Strategic Plan are evidence of that hunger but perhaps not sufficiently descriptive of it. The specific goals were developed in light of several fundamental principles to which Saint Mary's is committed. Each of the specific goals is intended to assist the College to adhere to these principles as well as to achieve one or more of the College's broader objectives. It is important to keep these principles in mind and to articulate them.

FIRST PRINCIPLE

Saint Mary's is committed to providing students with an excellent intellectual and academic experience.

This commitment requires constant vigilance to ensure that we continue to deliver the excellent education for which Saint Mary's College is known.

Saint Mary's is committed to the education of the whole student; while that education occurs both inside and outside the classroom, the core of the educational experience is the classroom experience. Recruitment and retention of the best faculty is essential to the excellence to which Saint Mary's is committed. The College continues to seek faculty members who are unusually committed to undergraduate teaching, to contributing to the College's intellectual community and its distinctive mission, and to their own scholarly lives. To be successful, the College must have an environment in which faculty can flourish.

Saint Mary's College focuses on the undergraduate education of women. Small class size and individual attention are hallmarks of a Saint Mary's education. Excellent teaching holds primacy of place in the process of promoting and tenuring faculty. Pedagogical innovation and the development, implementation, and assessment of curricular programs are constant and valued activities. At Saint Mary's, we understand scholarly endeavors to be an integral part of teaching excellence. In their scholarship, members of our faculty help to advance a discipline, keep current in their fields, and bring their scholarship into the classroom to improve course content and to demonstrate the value of learning over a lifetime. In their teaching, scholarship, and extramural activities, faculty members are accorded academic freedom as articulated in the College Governance Manual.

The College continues to require a broad general education for every student. The core of that broad based liberal arts education is the General Education Program. Because it affects the experience of every Saint Mary's student, the



evaluation and improvement of Saint Mary's General Education Program will receive priority attention during the coming five years.

We also remain committed to an intensive writing experience, known as the "W," for every student not only in her first year at Saint Mary's but also in her more advanced studies in her chosen major. In short, the W and Advanced W requirements remain valued components of a Saint Mary's education. We also continue to require a senior year comprehensive experience in each student's major area of study. The senior comprehensive experience provides all Saint Mary's students, not just a small percentage of the College's top students, with the opportunity for intensive work one-on-one with a faculty member.

The higher education environment today is one in which attention to students, to their growth and formation, is less and less emphasized. Education is often viewed primarily as an investment in human capital. In that view, colleges and universities are at the service of economic interests and knowledge is a commodity to be bought and sold. Saint Mary's view of education is quite different from that dominant view. As a Catholic college, Saint Mary's can never reduce the human person to a market player or education to merely an instrumental good. At Saint Mary's we realize that education is not morally neutral and that it has the capacity to change the student. In our view, the human mind, human knowledge, and educational endeavors are not just a means to a job; they are an end themselves and they can invigorate the quest for higher truth.

SECOND PRINCIPLE

Saint Mary's College is unwavering in its commitment to being a Catholic and Holy Cross college.

Saint Mary's was founded as, and continues to be, a Catholic college. The Catholic character of the College requires it to provide certain curricular offerings and to cultivate a community that supports its Catholic faith in a variety of ways including liturgically and through service to justice. The lived reality of the campus community has been strongly influenced by the charism of the Sisters of the Holy Cross including their educational philosophy and their tradition of hospitality. That tradition of hospitality, together with long-standing Holy Cross values,² means that the College does not simply welcome non-Catholics and non-Christians, but embraces as its mission the teaching of all women regardless of their faith traditions.

Catholicism views all education as proceeding from the effort to clarify the conception of the human person, a being created in the image and likeness of God and possessing an openness to the transcendent.³ Saint Mary's is committed to providing every one of our students, including those who pursue professional or pre-professional majors, with a broad based liberal arts education that plants the seeds of an intellectual life and prompts reflection upon one's place in the universe

² Father Basil Moreau: "These teachers know that all students are equally important to God...if at times you show preference to any young people they should be the poor, those who have no one else to show them preference, those who have the least knowledge, those who lack skills and talent, and those who are not Catholic or Christian."

³ Presentation by Archbishop Michael Miller, CSC., entitled "Catholic Higher Education in the Global Context" at the 2007 annual meeting of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities.

and purpose in life. It is not only Religious Studies or Philosophy courses that are important to the Catholic character of the College. The Catholic tradition contains a notion of God as Logos, as the Order – as well as the Mystery, at the heart of the universe. Consequently, Catholicism views knowledge itself as fundamentally and intrinsically valuable.⁴ We recognize the dignity of human reason and its capacity to seek and know reality. Therefore, while it is clear that there is no Catholic calculus or chemistry, our very Catholicism leads us to value and embrace all fields of knowledge.

Saint Mary's infuses the academic and student life at the College with the Catholic and Holy Cross characteristics that give the campus its unique sense of community. Our commitment to the education of the whole person, a commitment that has been with us since our founding, remains unwavering; but, the focus on the development of each student is not individualistic. We are always conscious that human beings live in community. As our Mission Statement implies, our commitment to education is not solely to or for the benefit of the individual student, but also for the benefit of the broader society.

THIRD PRINCIPLE

Saint Mary's is committed to being a women's college.

