



ST. THOMAS MORE COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

STRATEGIC PLAN 2015 -2020



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Our Mission

As the Catholic liberal arts college federated with the University of Saskatchewan, St. Thomas More College courageously explores the “riches of revelation and of nature so that the united endeavour of intelligence and faith will enable people to come to the full measure of their humanity” (Ex corde ecclesiae, 5).

We are an inclusive community open to all persons.

Through our teaching we are devoted to a partnership of learning and growth with our students which addresses the synthesis of faith and reason in all aspects of the human condition.

The creative discovery of truth and its open dissemination nourishes our life as teachers and members of the wider academic and Catholic intellectual community.

As a Catholic college we are called to share in Christ’s service to the people of God. Thus, the work of our college is not an end in itself, but must find application for the good of humanity.

Our Vision

St. Thomas More College will nurture its identity as a Catholic liberal arts college, and fulfill its calling as an exemplary embodiment of the Catholic intellectual tradition in Canada.

Introduction

Historic occasions provide a unique perspective from which to appreciate the past and recommit for the future. As we launch the St. Thomas More College 2015-2020 Strategic Plan we gratefully acknowledge the context in which we find ourselves: on Treaty Six Land; in this bountiful province; in this blessed Diocese and Eparchy; in a long-standing and intellectually fertile relationship with the University of Saskatchewan. We are the beneficiaries of the noble legacy of the Basilian Fathers and committed faculty and staff who together first created and then sustained, through untold sacrifices and legendary dedication, this renowned scholarly community. We are invigorated by the energy and idealism of our students, and inspired by generations of distinguished graduates who, transformed by the very best that the Catholic intellectual tradition has to offer, have in turn devoted their expertise and talents to transforming the professions, organizations, communities and countries in which they have worked and live. We acknowledge with gratitude the many generous alumni and benefactors who have and continue to provide the oxygen enabling a vibrant St. Thomas More College.

As we turn to the future in the St. Thomas More College 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, we firmly recommit to uphold and enhance all that has been entrusted to us by our illustrious predecessors. We mark this historic occasion by recommitting to the Catholic intellectual tradition which celebrates the liberal arts wherein the humanities, social sciences and interdisciplinary studies are vigorously present. The academic freedom we cherish holds that teaching and learning are subversive activities where advances in disciplines are only possible as a consequence of unyielding and ongoing critiques of traditional scholarship, just as the good society is the product of unyielding and ongoing critiques of public policy. This is and must be an emancipatory institution that liberates students from intellectual timidity and inspires them to appreciate that the pursuit of wisdom cannot abide unthinking conformity.

We recommit to the Catholic intellectual tradition whereby we model for students the truth that we are not simply consumers or producers, we are spiritual beings and there are ethical and moral dimension to what we do. As such, we recognize that each and every person is characterized by an inherent dignity that deserves the utmost respect -- including those with whom we disagree, those who come from different cultures and speak different first languages, those who are from different religious traditions or from none, those who think and look and act unlike ourselves. We respect our God given freedom of conscience; we welcome debate and reason not only because that is what is done in any good university, but mainly because God has given us minds with which to think and we have an obligation to use them to the full. This is what the world demands of our graduates.

As we look five years into the future, each of us at STM is conscious that we have a unique and privileged obligation to provide a dynamic student centred intellectual experience for all who entrust to us their post-secondary future. We greet this future with great confidence because we believe that very soul of this place is the calling we all share to provide a scholarly environment that fosters original research, teaching excellence and academic rigour. Taken together, these empower students to discover and cultivate their own abilities, to seek meaning and purpose, to nurture a life-long passion for knowledge and truth.

This St. Thomas More College 2015-2020 Strategic Plan summons us to inspire in students the courage to heed St. Paul's exhortation to "not be conformed to the world," but rather to ponder and challenge, to address injustices, to be passionate for social justice, to attend to the common good. Finally, we know that what we are capable of providing for our students is both priceless and lasting. Priceless because we are in a position to transform lives, lasting because such transformations resonate through future generations and ripple throughout the world.

