



LEADERSHIP SOCIETY MARCH 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 dean of the School of Health and Human Services at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, every day I lean into my career training as an occupational therapist to bring hands-on leadership to our varied and diverse programs.

I'm proud that our students navigate their paths to degrees and professional certifications, guided by faculty with clinical and lived experiences. With growing need for healthcare professionals, our students are in high demand. Our curriculum is embedded with ethical decision making and health equity to inform our future health professionals. As dean of the School, I make sure students are empowered as compassionate professionals who can meet the needs of society. Health care is a passion for me and my team!

It is important to me that I focus on being present to the people I serve – our faculty and students – and to walk alongside them in their journey. It's about being available, listening, and getting down in the trenches with them on the day-to-day work, including tackling tough situations and celebrating accomplishments.

We prepare students to be professionals in the “helping” fields, serving some of the most vulnerable populations. Students major in psychology, criminal justice, and nursing at the undergraduate level, and they study in a variety of graduate programs, including nurse anesthesia, counseling, public health, healthcare administration, and social work. Psychology is one of the largest majors in Winona, and we are creating new “pathways” for undergraduates to save money and time as they work toward our master's and doctoral programs.

More and more students are choosing the practical approach to service and leadership offered at Saint Mary's. At the undergraduate level, a record number of students are studying in our B.S. in Nursing program. The same is true at the graduate level, with record numbers of students in our Doctor of Nursing Practice Nurse Anesthesiology program. This growth is tied to the longstanding tradition of the De La Salle Christian Brothers to provide an excellent, practical education to underserved populations of students who might not otherwise have access.

Our faculty continually find new ways to engage students. Our Master of Social Work (MSW) has over 300 students completing their field assignments in over 26 states, and multiple professionals have commented they prefer the preparation and work ethic of our student interns over other universities' students. A dual license option is planned for fall 2024 for students seeking an MSW degree and an alcohol and drug counselor (LADC) licensure.

Dr. Robin Wisniewski is co-program director for the Master's in Counseling and Psychological Services, one of the largest programs at Saint Mary's, and led faculty in developing a new online cohort to address rural mental health needs. In honor of her efforts, Dr. Wisniewski was recognized as a Distinguished Lasallian Educator at Saint Mary's.

Among our students, 40 religious Sisters will receive their bachelor's and master's degrees in May. The Catholic Sisters take on roles as healers, missionaries, and educators to build vibrant faith communities in some of America's poorest regions. Through the U.S.-Latin American Sisters Exchange Program, Saint Mary's partners with the Catholic Extension Society and the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation to provide intensive training in pastoral leadership and community health. The Sisters, originally from Latin America, minister to low-income and immigrant communities across the United States. While celebrating these 40 graduates this spring, I am excited to share that 55 Sisters will soon begin a new cohort with us.

I pray every day in gratitude for the supporters of Saint Mary's. Our students need help, and people like you — who generously give your time, your resources, and your prayers — genuinely lift us up at Saint Mary's. As the Latin American Sisters Program so aptly demonstrates, the world needs our students, and your generosity helps us to better serve and prepare them. Thank you!

Live Jesus in our Hearts, Forever!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Heinz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Amy" and the last name "Heinz" clearly distinguishable.

Amy Heinz
Dean, School of Health and Human Services

P.S. Join us for the Hendrickson Forum on Saint Mary's Minneapolis Campus on Wednesday, April 10, where Saint Mary's honors Mary Jo Copeland, founder and director of Sharing and Caring Hands, with the Hendrickson Medal for Ethical Leadership. Lunch begins at noon. You can register at smumn.edu/hendricksonforum until March 27.