Today, only three all male colleges exist and the number of all women's colleges continues to diminish. Why is Saint Mary's a women's college? Why should women's colleges continue to exist?

Those of us committed to single sex education believe that women's colleges provide benefits for their students that typically are not provided to women at coeducational institutions. Our experience at Saint Mary's College reinforces that belief.

According to the Women's College Coalition, research shows that students who attend a women's college enjoy the following five benefits:

1. The opportunity to participate more, both in and out of class, due to small class sizes and an environment that demands the participation of women. Small class size also creates a more positive learning experience because students receive greater individual attention.
2. Measurably higher levels of self-esteem than other achieving women in coeducational institutions. Nine out of ten women's college graduates give their colleges high marks for fostering and developing self-confidence.
3. Greater satisfaction from their college experience than their coed counterparts – academically, developmentally, and personally.
4. More likely to graduate, and more than twice as likely as female graduates of coeducational colleges to earn doctoral degrees and to enter medical school. (Five of our Biology majors applied to medical schools last spring; all five were accepted at their first choice schools.)

⁴ Presentation by Cathleen Kaveny, entitled "Catholic Higher Education in the American Context" at the 2007 annual meeting of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities.



5. They earn more after graduation than their coed counterparts because they often choose traditionally male disciplines, like the sciences, as their academic major. Women's colleges continue to graduate women in math and the sciences at 1.5 times the rate of coed institutions.

Saint Mary's mission is to educate women. Everything that we do is aimed at that outcome, and that is as true in the student life arena as it is in the classroom. At Saint Mary's everything that is done by students is done by women. Our students sit on major College committees, all the way up to having a full voting member on the Board of Trustees. If there is a student initiative, every facet of it will be planned and executed by women. That alone is fundamental and important.

FOURTH PRINCIPLE

Saint Mary's is committed to being a residential college.

Our tradition of residential life and learning is so strong that it is impossible to imagine a Saint Mary's campus that empties at the end of each class day or even a Saint Mary's whose student population shrinks substantially each weekend. More importantly, it is the residential nature of our campus that provides our students with the rich opportunities for intellectual exchange and personal growth so essential to a Saint Mary's education.

The classroom provides students with intellectual challenges and assists them in acquiring the tools to meet those challenges. The opportunity to live in community with other young women experiencing those same challenges helps our students to integrate the excitement of learning, the habit of critical analysis, and the quest for understanding into the fabric of their shared lives. We accomplish our mission of producing graduates whose lives are marked by intellectual vigor, aesthetic appreciation, spiritual sensibility, and social responsibility through the total Saint Mary's experience, inside and outside the classroom.

Indeed, when asked to comment on their Saint Mary's experience, our alumnae most often speak about the sense of community at the College. It is a community in which faculty and students interact often and in many different settings. It is a community that values candid discourse, nurtures respect for every human being, and instills a sense of responsibility for oneself and for others. It is a community that bridges living in the home of a parent or guardian and living totally independently. It is a community that holds itself and its members to high standards for performance and for acting morally, fairly, and justly. It is a community that shares its joys and its sorrows. It is a community that believes in God and in the transcendent nature of the human person, but welcomes and respects those who do not share those beliefs as full partners in our community for they too are created in the image and likeness of God. It is a community that calls each of its members to be more fully human. The lived experience of this community is an integral part of the Saint Mary's education.

SECTION IV

GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Having outlined our foundational principles, the remainder of this document outlines our goals and recommends actions designed to achieve those goals.

GOAL #I

Educational Excellence Equal to that of the Best Colleges in the Country

Our first goal is to provide our students with an education that equals the education offered at the best colleges in the country. It is our fundamental obligation to provide students with the best possible education. In addition to actually providing that education, we seek to build upon and increase the College's national reputation. Two primary purposes underlie this objective:

- First and foremost, a first-rate national reputation opens doors for our graduates. Because our graduates bring to their endeavors not only their technical expertise but also the benefits of their broad based education and their thoughtful reflections on the world and their place in it, we want all doors open to them. That access gives them the greatest opportunity to make a positive difference in the world.
- Continued strong and diverse enrollment is the second factor motivating this goal. Current attitudes favor large universities. Consequently, small colleges face enrollment challenges and the challenges for women's colleges are unique among higher educational institutions. Saint Mary's primary response to those challenges is to increase the quality of the education we offer and along with it the College's national academic reputation. It is our academic stature that will continue to be the core of our strength.

RECOMMENDATION I

Design a New General Education Program

The General Education Program will be re-examined, re-articulated, and re-configured. General Education touches every Saint Mary's student and the articulation of its content telegraphs to our students the elements that the College judges to be essential to a Saint Mary's education. Every faculty member and every student should be able to readily recite the reasons for the components of Saint Mary's General Education and the integral way it achieves the liberal learning objectives of our students' four-year Saint Mary's educational experience.

In the past, General Education has been marginalized throughout higher education. At many higher educational institutions it is viewed as an extension of a student's high school education and the college believes that it places its real stamp on its students in their area of major study. Indeed, even at Saint Mary's, one can overhear conversations about getting a General Education requirement "out of the way." In designing our new General Education Program we are



re-energizing the students' four-year educational experience. As we design an improved General Education Program, we will have our eyes on the total education we provide our students. Hence, during this process, we will reinforce Saint Mary's learning goals⁵ and articulate the learning outcomes we hope to achieve in the four years our students are with us.