Terrence J. Downey, PhD

President

Strategic Planning at STM

Strategic planning at St. Thomas More College serves its mission. As such, it is “not an end in itself, but must find application for the good of humanity” (STM Mission Statement). The strategic priorities you see outlined in this document have been chosen to reflect STM’s desire to both read and respond to the ‘signs of the times’.

Our search for relevancy in today’s world – indeed, our desire to respond to today’s needs – walks hand in hand with our history, a history shaped by both the Catholic Intellectual tradition through our Basilian heritage and the liberal arts in our federation with the University of Saskatchewan. As a Catholic, liberal arts college we maintain our commitment to the social sciences and humanities. We remain focused on teaching, research, and service to the community. We will ensure that our scholarly pursuits will inform our teaching endeavours and vice versa. And we do all this within the context of academic freedom in a university setting.

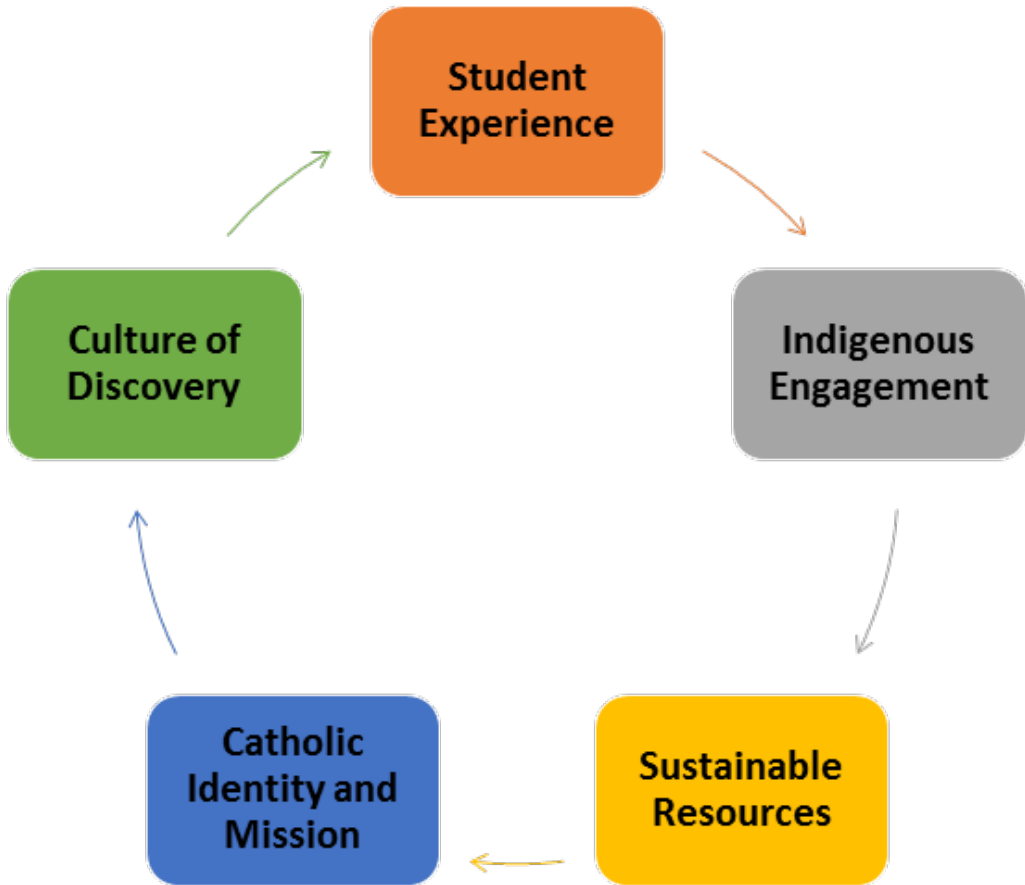
We are a College in relationship. We believe that, through dialogue, inclusivity and Catholic identity can walk hand in hand. We seek to be of service to our community and foster justice in the world. In this strategic plan, we spell out our desire to make of STM a truly welcoming community where Indigenous voices are heard and celebrated.

