



LEADERSHIP SOCIETY JANUARY 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!

As the spring semester begins, I am happy to provide an update on our undergraduate students on the Winona Campus. For the past two years, I have been dean of the College, while also leading the John C. Parmer School of the Sciences and the School of Arts and Humanities. My top priority is the success of our students, and I am blessed to work with our faculty and staff to serve these young people.

As dean on the Winona Campus, I provide leadership to improve the academic experience for students and benefit their futures. In 2022, the Board of Trustees approved changes to align new and existing academic programs with student interests and workforce needs. With redesigned general education requirements, the curriculum remains rooted in our Lasallian Catholic values. Students are provided a broad based academic foundation that includes character and virtue formation through theology, philosophy, social sciences, and the arts.

Saint Mary's is ensuring that students currently in teach-out majors have necessary classes for completing their programs in humanities, arts, and social sciences disciplines. Saint Mary's is honoring our academic commitment to these students, while simultaneously growing our majors in business, health, and sciences.

In 2015, the School of the Sciences was named in honor of John C. Parmer, a 1950 alumnus who majored in chemistry. John co-founded Cole-Parmer Instrument Company, an international supplier and manufacturer of laboratory and industrial equipment, and the school benefited from a gift from the John C. Parmer and Carolyn Noonan Parmer Private Foundation. As dean of the Parmer School, I am building on the strengths of our current faculty as I fill open faculty positions in biology and mathematics. Our partnership with Mayo Clinic is bearing fruits, and in May, the first cohort of students in the physician assistant program will graduate with their dual degrees. The mathematics department accepted students in a new data science track of our mathematical sciences major. The chemistry faculty applied this year for accreditation with the American Chemical Society.

My connections to Saint Mary's University of Minnesota are deep. I received my undergraduate degree from Saint Mary's in 1999 and teaching licensure and a master's degree from Saint Mary's in 2000 as a Remick Fellow for character development and ethical leadership in Catholic schools. After teaching high school for six years, I returned to graduate school, earning a master's degree from South Dakota State University in 2008 and a Ph.D. in 2011 from Iowa State University, both in mathematics. I returned to Saint Mary's in 2014 as a faculty member, teaching a wide range of courses in mathematics, statistics, and quantitative reasoning, and now serving as dean.

My daughter Mary is a student at Saint Mary's with a double major in mathematical sciences and computer science. She enjoys the renovated spaces on campus, including Aquinas Hall, the new home for the sciences and business. Mary's generation of students had their education deeply impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic, but are continuing to bring energy back to campus life through attendance at athletic and arts events, visiting speakers, and campus activities.

While our students are generally healthy and happy, there is an increased awareness of mental health and the needs of our students. Two current staff members and alumni, Sam Borawski B'15, M'17 and Katie Pierpont B'23 are leading a campus initiative, *A Future Full of Hope: Enhancing Mental Health and Suicide Prevention*. Their work for mental health awareness is shared with student leaders from the Green Bandana Club, one of the biggest student organizations on campus. The students are working to break down stigma surrounding mental health by hosting a variety of trainings on suicide awareness and prevention and advocacy events. Last year, Saint Mary's was awarded a national grant for \$300,000 from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration. Sam and Katie have used this financial support to help all athletic coaches, hall directors, resident assistants, and academic support staff be certified in Mental Health First Aid.

You have much to be proud of as Cardinal alumni, friends, and financial supporters of Saint Mary's. I am grateful that your generous contributions to the university help our faculty and staff serve our students. Because of you, Saint Mary's begins 2024 with strength and hope.

With gratitude,

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

Dr. Darren Row B'99, M'00
Dean of the College, the John C. Parmer School of the Sciences,
and the School of Arts and Humanities

P.S. Save the date for Wednesday, April 10, when Jon Clifton, CEO of the Gallup Organization, the global analytics and advisory firm, will serve as the keynote speaker for the Hendrickson Forum on Saint Mary's Minneapolis Campus. The event will begin at 11 a.m. with the lunch and keynote from noon to 1:30 p.m. To learn more, visit smumn.edu/hendricksonforum. Registration will be available Feb. 14 - March 31.