Our first steps are to review and design an improved General Education Program. The process will involve wide discussion and dissemination within the College community of three elements:

1. the learning goals and outcomes of the liberal education we seek to provide our students in their four years with us;
2. the specific learning outcomes of the General Education Curriculum which will help us realize those four-year goals; and
3. the schematics for and requirements of the General Education Curriculum.

Key components of a Saint Mary's education exist foundationally within the General Education Curriculum. In fact, some are specific to General Education and can best be achieved in this part of our curriculum. We expect all Saint Mary's students to be broadly educated women who have asked the big questions and dreamed the big dreams. Consistent with our commitment to diversification of the College community, it is our goal to incorporate reflection on diversity and intercultural competency into the General Education Curriculum. We want all of our students, not just those in Anthropology, to wonder how a culture is formed and how it changes. We want all of them to know that every language articulates a particular vision of the world. Our General Education Program plays a major role in helping us achieve these goals.

One thing that makes a Saint Mary's graduate — whether she is a lawyer, nurse, teacher, or community volunteer — so valuable in her position is that her education asked her to reflect upon the role of faith in her life, what it means to live a good life, and what her obligation is to her society. Again, our General Education provides this value-oriented education through its course requirements and schematic underpinnings.

Other components appear early in the General Education Curriculum but are reinforced in a student's major and minor programs of study. For example, we want all of our students to write well, to analyze issues, and solve problems. Both the General Education Curriculum and the major and minor programs of study work together to achieve these learning outcomes.

Because of its foundational and central role in the Saint Mary's educational experience, our primary investment over the next five years will be in those areas needed to implement the new General Education Curriculum.

⁵ Some believe these learning goals are articulated in Saint Mary's Mission Statement insofar as it commits us to promote "a life of intellectual vigor, aesthetic appreciation, religious sensibility, and social responsibility."

Because of its centrality to a Saint Mary's education, the General Education Program must be kept vital. Responsibility for the General Education Program previously has been assigned to the Curriculum Committee. Because that committee has focused on approval of new courses and majors, it has not been able to devote sustained attention to General Education. Therefore, we will create a standing committee, the General Education Committee (GEC), to oversee, to implement, and to evaluate the General Education Program on an ongoing basis. That committee will work with the Assessment Committee to make whatever adjustments in the program are needed from time to time to ensure that the General Education Program's specific learning objectives and those liberal arts learning objectives that span a student's four years, which can be attained through the General Education Curriculum, are, in fact, achieved.

RECOMMENDATION 2 Consideration of an Honors Program

During the re-examination of General Education, the College also will consider instituting an Honors Program as one segment of the General Education Program. Grouping the most promising incoming first-year students together for some Honors General Education courses will challenge them and create among them a coherence that will increase their rate of persistence at the College. As the General Education Committee nears the completion of its task and approval of a new General Education Curriculum is in sight, an Honors Committee will be formed to begin investigation of whether we wish to institute an Honors Program at Saint Mary's. If we are in the affirmative on this question, the committee will recommend a design and set of requirements for an Honors Program.

RECOMMENDATION 3 Create Learning Communities

Because the General Education Program constitutes an intellectual experience that is shared by all Saint Mary's students, the program offers a context within which the Academic Affairs and Student Affairs divisions can work together to bridge the divide between student life inside and outside the classroom. A goal shared by both divisions is to create learning communities tied to General Education. One such community may be an Honors Community; the shape of other learning communities will depend in great part on the requirements of the General Education Curriculum and how the requirements lend themselves to integration with the residential lives of our students. This recommendation may be tied, as well, to a First Year Experience for those learning communities proposed for first-year students. When we begin to see the shape of the new General Education Curriculum, a Learning Communities Committee will be formed, with wide representation, so that persons from the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Mission divisions may together explore these exciting possibilities. Keeping in mind that "one size does not fit all," we will create programs that reflect the uniqueness of Saint Mary's College.⁶

⁶ Kathleen Manning, *One Size Does Not Fit All: Traditional and Innovative Models of Student Affairs Practice* (New York: Taylor & Francis, LLP, 2006).



Learning communities also should be considered for students in their junior or senior years if the programs of study, degree opportunities, and co-curricular interests of the students provide a fruitful basis for this endeavor. For example, students who have expressed an interest in the dual-degree program in Engineering and who draw from several different majors may desire a learning community to further support their goals.

RECOMMENDATION 4 **Assess and Improve Existing Academic Programs**

Regular and systematic review of academic programs ensures that the programs are rigorous and up-to-date and that desirable improvements in the programs are made explicit. Saint Mary's College now participates in the Higher Learning Commission Assessment Academy. The Assessment Committee will adopt two College-wide projects and complete them in the next five years, in fulfillment of the Academy's requirements. At the same time, this committee will function as a resource to both the new General Education Committee (GEC) and to all academic departments to provide resources on assessment. The Assessment Committee will educate the College about this multifaceted area of curriculum improvement. With these resources at our disposal, the College will complete assessment plans, implement them, and, within the next five years, produce improvements in our curriculum and programs based on the results of their assessment.

