



LEADERSHIP SOCIETY OCTOBER 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 a generous supporter, you are an essential partner in continuing the tradition of Lasallian Catholic education at Saint Mary's University. I am excited to update you on our enrollment as I complete my first year as vice president for enrollment management. When Father James Burns invited me to join Saint Mary's, he made it clear the importance and urgency to increase recruitment numbers without compromising our commitment to academic excellence. In this letter, even as we celebrate the point of radiance in our admission success, I also request your continued prayers, referrals, and financial support — all essential for continued enrollment growth.

Saint Mary's welcomed 302 new students to our Winona Campus in August. This includes 272 first-year students, a 25% increase in enrollment over the past year. There were also 30 new transfer students, 150% greater than last year's number. (That is not a typo.) Overall, the incoming student numbers for the undergraduate campus increased by 33% in just one year. These new students include 18 First Generation Initiative scholars, 42 nursing students (doubling the size of this new program) and a 40% increase of first-year students from the Chicagoland area. This turnaround is the result of the faith and good work of so many people, including faculty, staff, and student workers in a host of areas.

Due to this remarkable recruitment success, and combined with better than anticipated returning student numbers, our overall undergraduate enrollment exceeded our projections by 50 students! While most are from the Midwest, Saint Mary's has students from 33 states and 16 different countries. These students are a sign that we are heading in the right direction, but we cannot rest; there is more work to do. Our total undergraduate enrollment is 836 full-time students, and we know we need 900 students to ensure financial stability. The goal was echoed last year by an anonymous benefactor and his family who committed \$25 million to Saint Mary's with this same goal. Our community is up for this challenge, and making remarkable progress, but we need your help. Please continue to encourage family members and friends to join us.

Our School of Graduate and Professional Programs (SGPP), which offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in Minneapolis, Rochester, and online, has seen declining enrollments for the past eight years, and we are fully dedicated to correcting our course. This year, Saint Mary's has 2,979 adult students in SGPP programs. Our School of Health and Human Service has been particularly successful in growing enrollments in recent years, due in large part to the launch of the Master of Social Work program and the transition of the Nurse Anesthesiology program from a master's to a doctoral level. A newly developed online cohort of the M.A. in Counseling and Psychological Services surpassed its recruitment goal for the fall term, another encouraging success.

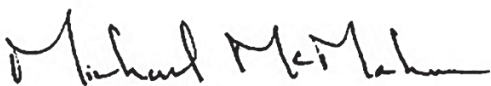
Like the Winona Campus, SGPP enrollment has been impacted by a number of factors, including the global pandemic and other headwinds facing higher education. As the leader for institutional enrollment, I am aware of these trends, yet insistent that they never become excuses. Our teams in academic leadership, marketing and communication, and enrollment are working closely to reverse our enrollment trend. Thanks to the generosity of benefactors, our leadership has invested significant new resources to enhance digital marketing to share our programs with potential students.

Our recruitment of graduate students is also aided by increased philanthropic support for scholarships that aid adult learners. Last year, the friends and family of the late Dr. Christina D. Huck, longtime program director of our M.A. in Counseling and Psychological Services program, came together to create a scholarship in her memory. This fall, the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation provided scholarships to four Catholic school elementary teachers to complete Saint Mary's new graduate certificate in Catholic School Leadership. These 2023-2024 Schulze Scholars include a second-grade teacher from St. Mary's in Owatonna, a middle school band teacher from Cotter Schools in Winona, and two first-grade teachers from the St. Cloud Diocese. Scholarships like this help us recruit emerging leaders for their profession and the community.

As I bring this update to a close, I was asked to share some more personal points as well. Promoting Catholic education is not only a job for me; it is deeply personal. I grew up in a Catholic family and attended a Catholic college. In my late teens, I fell away from the Church. Yet through God's grace, while serving as an intercollegiate football coach in North Dakota, I was befriended by a few everyday saints at that university who were witnesses to the Catholic faith. They lived the joyful truth of the Gospel in their lives. Through this experience of Christ at a university, my own life was transformed. I began to center this joy in the decisions that I made about my personal and professional life. I became a better husband, and eventually father to our three young children, now ages 5, 8, and 10. Living a life of faith led me to meet Father Burns and eventually to his invitation to lead the enrollment team. As my own life was transformed through those serving in Catholic higher education, I feel blessed to now serve that mission.

Increasing enrollment at Saint Mary's is part of my life's purpose, my vocation. Each of our students was created by God for a definite purpose. To paraphrase Saint John Henry Newman, God has created some work for each of our students that He has not committed to another. It is our privilege to help prepare our students to fulfill that work, no matter what their views might be concerning that all-loving God. It has been such a joy to be welcomed by this Saint Mary's University community, and to become familiar with the practical approach valued by Saint John Baptist de La Salle and to help students discover and fulfill the definite purpose for which they were created.

Live Jesus in our hearts, Forever!

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

Michael McMahon, Ed.D.
Vice President for Enrollment Management

PS: In honor of All Souls Day, I encourage you to share any names of loved ones who have passed on so that our university can keep them in our prayers. If you have not received your All Souls Day letter in the mail yet, you can share your names of remembrance online at connect.smumn.edu/all-souls.