In all this, our students remain our central focus. We pledge to continue to serve students in the way we have inherited from the Basilian Fathers. In other words, we seek to interact with our students as unique individuals, ready to respond to their intellectual, spiritual, emotional and social needs.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish.” *Proverbs 29:18*

Strategic plans are about putting vision into action. Our vision is formed by our history and tradition, articulated through our mission, and incarnated in the dedicated people who serve STM as faculty, staff, governors, donors and friends. May the 2015-2020 strategic plan allow St. Thomas More College to flourish in the years ahead.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



CATHOLIC IDENTITY AND MISSION

Embody the Catholic intellectual tradition in our teaching and curriculum

1) Engage a diversity of voices and opinions

- Initiate dialogue within our classes that is both inclusive of diverse opinions and Catholic tradition/teaching/practice

2) Promote vigorous dialogue between the faith and reason

- Explore the creation of a degree program connecting Catholic Studies and Social Justice and the Common good
- Create both curricular and co-curricular opportunities for dialogue between faith and reason

3) Reflect on social justice

- Maintain our continual effort to incorporate the main ideas of Catholic social teaching into our instruction
- Continue to participate in teaching courses for Social Justice and the Common Good program
- Encourage collaboration between service-learning groups and other student groups

4) Focus on the dignity of the person

- Create an inclusive environment for all our students
- Identify ways of working more closely with Mission-related structures already in place at STM
- Promote the achievement of work-life balance and wellness among our employees
- Recognize how all members of our College community contribute to the common good of STM

Foster a culture of research that reflects our Catholic identity

- Establish a Centre for Faith, Reason and Justice

Build relationships with the Catholic and broader communities

- Create strong networks with the wider Catholic communities, organizations, and academic institutions

Develop our understanding of our Catholic identity

- Create opportunities for faculty and staff to further develop our understanding of what it means to be a Catholic liberal arts College today

CULTURE OF DISCOVERY

We conduct research within the context of academic freedom in a university setting.

We will, thereby:

Engage our faculty in quality and productive research

- Link STM's strategic academic objectives to the specific research performed by faculty
- Increase the amount of applications for external research grants for our faculty

Support our faculty in attaining their research goals

- Provide the necessary administrative supports to allow STM faculty research to flourish within available resources
- Incorporate STM research goals into the long term financial plan of the College within available resources

Ensure faculty research supports our teaching

- Encourage faculty to bring their research into the curriculum
- Support STM faculty who engage in research

Communicate our research accomplishments to the community

- Highlight frequently research accomplishments of our faculty in community and stakeholder publications and media
- Develop a system of reporting research accomplishments and progress on a frequent and timely basis

INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

Build capacity to develop Indigenous content in STM courses

1) Curriculum development

- Build Indigenous content in all STM courses where it is academically appropriate to the subject matter
- Acquire resources to support the development of an Indigenized curriculum
- Construct a course within that addresses the relationship between Catholicism and Indigenous peoples

2) Hiring Indigenous staff/faculty

- Invite Indigenous scholar(s)/faculty member(s) to the College
- Explore the possibility of hiring faculty with expertise in Indigenous/Catholic relations
- Increase the number of qualified Indigenous staff and spiritual advisors (e.g. Elders, Aboriginal clergy, Elder Helpers, etc.)

3) Pedagogy

- Enhance pedagogical tools to support Indigenous students (e.g. tutoring, using appropriate texts)
- Engage with local Indigenous scholars and teachers to create among faculty a better understanding of Indigenous student experience and expectations

4) Engaged Learning

- Engage Indigenous Students more directly in service-learning programs
- Develop more service-learning opportunities that engage with Saskatoon's Indigenous community
- Provide foundations for Indigenous students to have international experiences

Build capacity for research addressing issues that have significance for Indigenous communities

- Explore the creation of a Chair for Indigenous Studies
- Build capacity for research addressing issues that have significance for Indigenous communities