With the exception of the nationally accredited programs, Saint Mary's has not conducted periodic program review. It is the College's goal to design and implement an evaluation process for all academic programs of study. The process will require each program to produce a self-study that will be followed by an external review. In addition to its general assessment of a program, the process will examine a program's technology needs, library resources, faculty personnel, and space needs.

Our goal is to review all academic majors, and if possible minors, in the next five years and thereafter on a rotating basis so that every program is evaluated at least every ten years. The information garnered through the evaluation process will guide the College's decisions about future investments in specific programs. The intended results are a culture of continual assessment and improvement, excellent programs, and, through the external review process, increased interaction between Saint Mary's faculty and colleagues in similar programs at other institutions.

RECOMMENDATION 5 **Have a First-Class College Library**

No matter how nice a college's facilities are, the three basic ingredients of a great academic institution are a great faculty, a great student body, and a great library. Over the past decade financial constraints have resulted in our library receiving a smaller and smaller percentage of the College's overall budget.

That cannot continue. Indeed, we must reverse that trend and find ways to increase the annual allocation to the library as well as to provide it with endowment funding.

Today, library resources take a variety of formats: books, journals, media, and online materials as well as online search engines and databases. Increasingly, students and faculty expect access to library materials twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, from any place on or off campus. As a residential college with high academic standards, the core library resources and services needed for faculty teaching and student learning should be available in our library. Our faculty and students should rely on other libraries only for more specialized resources. As we strive to raise the academic profile of the College, we must improve our library resources and services.

Unfortunately, our library budget lags far behind the library budgets of our aspirant schools. Our acquisitions expenditure per student is half of the per student expenditure at Saint Olaf's (MN) and less than half of that at Centre College (KY) and Kalamazoo College (MI). Our per student expenditure is less than one-third of that at all other aspirant schools; for example, Mount Holyoke's (MA) and Oberlin's (OH) expenditures per student are more than five times greater than ours. While participation in a number of consortia has enabled us to stretch our library dollars and several endowments generate funds for the library, we are unable to meet our current and growing needs.

To bring the library to the level of a first-class college library, we must double the acquisitions budget in the next five years and anticipate the need, in the following five years, for further growth in the overall library budget.

In addition to traditional library materials and functions, the College archives fall within the library's jurisdiction. The archive collections have far outgrown the limited space allocated to them and the ability of a part-time archivist to manage the collections. Relocation of the archives to a more suitable space as well as increasing staff time to manage the materials is crucial to the College's ability to care for and preserve the history and heritage of Saint Mary's as well as to permit use of the archived materials.

Finally, libraries today are adding facilities and services that are traditionally academic but have not historically been seen as part of the library; e.g., writing centers, tutoring centers, classrooms, sabbatical spaces, faculty offices, and career centers. We have already begun this new direction at Saint Mary's with the location of the Huisiking Instructional Technology Resource Center, the Writing Center, and the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities in our library. In our strategic planning, we will continue to explore ways in which the existing space in our library can function as a new learning space.⁷

⁷ Scott Jaschik "More than Coffee and Wireless" at <http://insidehighered.com/news/2007/7/10/scup>



RECOMMENDATION 6

Reduce the Teaching Load

Progress toward national academic recognition will be aided by having a teaching load that more closely resembles that of our aspirational peers. During an academic year members of Saint Mary's faculty currently teach three courses one semester and four courses the other semester (known as a 3 / 4 load). Most of our aspirational peers teach far less, some as few as 2 / 2. Our ultimate goal is to reduce the teaching load for all members of the faculty to 3 / 3, but a number of decisions must be made and supporting resources put in place before that goal can be equitably achieved. The reduction will have several benefits. Teaching effectiveness should improve. In order to teach seven courses a year, certain compromises are necessary, the most obvious of which are the number of graded tests and assignments and time spent with students outside of class. Reducing the number of course preparations and courses per year will also afford faculty additional time to explore collaborative projects with each other and with students, as well as to pursue research and scholarship. The implementation of this change must be undertaken with due concern for its impact upon the availability of courses and upon the budget of the College.

RECOMMENDATION 7

Improve the Academic Profile of the First-Year Class

Improving the academic profile of the first-year class is another element that will enhance Saint Mary's national academic reputation. We seek to improve our reputation not because an enhanced reputation is itself our end goal. Our end goal is to provide our graduates with the greatest number of opportunities to improve our world. Because we believe so strongly that the education we provide produces young women with uncommon ability to make a positive difference in the world, we seek to have every door open to our graduates. An enhanced academic reputation opens doors.

Saint Mary's plans to recruit a first-year class with a mean grade point average of 3.75, a median SAT of 1180, and 35% of the class having graduated in the top 10% of her high school class. As one means to achieve that goal, the College will enhance the prestige of the Presidential Scholars Program.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Educate for a Global Community

Communication with a friend or colleague halfway around the world is now instantaneous and essentially free. Thomas Friedman has convinced almost everyone that the "World is Flat." It is no longer sufficient for our graduates to be prepared to work only in the United States, even though it is a complex society that blends many cultures. Today's graduates must be prepared to work with, and compete with, colleagues from around the globe and potentially to spend some portion of their careers living outside the United States. To prepare our students to fully participate in the emerging global community, we must expand their

opportunities for international study and further internationalize the College community and its curriculum.⁸ Our five-year goal is to have one-half of Saint Mary's students participate in an international study program. During the same time period, it is also our goal to increase the presence of international students on the campus (see Recommendation 13) and to expand our curricular offerings in the core international studies areas.

