

This issue

As we enter the Fall semester we give thanks for our ability to welcome students, staff, and faculty back to the St. Mary's University campus. The past year has truly brought about remarkable challenges but it has been the passion, purpose and strength of our community that has allowed us to navigate these difficult times. Our strength comes from our people, and our community of supporters. This support has allowed us to continue to be a beacon of light for our students, at times when they needed it the most.

This Fall edition focuses on that spirit of commitment to highlight some of the amazing stories and initiatives that have defined this past year and the impact our community of supporters has had on ensuring that our students are able to continue pursuing their goals.

From new student orientation, opening term mass, to our new medicine garden, our amazing students and initiatives have been able to succeed because of you, our dedicated community.

Your support and belief in our vision to provide our liberal arts, science, and education programs to our students has helped ensure that we are able to meet any challenge head on and continue to shape the leaders of tomorrow.



Over 150 first-year students gather for a photo at the 2021 New Student Orientation on the St. Mary's campus.

Welcome Home

New Student Orientation welcomes StMU community back to campus

For the first time since pivoting to an online learning environment over 18 months ago, St. Mary's University welcomed students back to campus for the Fall Term New Students Orientation Days on September 2 and 3. Over 150 first-year students embarked on their post-secondary careers with a day full of new information, activities and most importantly in-person socialization with fellow classmates.

"Seeing a campus full of students for the first time in such a long time was a great feeling," said Alexa MacKell, Recruitment and Engagement Officer at St. Mary's University.

"Although virtual events have become commonplace in the last year and a half, these events don't have the same impact as seeing people in-person. So many people have worked so hard to make the New Student Orientation a fun, informative, yet safe event."

The activities may have looked a bit different and required extra precautions to ensure safety, but the impact and energy was palpable with excitement in the air as students got to know each other, tour the campus and partake in a series of fun ice-breaking events.

"There was definitely an excited, yet nervous, energy on campus during NSO – since this was the first time on-campus for most of these

students (and the first time back on-campus with students for the staff and faculty)," said Alexa. "I think there was a hesitant excitement and the typical first day of school jitters but as the day went on you could tell that everyone was so happy to be on campus together."

Alexa acknowledges that it took a lot of work for St. Mary's to get to this point and to be able to welcome our community back to campus but has credited the ongoing support from everyone associated with St. Mary's to make it possible.

"The support of the community was fundamental to the planning and execution of this event. If not for the generosity of our staff, faculty, and volunteers, the in-person NSO would've been impossible," explained Alexa. "I know many of our students were able to carry on and continue their education thanks to the support of our community members, and to see a whole new group of students who will get to experience that community is truly special."

St. Mary's continues to thrive thanks to the generosity of our community who help to ensure our students receive the best liberal arts and sciences education while becoming impactful citizens in their communities.

President's Message

Fall is upon us and with that a new school year with faces new and old uniting on our beautiful campus once again. The past year has illustrated how it is the relationships we forge that help us in times of need and to be able to welcome the St. Mary's University community back to our campus has been a moment we have looked forward to for quite some time.

To see all of the new faces at our New Student Orientation, or the familiar friends and supporters at our Opening Term Mass with Bishop McGrattan, reminded me of how powerful the ties we have to each other truly are. It is the personal connections to one another that truly makes St. Mary's University such a special place to work and to study. To see students in our quad, grabbing food from our café or chatting with faculty reinforces that special bond that we share here.



The spirit, compassion, and resilience demonstrated by our community has never been stronger. I could not be more proud of our students, staff, and faculty who have embraced the challenges during the past year and continued to demonstrate the values and strength of character that has come to symbolize St. Mary's University.

May these stories help you discover how your gifts and generosity support, encourage and inspire all members of the St. Mary's community. It is my hope that these stories motivate you to continue your support for St. Mary's University in a way that is most meaningful to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerry Turcotte".

Gerry Turcotte, PhD
President

Together in Faith

St. Mary's University welcomed our Chancellor Bishop McGrattan to campus on Wednesday September 15 to preside over our Opening Term Mass and help mark the start of the new Fall school term. To witness the full attendance of the mass speaks to the hunger for the St. Mary's community to come together and celebrate faith. To be in a community with one another, a community that St. Mary's University's new Director of Campus Ministry Jolene Smith is happy to be a part.

"I was very excited to be celebrating Mass with the St. Mary's community. It was the first opportunity that I had to see students, faculty and staff come together to celebrate the Eucharist. It was a pleasure to see people share their talents and also to have Bishop McGrattan preside, and Fr. Cristino Bouvette and Fr. Adrian Martens concelebrate."

St. Mary's University Bachelor of Education student Brandon Lorenzo treated those in attendance to the amazing musical accompaniment, having previously performed for the St. Mary's community during the 2019 President's Dinner and our 2020 virtual convocation program, Brandon is one of many shining lights at St. Mary's.

During the mass Bishop McGrattan offered a special blessing of a Chalice donated by the Knights of Columbus in memory of Al Soloski. A member of the Knights of Columbus, Mr. Soloski was a longtime supporter and friend of St. Mary's through a bursary established to aid our students and ensure they can continue chasing their dreams.



