



LEADERSHIP SOCIETY FEBRUARY UPDATE

You are receiving this letter because you are a member of Saint Mary's Leadership Society, a family of givers who generously contribute \$1,000 or more annually to the university.

Greetings!

Sharing Saint Mary's good news and telling its story, including alumni successes and service, student accomplishment, and stellar faculty work is my privilege as the vice president of marketing and communication. I have served the university since September 2020, after leading communications and marketing for Loyola University Chicago and other universities for 15 years. Journalism was my first career, and I have been fortunate to work for organizations that impact communities and beyond through knowledge, service, and leadership. Simply put, well informed citizens, in our case students, improve and lead society.

My team's work builds awareness, visibility, and Saint Mary's reputation. We refreshed the university's brand and launched a new website last year to create clarity, consistency, and interest. Our brand comes to life with every interaction from every member of our community. This ranges from a phone call to a class; from an alumni event to career services; from mission, sports, arts, and other student activities to residence life. We use the phrase "Because of you" in our branding, and it means many things: we commit to our mission because of you and our work is because of you. It also indicates the special nature of a Saint Mary's education — because of you, the world will be a better place, workplaces will be more virtuous, and customers will have better experiences. Every billboard, radio spot, video clip, online post, and media story speaks to the brand. We hope you have seen and heard stories of the amazing things happening at Saint Mary's. We tell a lot of stories about members of our community like you; these stories help prospective students imagine their own Saint Mary's journey and bring life to our brand. Our efforts support recruitment of new students from the enhanced, new website, which we are continually improving, to branded billboards (including 60 that ran in the Twin Cities in December), to more and better targeting of prospective students seeking the special education Saint Mary's provides.

At Saint Mary's, we seek to marry our essence with the values and outcomes sought by prospective students. All of us at Saint Mary's — staff, students, alumni, and benefactors like you — are brand ambassadors and play a vital role in ensuring Saint Mary's is top of mind and recommended to students seeking to further their education.

Kevin Ebben B'04, director of strategic partnerships, is elevating the way we connect with employers and corporate partners, embracing a shift from transactional to transformational mutually beneficial relationships. Bringing considerable experience from the private sector, including starting his own business, Kevin has a deep understanding of the unique and lasting power of authentic, trust-based relationships. By taking the time to intentionally connect with and learn from employers, Kevin is charting pathways for our programs to be tailored to the needs of the marketplace today. If you have ideas for potential corporate partners for Kevin to connect with, please reach out to him (kebben@smumn.edu | 612-238-4573).

Fastenal provides an enduring and positive model for the kinds of partnerships we aim to build. A remarkable Fortune 500 company, Fastenal is a national corporate leader in the backyard of our Winona Campus. Our students regularly complete internships at Fastenal, moving on to meaningful careers and gaining invaluable experiences. “Getting an opportunity to work in a real-world experience is something you don’t get in a lot of university settings,” reflected Parker Swanson ’23, a triple major in Business Intelligence and Analytics, Marketing, and Management. “Saint Mary’s close relationship with Fastenal has allowed a lot of different students to have opportunities, to understand what they like and what they don’t ... working with five different teams this summer helped me understand what I like, what I’m good at.”

As mentioned, serving as a brand ambassador for Saint Mary’s is the best “advertising” we could ask for. That is what our alumni do by leading in their careers and their communities. Enthusiasm for Saint Mary’s is infectious. Ask David Dahlstrom B’10; he and his wife Lindsey B’11 return to campus for baseball and volleyball games, play in university golf tournaments, and generously support our annual operations. David has attended career fairs on campus, done video testimonials, and works to actively recruit Saint Mary’s students into internships and full-time positions at Hormel Foods, where he serves as director of investor relations. Each year, David participates in business departments events, an in-class presentation for accounting students, and other professional networking opportunities. “The school did so much for me. So in return, I need to give back,” reflected David.

When you are at a springtime barbeque, a family birthday celebration, a neighborhood block party — whenever you have the chance, share your Saint Mary’s story. This, more than anything else, is how we strengthen our brand and our future as a university.

Live Jesus in our Hearts, Forever!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Shannon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelly Shannon
Vice President of Marketing and Communication

P.S. Please join us for an opportunity to support our inspiring student-athletes, past and present, at the Cardinal Excellence Fund Dinner and Hall of Fame Awards Ceremony next month at Vision’s Event Center in Winona. At 6 p.m. on Saturday, March 11, we will induct the Saint Mary’s Sports Hall of Fame Class of 2023, celebrate the accomplishments of Cardinal athletics, and recognize the generosity of benefactors like you. For more information about the 2023 inductees and to register, visit connect.smumn.edu/CEFDinner.