RECOMMENDATION 9

Provide High Quality and Highly Reliable Information Systems and the Infrastructure to Support Them

Information technology is more than a tool to support the administrative and educational efforts of the College. Advanced technologies play a major role in shaping the way that we learn, think, and interact. To achieve the academic distinction to which we aspire, Saint Mary's must provide fast, highly reliable, and robust IT systems for our administrative offices as well as for our instructional technology and academic computing efforts.

The digital revolution, with all of its effects, is in the midst of unfolding. Only the wealthiest of institutions can attempt to keep pace with the leading edge of technological developments. While Saint Mary's has neither the resources nor the need to be at the leading edge of technological advancement, we must at least advance along with other excellent undergraduate colleges.

Several technology-related projects will benefit both administrative and academic areas of the College. These projects include: a faster data link, a content management software system to assist us in displaying timely and accurate information on our Web site, a Web portal, and a One-Card system for both security and campus purchases.

Some technology initiatives will exclusively benefit instructional and academic computing. Our students must be technologically literate. Students acquire the highest level of technological skills when those skills are required in their courses. To ensure that Saint Mary's graduates are technologically proficient, we must research, test, and use emerging technologies. During the next five years, we hope to do the following:

1. assess our students' technological readiness;
2. further integrate technology into the teaching and learning environment;
3. create an e-fellows program to prepare faculty to carry out the integration described above;
4. add 25 additional technology-enabled classrooms on campus; and
5. create internships and apprenticeships in our own IT Office to provide interested students with intensive hands-on technology expertise prior to graduation.

⁸ According to a recent study of the Hanover Research Council, "The impetus for curriculum change cited by virtually every university undergoing curriculum reform has been the greater need for an 'international education.'" ("Trends in Curriculum Reform at Top American Universities" 2007, p.2)



RECOMMENDATION 10

Focus and Coordinate the Centers of Distinction

Saint Mary's three centers of distinction are the Center for Women's InterCultural Leadership, the Center for Academic Innovation, and the Center for Spirituality.

The initial funding for the Center for Women's InterCultural Leadership (CWIL) will be expended by the close of fiscal year 2008. The Center's work has increased the visibility of the College both nationally and internationally; it has been instrumental in the recruitment of diverse faculty to Saint Mary's as well as in bringing intercultural programming to the College. The College's goal is to more fully integrate CWIL into the Academic Affairs Division and that division's budget so that we may continue to reap the benefits of its presence on our campus. In the future, the Center's reduced budget will necessitate a narrowing of its activities and a clearer focus for its work. Those activities that bring the greatest direct benefit to the College should continue: among them are the Faculty Fellows Program, the sponsorship of excellent conferences and external speakers who bring international and multicultural issues to the fore, the Certificate Program in Intercultural Leadership, and the development and coordination of the College's international and intercultural study experiences. Other CWIL activities have enormous potential to provide opportunities for experiential learning, internships, and social justice outreach and could be integrated into other divisions of the College.

The Center for Academic Innovation has focused on the faculty's pedagogical and scholarly development with some attention to undergraduate research through Student Independent Study and Research (SISTAR) grants. It is our goal to focus the Center on multiple forms of academic development, including expanded opportunities for student/faculty research and scholarship partnerships. The Center, in collaboration with the Development Office, will become known in the College community as a resource for those individuals seeking external academic grant support.

The Center for Spirituality, a part of the Division for Mission and the first of the Centers of Distinction to be established, advances the mission of Saint Mary's College with particular attention to spirituality as both an academic discipline and a way of life. In addition to the Academic Division, the Center for Spirituality is in a unique position to address the broader issues involving the interaction of faith and reason. We must integrate the Center into the academic life of the College in a more thoughtful and deliberate way.

RECOMMENDATION 11

Develop and Implement a First-Year Experience

To create the dynamic intellectual community that we envision, Saint Mary's must bridge the space that traditionally divides the classroom and the life of the mind from student life outside the classroom. To that end, we recommend development of integrative student learning experiences across the four years a student is in residence at Saint Mary's, including a First-Year Experience jointly run by the Academic Affairs Division, the Mission Division, and the Student Affairs Division. The First-Year Experience will be required of all first-year students and consist of a variety of programs spread throughout the students' first year at Saint Mary's. The programs will examine, among other things, the history of the College and of our sponsors, the Sisters of the Holy Cross, and introduce students to various spiritual, academic, and personal development aspects of the curriculum as well as the general college experience. We will provide our students with a much richer introduction to college life than the traditional first-year orientation program and help them see the wide variety of new experiences they confront as part of a coherent educational experience. This experience will continue into the student's second through fourth years, with special attention to the "forgotten sophomore" year. In addition, the cross-division cooperation between Academic Affairs, Mission, and Student Affairs that will be required to make this program successful will create synergies between the three divisions that do not now exist.