Building mutually beneficial relationships with Indigenous communities and organizations

- 1) Educate STM faculty and staff**
 - Create opportunities for faculty and staff to become familiar with First Nations' and Métis cultures and increase their confidence in cross-cultural settings
- 2) Reconciliation**
 - Address in a respectful, sensitive way the troubled history that exists between Indigenous communities and the institutional church
- 3) Networking**
 - Continue developing positive and enriching relationships with Indigenous leaders/ Elders, communities and groups in Saskatchewan

Foster a welcoming and supportive community for Indigenous students

- Create a climate where Indigenous students feel more welcome in the College
- Foster an understanding of Indigenous spiritualities at STM
- Increase cultural events focusing on Indigenous perspectives taking place at or hosted/ sponsored by STM that will appeal to the community at large
- Create a task force to oversee Indigenous engagement initiatives at STM

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Make “high-impact” educationally purposeful activities available to every STM student

- Each academic department within the college will provide at least one undergraduate research project each academic year
- Academic departments will collaborate with Student Services to increase our number of multidisciplinary learning communities
- Academic departments and the Student Affairs Collective (SAC) will collaborate to increase the number of STM educational travel experiences both international and within Canada
- The Dean, Associate Dean, Department Heads and Program Chairs will ensure that all STM coordinated academic programs include a capstone course or culminating research project
- The SAC and academic departments will grow the community service-learning program to include a diversity of “depth of experience” on a continuum

Remove barriers to experiencing STM classes, communities, and educational activities

- Increase bursary funding by 20% over the five years of the plan through donations and College funding and target those bursaries to underserved populations
- Develop renewable scholarships for liberal arts majors
- Audit student supports and services and college policies and practices relating to students for biases against, and barriers to, underserved populations
- All units in the college will seek ways to provide employment and/or internship opportunities for STM students
- Work with other colleges on campus to develop attractive electives to be delivered by STM
- The Associate Dean and Department Heads will work toward offering at least one viable distance learning course in each term

Offer Exceptional “Classroom” Learning Experiences

- Maintain smaller class sizes as much as possible where it is beneficial for the learner
- Academic departments will widely implement best practices in teaching and encourage innovation/research in undergraduate education
- Student Services and the Department Heads/Program Chairs will develop a mechanism for measuring student interest/demand for new course or program development
- Encourage faculty through incentives to take part in professional development opportunities to improve their teaching

Engage more students in the extracurricular/co-curricular community of the college

- Steer more students into leadership positions within STM student groups through the engaged learning program
- Ensure necessary financial support for successful functioning of STM student organizations
- Develop a STM Certificate in Leadership and Service to recognize the value of learning and leadership development occurring in our extracurricular community
- Ensure that STM student organizations are featured prominently in first year experience programming at the College

SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES

Ensure financial resources are appropriate and sustainable

- Explore alternative methods of delivery of courses such as remote and online delivery
- Develop a slate of courses that meets students demand while maintaining a quality liberal arts education
- Ensure departments and units use best practices in utilizing resources in academic and non-academic areas while maintaining the quality of the education and service we deliver
- Develop a long term financial plan that incorporates the academic and non-academic goals and objectives to the greatest extent possible

Ensure human resources are appropriate and sustainable

- Develop and implement a human resources plan that uses existing resources to meet, as much as possible, STM's academic and non-academic goals
- Develop and implement a performance management system for employees that incorporates STM's strategic plan to the extent possible
- Ensure existing and future staff and faculty have full access to information on College policies and procedures
- Develop a succession plan for STM faculty and staff that meets the needs of the College

Ensure capital resources are appropriate and sustainable

- Design and implement policies and procedures to minimize the disruption of services from an adverse event that affects the STM physical plant
- Develop a long term capital plan that incorporates the strategic objectives of academic and non-academic departments within available resources
- Ensure all building systems and infrastructure maximizes public access and comfort within available resources

Ensure intellectual and social/relational resources are appropriate and sustainable

- Develop long and lasting relationships with key community stakeholders
- Develop and implement a system of donor recognition



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