

This issue

With the 2018 - 2019 academic year already in full swing, we take this opportunity to acknowledge the amazing accomplishments, and initiatives that have been undertaken by our students and faculty.

This Fall edition focuses on the institution-wide commitment to social justice and service to the community.

From the creation of the Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Social Justice and Catholic Studies degree to the introduction of Dr. Lance Dixon as the new Director of Campus Ministry, social justice and community service have been, and will continue to be, at the forefront of what we do at St. Mary's.

All of the amazing things that happen at St. Mary's University have been made possible through the support and generosity that donors have shown to our community as St. Mary's continues its commitment to fostering critical thinkers who are passionate and compassionate about the world around them.



A Degree Like No Other

St. Mary's University introduces the Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Social Justice and Catholic Studies

St. Mary's University is pleased to announce it will offer a Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Social Justice and Catholic Studies, a new four-year degree approved by the Alberta Ministry of Innovation and Advanced Education. Enrollments for this program will be open for the Fall 2019 academic term.

The Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Social Justice and Catholic Studies draws on the existing strengths of St. Mary's in the Liberal Arts. It will equip students with the skills, connections, practical solutions to real issues and enriched knowledge related to economics, health care, human rights, and civil rights needed to advocate and foster social change and service for others in our community. This aligns with St. Mary's University's mission and commitment as an institution founded in the Catholic intellectual tradition — **through the pursuit of knowledge and service to the community, we prepare our students to become lifelong learners, engaged citizens and compassionate members of society.**

"This degree arrives at a perfect time for St. Mary's," said President, Dr. Gerry Turcotte. "St. Mary's is not only one of the fastest-growing Liberal Arts universities in Canada, but it is also an institution that has made its name for its commitment to social justice. We were one of the first post-secondaries to have a First Nations Strategic Plan, we have been actively engaged in supporting non-traditional learners through our award-winning Humanities 101 program, and we have been producing some of the finest graduates in the Arts and Sciences whose degrees have focused, in whole or in part, on social justice. This degree allows us to capture that specific engagement with social justice that our Catholic identity has encouraged. It also allows students with this unique passion to acquire the credentials they need to be successful both in the marketplace and as champions of change in our communities."

This degree program allows students to integrate their vocation into careers and empower them to lead and serve in a wide range of fields, including: child and healthcare advocacy, law, education, social justice education, government, human rights, disability rights, environmental justice, human services, health care, not-for-profit organizations and more.

President's Message

2018-19 is shaping up to be another year of exceptional growth at St. Mary's University with exciting initiatives and opportunities presenting themselves as we continue to progress through the year.

Although we still remain one of the lowest funded post-secondary institutions in Alberta, we continue to thrive thanks to the generosity and support of members of our extended community.

We are excited to announce the creation of a new degree, the Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Social Justice and Catholic Studies degree that closely reflects our vision and mission and further emphasizes our commitment to developing the whole person — body, mind and spirit.

This year we also introduced a third cohort of our Bachelor of Education students and in order to accommodate these new



students we were able to expand St. Basil's Hall with the addition of two new dynamic classroom spaces.

This is only one of the inspiring stories that makes St. Mary's remarkable. May the stories in this issue of the Marian Update help you discover how your commitment and investment help so many to have a remarkable learning experience at an institution committed to academic excellence, student success, ethics and social justice. It is my hope that these stories inspire and motivate you to support St. Mary's in a way that is most meaningful to you.

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

Gerry Turcotte, PhD
President

A commitment to service

Throughout her tenure at St. Mary's University, Bachelor of Education (Elementary) graduate and St. Mary's alumna Jaden Baragar exemplified the mission and values of St. Mary's University and continuously worked towards a vision of social justice and the common good.

As the 2018 St. Mary's University Star Award recipient, Jaden demonstrated the development of the whole person – mind, body, and spirit. A committed volunteer and strong advocate for mental health and well-being, Jaden worked tirelessly in support of social justice initiatives while also serving as a strong ambassador for St. Mary's.

"I really found my place at St. Mary's in a small university atmosphere," said Jaden. "I was able to do so much including: being on the Student Legislative Council for six years, volunteering at numerous President's dinners, raising funds for the wonderful Humanities 101 program, being able to attend a donor recognition event and give a thank you speech on behalf of students, among many other things."

Through her commitment to her studies and to various initiatives Jaden was able to distinguish herself amongst her fellow BEd. graduates, and garner a position for "Literacy Support" after graduation.

"This person in schools is someone who works on reading comprehension and testing students for fluency, accuracy, and comprehension. As I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Concentration in English and Psychology, I developed a high passion and belief in how important it is to enjoy reading," explained Jaden.