RECOMMENDATION 12

Assess and Revise Academic Advising

First-year experiences, sophomore programming, and transfer student retention efforts are only as successful as the foundations upon which they are built. In particular, they depend upon the strength of the academic advising system that supports a student prior to the time at which she declares a major area of study. We must evaluate Saint Mary's current system of advising pre-matriculated first-year students, matriculated first-year students, sophomores, and transfers to determine if that system ensures that students are assisted to pursue General Education courses and prerequisite courses that best fit their talents, abilities, and goals. Areas of concern identified by the evaluation process must be addressed. Consideration should be given to inclusion of faculty advisors during summer and fall orientations.

RECOMMENDATION 13

Experiential Learning for Every Student

As an engagement point between the classroom and co-curricular activities, we recommend that each student benefit from some form of experiential education. This educational experience may take a variety of forms: an internship, a practicum, a research project, a career development opportunity, a community-based learning experience, or a service project. Evaluation of this recommendation and of various ways in which it might be implemented should become part of the General Education discussion.



RECOMMENDATION 14

Improve Career Services

There currently are two full-time staff members in the Center for Career Opportunities, a Director and a recently approved full-time Assistant Director. The Center will work closely with the academic departments and the First-Year Experience to advise students in the sophomore year. Pre-internships and internship experiences must be developed for students from all different disciplines. The office will shift from an emphasis on career services to that of career planning and placement. The development of new employer relations and a program of employer recruitment will be integral to this new emphasis. An e-portfolio advising system will be developed and managed from this office.

GOAL #2

Sharpen our Focus as a Catholic and Women-Centered Community

The unique niche that Saint Mary's occupies in the landscape of American higher education is that Saint Mary's is the Catholic women's college with the strongest academic reputation. We seek to sharpen our focus as both a women's college and a Catholic college. At times Saint Mary's has shied away from emphasizing that it is a women's college or that it is Catholic. It is our goal to deepen our understanding of both those facets of our identity and to strengthen our ability to live out those aspects of our identity. Furthermore, we must learn to better articulate our role as a college that is equally committed to both those aspects of our complex identity.

RECOMMENDATION 15

Foster a Stronger Catholic Community on Campus

While our vision is to have Saint Mary's recognized as being among the leading liberal arts colleges in the country, we must also continue to cultivate and attend to the Catholicity of the College. To that end, we are committed to growth in faith life as a key educational experience of our students. We must offer both curricular and co-curricular programs that examine, explore, and explicate key elements of Catholicity related to the Church, culture, the curriculum, and student life. The richness of the Catholic intellectual tradition and of Catholic social teachings must be made available to and rendered comprehensible to our students. We must expand opportunities for personal faith development and increase our institutional commitment to service to others.

While not wavering from this commitment, we must be ever conscious that not all members of this community are Catholic, or Christian, and that all are welcome here. Because Saint Mary's is an intellectual community, discussion of issues of belief or non-belief must be as much a part of our discourse as discussion of other issues.

We will strengthen the Center for Spirituality so that it may play a more national role as well as having increased visibility and impact upon campus life.

GOAL #3

Diversify the Campus

The need to diversify arises from the role that diversification can play in making Saint Mary's a more vibrant learning community and preparing all of its students for life and work in a diverse and global world. Additionally, the social justice call to correct the inequities that are the product of our political, cultural, and economic history mandates diversification of the best educational institutions in the country. Furthermore, the fact that the Catholic Church is a worldwide organization encompassing people of every race means that if Saint Mary's fails to become a community that is inclusive of women of many races, ethnicities, and cultures, the College's ability to provide intellectual leadership within the Church will be ever more and more marginal. It is imperative that we increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the student body, faculty, staff, and administration and increase the socioeconomic diversity of the student body.

RECOMMENDATION 16

Diversify the Student Body

Saint Mary's ultimate goal is to have a student body reflective of the racial and ethnic composition of the general population in the geographic areas from which the College draws its students.

Over the next five years, we aim to increase the enrollment of students from historically underrepresented minorities to at least 15% and to increase the enrollment of international students to at least 4%. Without a more diverse student body, many of the most academically talented young women will avoid Saint Mary's College because they realize that the lack of diversity will adversely impact their educational experience. Participation in the Posse Program is one means by which we hope to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the student body as well as its socioeconomic diversity.

RECOMMENDATION 17

Diversify the Faculty and Staff

It is our goal to have a diverse workforce at Saint Mary's College. In order to do so, it is our aim to have a diverse applicant pool in every single search. It is our belief that if the efforts needed to bring about diverse pools are expended, diverse candidates will rise to the top of the pool in sufficient numbers to meet our goal of a truly diverse community from top to bottom. We will continue professional development efforts and the transformation of campus culture to make certain that the College truly is a welcoming and supportive place for all employees.



GOAL #4

Stabilize and Grow Enrollment

Saint Mary's is committed to being a small, residential college. Like most small colleges, Saint Mary's experiences enrollment swings. When enrollment declines even by a small percentage, the decline strains Saint Mary's operating budget, especially when the total student census is below 1600. Saint Mary's first seeks to stabilize enrollment at a minimum of 1600 students. Our longer range goal is to grow enrollment to between 1700 and 1750. We plan to do so while controlling our discount rate, improving the academic profile of the first-year class, and increasing the diversity of the student body. Achievement of these goals will require not only success in recruiting incoming students, but also assessment of student needs in order to improve student satisfaction and success, all of which should result in a higher retention rate and an improved graduation rate.

