



LEADERSHIP SOCIETY SEPTEMBER UPDATE

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

Greetings!

Welcome to a new academic year!

The start of the school year holds unique memories for each of us. As I greet new students, I warmly welcome them to our Saint Mary's family, where they are quickly enveloped by a community that cares. In some ways, Saint Mary's close community reminds me of my boyhood on the West End of Saint Paul, in the parish of Saint Francis de Sales. Everyone knew everyone, in the classic ways that neighborhoods flourish. I hope our new and returning students feel known as beloved children of God — in their classrooms, in their activities, and by their friends.

A big part of that close-knit community was our Catholic education and how we marked the start of each new year by gathering families and friends together. Fundamentally, a Catholic education is inspired by Christ, who is the best role model for welcoming both old and new. If Christ is the center of our Catholic education, then we have the potential to promote a truly flourishing life through an "... educational philosophy in which faith, culture, and life are brought into harmony."* We can ask the big questions: What does it mean to be a good person? What is ethical? We also want to help our students experience God's grace and His presence, whether they are of our shared faith, another faith, or no faith at all. In this, we try to convey: "You are of inestimable value because you are created in God's image." We work to bring people into the university to experience this amazing opportunity and grow with us.

Among the 280 new students we welcome, this first-year class has the largest number ever of First Generation Initiative (FGI) scholars. With the support of the Otto Bremer Trust, 24 scholarships were offered for new FGI students on the Winona Campus.

The Otto Bremer Trust is a private charitable trust based in Saint Paul, Minn. It was created in 1944 by Otto Bremer, a dedicated community leader involved in civic, financial, and corporate life. The Trust was inspired by our goals to increase Winona enrollment, and especially by the success of the FGI program in breaking the cycle of poverty for students and families with the greatest needs.

The Otto Bremer Trust committed a \$600,000 matching gift, providing a \$25,000 scholarship when matched dollar-for-dollar by \$25,000 from another Saint Mary's benefactor. I am impressed by our generous FGI supporters who came through with a total of \$600,000 in contributions to the FGI scholarships to earn the match of the Bremer Trust. I am also grateful to the Otto Bremer trustees who offered this FGI match, including Charlotte S. Johnson, Daniel C. Reardon, and Francis M. Miley C'02 (also a past parent).

Another bright example of change is found in our growing enrollment numbers and particularly the growth of our nursing programs. The incoming undergraduate nursing cohort reached a total of 50 incoming students! It is the fourth undergraduate nursing cohort and the first cohort to have a waiting list. Our new Doctor of Nursing Practice in the Nurse Anesthesiology program has also been a source of enrollment growth, and the first cohort has 21 doctoral students. The program is a full-time, 36-month commitment to both academic work and clinical rotations.

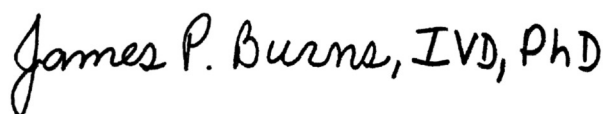
The nursing programs are expanding our reach. In partnership with Benedictine Living Community (Saint Anne Hospice) in Winona, our nursing classrooms hosted community education courses for 69 Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and additional CPR students.

Saint Mary's students have reaped the benefits of having CPR and CNA classes offered directly on campus. Additionally, community members taking CNA courses have benefited from using our state-of-the-art nursing skills lab for training. During the school year, the undergraduate program uses the skills lab during the day, and the Benedictine Living Community typically uses the lab after 3 p.m. for evening classes. In the summer, Benedictine students are able to utilize the lab during the day for their classes. Thanks to this collaborative effort, the nursing suite is now buzzing with activity year-round!

Also on the philanthropy front, in June an anonymous benefactor, a longtime university supporter, made a \$3 million estate gift commitment. Saint Mary's continues to build toward its ongoing \$100 million challenge, made in 2023. The benefactor shared that the reasons behind this commitment are multifold: "I believe in education, and education was always very important to my family. Saint Mary's has always been a special place, and I'd like to see the endowment grow so it will survive long into the future and be as helpful to future students as it was to me. It prepared me well for a career in the financial industry, and I built lifelong friendships there." I am extremely thankful for the generosity of our benefactors.

Finally, I celebrated with the 330 alumni and friends who attended events over Reunion Weekend 2024 in June. Every guest I spoke with had a fun time and shared fond memories, old and new. I especially celebrate members of the Class of 1974 — marking their Golden Reunion — which brought together nearly 60 alumni. Thanks to everyone who returned to Saint Mary's for that special weekend.

Live Jesus in our hearts, Forever!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James P. Burns, IVD, PhD". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

The Very Rev. James P. Burns, IVD, Ph.D.
President, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota

P.S. As members of our Leadership Society, you should have received a survey opportunity from Gary Klein, our vice president of advancement, to provide your feedback and preferences regarding this monthly letter. I welcome your participation as Saint Mary's works to communicate with you in the most effective and meaningful ways possible.