Marshals Brian Strawford (far left) and Gaston Launière (far right) of the Knights of Columbus 4th Degree with St. Mary's President Dr. Gerry Turcotte and Mary Ann Fullerton, daughter of Joseph E. "Al" Soloski

Transforming Communities with Catholic Education

StMU graduate Jaden Baragar making a difference in the classroom

Jaden Baragar, a St. Mary's University graduate attributes her success as a teacher to the education she received. "St. Mary's prepared me for my teaching career, my professors invested in me with their time and expertise, and I was honoured to receive scholarships from generous donors who gave financially to support my education. My life has been enriched in so many ways since I have embarked on my journey as a teacher."

Throughout her first year of teaching, Jaden worked as literacy support assisting children from all grades and was able to see their growth in reading from the beginning to the end of the school year. She now teaches grade one and two with Tsuut'ina Board of Education and continues to volunteer to serve the community through St. Mary's University events.

"When attending St. Mary's University, I was very fortunate to learn and grow in a community with unlimited opportunities that enriched my educational experience and made me a stronger candidate to join the workforce and contribute to society in a meaningful way."

The St. Mary's University Bachelor of Education program is training future leaders in service with a curriculum that has a stronger focus on the principles of Catholic social thought and that gives students an opportunity to reflect and serve while respecting the dignity of the human person. Over the past few years, the St. Mary's Bachelor of Education program



has experienced tremendous growth while our graduates have earned numerous awards for the work done in the communities they serve.

We could not have achieved this incredible success without the support and generosity of our donors who have remained committed to supporting the educational experience and opportunities for our students, many of whom have now gone on to become teachers in the Catholic school system, in Alberta and across Canada.

Amazing turnout for 10th Annual Golf Tournament

Members of our amazing community broke out their golf clubs and their chequebooks in support of scholarships and bursaries for St. Mary's students at the 10th Annual St. Mary's University Golf Tournament on Thursday, August 26 at the beautiful Silvertip Resort in Canmore, Alberta.

The annual event, which raised over \$20,000 in sponsorship, saw over 100 members of the St. Mary's community pledge their support through donations, sponsorships and ticket purchases that all go to provide opportunities for students who need it most.

"Our community is just so amazing," said Thérèse Takacs, Vice President Advancement and Campus Services at St. Mary's University. "It has been a difficult year for so many and yet they were able to come out and not only support this initiative but support our students."

With perfect weather, attendees were treated to a driving clinic by 8-Time Canadian Long Drive National Champion Lisa Longball and many fun hole challenges that really sparked the competitive energy and generosity of those in attendance.

It is through the support of our community for events such as the annual golf tournament that St. Mary's university can continue to provide opportunities for deserving students to achieve their educational goals.



Going Green

St. Mary's graduate heading to Ireland to pursue Masters in Sustainable Resource Management

Jack Nodwell has been a member of the St. Mary's University community for 8 years and has decided to jump into a new adventure to pursue his Masters in Science in Sustainable Resource Management: Policy and Practice at the University of Limerick & National University of Ireland Galway. This degree involves an interdisciplinary approach to environmental sciences with a focus on sustainability, and the program he chose in Ireland has a crossover with business and policy that Jack is particularly interested in.



For Jack, this program offers an opportunity to develop his passion for conservation and environmentalism into a career. "Part of the problem is a lack of understanding of the science and why the need for sustainability is a viable option. Working on developing well thought out changes that can make sense for companies is what I am hoping to do."



The program offers a variety of field courses within and surrounding the university town, and Jack has grown to deeply appreciate hands-on experiences throughout his undergraduate degree in biology at St. Mary's University. The opportunity to explore all areas of Biology through our science degree enables students to gather knowledge about

how different systems work together and are important to each other:

"At StMU, you investigate environmentalism and when you see the loss of species and viable land... it hits you pretty hard. If I can bring my skill set to help that area, I'd be happy to do so. The professors were passionate about wild places in general and took us on numerous field studies, including guided hikes to inspire the wellness piece associated with our environment. It is a sad thought that people in the future would never experience this because we've used up all the resources and it simply won't be here."

Jack was raised to value the environment, and this allowed his internal motivations to blossom. He prioritizes his role as a global citizen and since working in career services for StMU, Jack has developed a method of introspection he provides for incoming students. A holistic analysis of desires, skills, and goals, as well as a good amount of seminars and professional development experiences offers students a foundation for deciding on a career path. Jack eventually used this model on himself and knew that it was time to move on from his time as a staff member at St. Mary's University.

"The people are 100% what I will miss the most. They are absolutely in it for the students which is how it should be. Everyone is working hard to make things new and engaging for students as we are all so close and working together on our efforts."

Upcoming Events



1

We Need to Build: Field Notes for a Diverse Democracy ft. Dr. Eboo Patel

Tuesday, October 19th, 2021

An Inspiring Conversations Series Virtual Event
stmu.ca/eboopatel2021 for registration

2

A Lifetime's Dream: ft. Donald Jackson

Thursday, November 18th, 2021

A Saint John's Bible Virtual Event

stmu.ca/lifetimes-dream2021 for registration

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