RECOMMENDATION 18

Ensure a Minimum Student Population of 1600

Development and implementation of enrollment strategies and processes that allow the College to be confident that the student population will not drop below 1600 will minimize the strain that small variations in enrollment cause the College. While the longer term goal is to increase enrollment to between 1700 and 1750, the College must first build enrollment to the level of 1600 and become confident of sustaining at least that level.

In order to do so, Saint Mary's must grow its first-year applicant pool from 1200 to 1500 well qualified applicants. The College also must expand its geographic market so that at least 35% of first-year students come from beyond the College's traditional primary market in the states of Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Ohio. Yet, growth in the size of the class cannot be achieved at the cost of an ever increasing discount rate. The stated tuition, before any scholarship aid is taken into consideration, is not sufficient to cover the cost of educating a student. The difference between the sticker price and the full cost of educating a student is not even fully covered by the pay out on the endowment and annual unrestricted giving to the College. Neither Saint Mary's endowment income nor its annual unrestricted giving is sufficient to cover a greatly increased discount rate.

Neither the enrollment goals nor the academic quality goals will be achieved if Saint Mary's focuses only on recruitment and fails to attend to student retention. Our five-year goal is to improve our sophomore retention rate to 90% and our four-year graduation rate to 75%.

RECOMMENDATION 19

Meet Full Financial Need of Pell Grant Eligible Students

A student's financial need is the difference between the estimated cost of attending Saint Mary's College and the amount the student and her family is expected to contribute toward those costs. At Saint Mary's, the expected family contribution is determined by using both the Federal Financial Aid Application (FAFSA) and the College Scholarship Service's Profile aid application. FAFSA determines a student's eligibility for federal and state aid. The Profile provides a more complete picture of a student's true need and Saint Mary's uses the Profile to determine the need-based aid that the College provides a student.

It is our long-term goal to meet the full financial need of every Saint Mary's student. We do not want any student to be unable to attend Saint Mary's because she lacks the financial means to do so. In the near term, it is our goal to meet the full need of our Pell eligible students. Pell eligible students are the neediest, as need is defined under the federal guidelines. In general, a student from a family of four with one child in college would qualify for a Pell Grant only if the family's income is less than \$40,000 per year. Saint Mary's generally has between 76 and 90 Pell eligible students in the student body. In the 2007-08 academic year, those students who qualify for the maximum Pell Grant will have approximately 12% of their Saint Mary's tuition, room, and board paid for by the grant. Our current policy provides them with at least full tuition, but they still have unmet needs after applying the standard \$3,500 Stafford Loan. Many of these students are left only with the option of utilizing an alternative loan because the family cannot afford the monthly payment required under the PLUS Loan. As part of our Catholic mission to reach out to those with the greatest need, the College must find ways to allow these students to pursue a Saint Mary's education.

RECOMMENDATION 20

Invest in Athletic and Recreation Programs

Providing a healthy environment, helping students to build leadership skills and confidence, and providing quality athletic programs all support student success in the classroom as well as outside of it.

The Athletic Program needs additional staff and resources for recruiting and team travel. We need to create full-time positions for the head coaches of soccer, swimming and diving, tennis, and cross country. Coaches who are employed full-time at the College are desirable for a number of reasons. Most importantly, they are much more integrated into the life and culture of the College and are expected to embrace and convey the values of the school. Because they have the time to focus on their coaching, they are often better coaches and they are more likely to be consistently present and to have a long tenure at the College. Full-time coaches also have recruiting responsibilities. Until recently, all of the varsity athletic teams had part-time coaches, meaning that a coach typically held a full-time position someplace off the campus. Now, four of the eight coaches have



full-time positions at Saint Mary's, but all of them have responsibilities, either in the Athletic Department or elsewhere on campus, in addition to their coaching responsibilities. We plan to continue that model.

Additional financial resources are also needed to support travel for recruiting and the cost of team travel. The cost of team travel continues to rise and, for safety reasons, we need to relieve coaches of the burden of driving a van or bus to away competitions.

Athletic and recreation facilities need improvement. The indoor sports facilities need more court space, more locker rooms for the teams and the College community, training space, office space for the coaching staff, and improved fitness space. Swimming and diving facilities are a dream, but would need, in addition to the construction costs, a substantial endowment for operation and maintenance. Upgrading of the outdoor playing fields is also a priority.

RECOMMENDATION 2I

Keep Current the Research on and Design of College Marketing Materials

Recruiting incoming first-year students and their families is increasingly competitive. Providing an excellent collegiate experience is necessary but not sufficient to convince an ambitious young woman to enroll at a particular school. Evidence of the quality of the experience must be marshaled and responses must be provided to her often unvoiced concerns and questions. In order to effectively do so, we must be aware of the perceptions of Saint Mary's and of the issues that are uppermost in the minds of seventeen-year-olds and their parents. We must periodically repeat the kind of research and redesign of College marketing materials that is currently underway with our Identity Initiative.

This recommendation also supports Goal #7.