Jaden Baragar receiving her St. Mary's University Star Award at the 2018 Convocation ceremony.

"St. Mary's University gave me the best and most gratifying six years of my life and, although I am not a student at the school anymore, I am still going to be very much a part of its future through volunteer initiatives and continue to see its growth."

Thanks to the generosity of donors and contributions to student awards and bursaries, Jaden was able to dedicate her time to what mattered most, her education and her commitment to creating a better community around her. No matter how large or small the gift, the impact these student awards and bursaries have on St. Mary's students is beyond measure.

St. Basil's Library adds classroom space with new donation

It's been an exciting year for St. Mary's University with new and generous support that is helping our university to build and grow—providing our students with the best possible facilities and resources. With growth of over 70% in the past five years alone, St. Mary's is now challenged by a lack of space, striving to meet the needs of our students, but determined to maintain small class sizes that give students critical one-to-one interactions with faculty.

In November 2017, St. Mary's University received generous gifts from the Basilian Fathers of Toronto and from the Estate of Therese Lebel that allowed us to expand St. Basil's Hall by building two new, urgently needed classrooms. The construction of the new classroom wing in the Library was completed this September in time to support an additional cohort in our remarkable Bachelor of Education Degree program.

As St. Mary's grows, we are creating the opportunity for more students than ever before to experience the exceptional education that makes this university a treasured and highly valued environment for learning. We could not do it alone. We are grateful for Mrs. Therese Lebel's belief in our mission through her estate gift. Her legacy will live on in the lives of hardworking and dedicated students and will go a long way towards helping them achieve academic success. We are also fortunate to experience the commitment from the Basilian Fathers every day at St. Mary's through the gift of St. Basil's Library at the heart of the St. Mary's University campus and through their ongoing generosity that continues to support our growth.



Dr. Peter Baltutis Appointed to the CWL Chair for Catholic Studies

St. Mary's University is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Peter Baltutis to the CWL Chair for Catholic Studies.

This is the second appointment to the CWL Chair for Catholic Studies, following the retirement of Dr. Michael Duggan who stepped down as chair earlier this year. Funded by an endowment created by the Catholic Women's League, this senior academic position was founded to encourage and foster the advancement of Catholic knowledge and education through exemplary teaching and pre-eminent research.




ST MARY'S
UNIVERSITY

St. Mary's Welcomes Dr. Lance Dixon, new Director of Campus Ministry

The opportunity to become the new Director of Campus Ministry was not one that Dr. Lance Dixon was actively seeking but the fit was one he couldn't pass up.

Since joining St. Mary's in October, Lance has submersed himself into a St. Mary's University community that is committed to fostering an inclusive learning environment where diversity of thought is valued.

"St. Mary's is moving towards a clearer expression of social justice as an integral part of student learning and engagement in the community," said Lance. "Giving space for social justice to happen but to be intentionally structuring learning around social justice is a very unique thing and St. Mary's is very aware of that."

"This felt like an exciting time to come alongside a university that makes social justice a large part of learning."

A Consultant for Religious Education and Family Life for the Calgary Catholic School District where he has mentored high school chaplains since 2018, Lance comes to St. Mary's with over 20 years' experience in the educational field and has also taught in a number of educational institutions.

As Director of Campus Ministry Lance has made integrating Campus Ministry into the natural ebb and flow of campus life one of his priorities as a way to work together to create a place where all voices are heard and respected in a completely inclusive environment.

"Campus Ministry can sometimes be narrowed down to exclusively pious religious activities," explained Lance. "I try to always go back to the source of who is Jesus? He was creating conversations where people are and I think that's what campus is all about. I think



Lance Dixon, St. Mary's new Director of Campus Ministry

it's easy for us to lose our way, but I think that this is a campus where people are converging from different walks of life and I feel that I can help create a space where people can have meaningful conversations. Those real authentic, meaningful conversations."

"An essential part of my role is to take the inspiration that students are receiving in the classroom and help create opportunities for them to live them out and practice them in meaningful ways."

Coming Events



1 **Christmas Concert**

St. Mary's University
Sunday Dec. 2, Monday Dec. 3
8:00 p.m.

2 **Weaving Words of Wisdom**

St. Mary's University
Friday, February 8
2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

3 **Open House**

St. Mary's University
Saturday, February 9
10:00 a.m. — 2:00 p.m.

4 **President's Dinner**

Heritage Park - Gasoline Alley
Thursday, March 7, 2019

The *Marian Update* is published by St. Mary's University and distributed to alumni, friends and supporters to celebrate University accomplishments and share news and information throughout the St. Mary's community.

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