GOAL #5

Recruit and Retain the Best Employees

No other factors are as essential to the health and success of the College as attracting and retaining the best people. With each new hire, we should improve the College. Newcomers must be welcomed into the Saint Mary's community, oriented to its mission, and supported in their quest to do their best work. We must offer competitive salaries and benefits for all faculty, staff, and administrators. In order to do so, we must be ever mindful of achieving and maintaining the optimum ratio of faculty, staff, and administrative members to students.

RECOMMENDATION 22**Improve Salary and Compensation Levels for All Employees**

It is imperative that the College improve salary and compensation levels for all employees or we risk serving as a training ground from which our employees routinely move to campuses offering higher salaries. It is our goal to raise faculty compensation to at least the 80th percentile of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) survey of four-year Baccalaureate Institutions. It is also our goal to raise entry level staff salaries to the 40th percentile of the target market and entry level administrative salaries to the 40th percentile of the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA) benchmark. Corresponding adjustments will be made to long standing employees. The compensation of full-time employees must take priority, but adjunct faculty salaries and other part-time salaries also require attention.

RECOMMENDATION 23**Achieve Optimum Staffing Levels**

In addition, it is our duty to determine the optimum administrative staff to student ratio by division and department and to take advantage of transfers, retirements, and turnover to achieve the optimal size. Similarly, as faculty members retire and student enrollment increases, it is our goal to maintain a faculty to student ratio of eleven to one.

RECOMMENDATION 24**Improve Employee Development Programs**

Having hired the right persons, it is our obligation to provide them with a comprehensive and mandatory orientation session, with a new employee mentoring program, and with ongoing training and development opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION 25**Improve Internal Communication**

Finally, it is our goal to achieve effective internal communications, especially communication across divisions of the College. A communication plan for various internal constituencies will be developed and implemented.

GOAL #6*Improve the Physical Campus and Its Environmental Impact*

The beauty of Saint Mary's campus is legendary. We must preserve and enhance the traditional beauty of the buildings and landscape as well as the overall sense of harmony and tranquility that create an ideal setting for intellectual work.



We have a duty to preserve and enhance this special place for future generations of learners. In addition to being aesthetically pleasing, the College must have high quality facilities that meet institutional needs, are energy efficient, and are otherwise environmentally sensitive. The College also must acquire and use land wisely and have a campus infrastructure that ensures an efficient, functional, pleasing, and safe campus.

RECOMMENDATION 26 Update the Master Plan

It is time to begin phase two of our campus Master Plan. The major pieces of phase one have been accomplished. In this next phase we must pay special attention to existing campus buildings. Several renovation projects must be undertaken in Madeleva Hall, Hagggar Hall, Moreau Hall, Angela Athletic Facility, Le Mans Hall administrative offices, and residential facilities across the campus. Even in buildings not slated for renovation we have identified significant deferred maintenance needs and we must move forward to address those needs.

We do not envision much additional construction. If enrollment growth warrants it, the companion building to Opus Hall will be constructed.

RECOMMENDATION 27 Acquire Additional Land

Several parcels of land adjacent to the College will be important to the College's future. We recently purchased 4.4 acres of land located in front of the Welcome Center, the Clubhouse, and Madeleva Hall. The acquisition of three other parcels has priority: the athletic fields (18.4 acres), the front land extending along highway 933, and an additional 20 acres immediately north of the athletic fields.

GOAL #7

Increase Financial Resources

Saint Mary's has long known how to do more with less. There is, however, a limit to the advancement of an institution when its financial resources lag significantly behind its aspirational peers. For example, despite their greater national recognition, some of our aspirational peers have higher discount rates than Saint Mary's. Schools with a higher discount rate are able to offer more financial aid to a given student than Saint Mary's can offer. If Saint Mary's competes for a high talent student with a school that has a stronger reputation and that school also provides the student with more financial aid, it is not likely that the student will enroll at Saint Mary's College. Our aspirational peers are able to support a higher discount rate because their endowments are several multiples of ours.

Saint Mary's College must increase its financial resources in order to expand its support of academic programs, financial aid, and strategic faculty growth. Achievement of most of the preceding goals will require the infusion of additional financial resources. We must seek those resources and ensure that once acquired we steward those resources responsibly.

RECOMMENDATION 28

Increase the Endowment

Saint Mary's must increase its endowment by at least \$100 million. This will require the launching of a comprehensive campaign. An increased endowment will provide the College with assets needed to increase its financial aid as well as enhance its academic programs. Our first financial aid goal is to meet the full financial need of at least those students who are eligible for the Pell Grant, our neediest students.

RECOMMENDATION 29

Increase the Rate of Alumnae Giving

In addition to increasing the endowment, it is our goal to increase alumnae participation in restricted and unrestricted giving to 45% of our alumnae. By many standards, our current alumnae participation rate of 32% is unacceptable. Given the strong attachment to Saint Mary's evidenced by attendance at reunions, we can and should increase the participation rate.

CONCLUSION

Saint Mary's College has a proud past and a bright future. We are entrusted with the responsibility of planning for the continuing advancement and improvement of this great College. Our goal is to aggressively move the College forward. We recognize, however, that this specific plan is but one step in a long series of steps that have been taken and will be taken to help Saint Mary's College achieve its full potential. This is, after all, only a five-year plan. The principles and initiatives outlined here are such that if the members of the College community work together with energy and efficiency and if our friends and alumnae work with us, the goals can be accomplished within a five-year time frame.



