



## PROGRESS REPORT May 2021

**The following updates provided to the Board of Trustees illustrate progress on many of the strategic priorities outlined in our new strategic plan, *St. Thomas 2025*.**

### **Lead in STEAM Education**

Planning for the STEAM complex is progressing well, and with the demolition of Loras Hall complete, the site is cleared and ready for future construction. The conceptual design will be reviewed by the Physical Facilities Committee. Schematic designs will be finalized by mid-June. A series of collaborative workshops have been held with various stakeholders and future users of the complex. This input will ensure that the guiding principles of the STEAM Center (inclusive, innovative, collaborative, connected, adaptable and sustainable) will be achieved through the design. Fundraising continues, and we expect to break ground in May 2022.

### **Grow the Morrison Family College of Health**

Substantial progress has been made toward welcoming students to our new School of Nursing. We are ahead of schedule in obtaining the necessary approvals for the Board of Nursing and other planning, and on target for a fall 2022 launch! The first phase of our approval from the Board of Nursing is complete, we and expect that our second phase will be completed by fall 2021. We have received approval from the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and submitted the necessary documentation into the Higher Learning Commission for nursing program approval. Though clinical placements are often a barrier for nursing program start-up, we have had great successes in securing founding clinical partners. This includes major health care systems as well as nonprofit partners that will provide holistic experiences for students in community settings. This summer, the design process for a renovation of the Summit Classroom building will be completed and the actual renovation will begin January 2022. This will allow for an integrated academic building that accommodates the school of social work and the school of nursing with classroom, lab space, and simulation facilities. Our plans for growth project that the Summit Classroom building will accommodate these needs for the next five years.

## Foster Belonging and Dismantling Racism



In April, we launched our first university-wide DEI strategic plan, a roadmap for embedding the work of DEI across the university. The plan and the leadership of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will help coordinate our activities that cultivate inclusion and track and report on our progress. On April 26, nearly 1,700 registered participants attended the university's racial equity conference, ***Equity in Action: Cultivating Antiracist Universities***. Attendees listened to a thought-provoking keynote address by Ibram X. Kendi, author of the bestselling *How to Be an Antiracist* and a question-and-answer session with Dr. Yohuru Williams. Small-group discussions and breakout workshops followed, showcasing the internal commitment and expertise we have at dismantling inequity at St. Thomas. Our campus community continues to feel the impacts of the two concurrent crises of 2020: a worldwide health pandemic and a pandemic of racism and societal disparities. The death of George Floyd and the Chauvin trial were especially intense and traumatizing times for many in our community. Leading up to and during the trial, we communicated with our students, faculty and staff and offered ongoing supports and university programming that included gathering circles, educational panels and teach-in sessions.

## Prepare Students for Work and Career



As you know, we have elevated and restructured career support in a way that will more intentionally set our students on a path toward a lifetime of continued professional and personal growth. This will include creating a deeper connection with alumni, as well as with industry, employer and community partners to drive stronger lifelong career networks and outcomes for our graduates. This new model for work and career will be led by Karyn McCoy, our new associate vice president for alumni, corporate & career. Karyn comes to us most recently from DePaul University where she served as assistant vice president of the DePaul Career Center. She also previously held positions in alumni engagement at the Melbourne Business School, University of Melbourne, and the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. As a national leader in the space of career development, Karyn will help us not only propel students into the workforce and prepare them for success, but also will elevate St. Thomas as a national leader in this area and a partner of choice to our employer partners. Karyn will report to Erik Thurman, vice president for university advancement.

## Build National Awareness and Advance Priorities through Athletics



Dr. Phil Esten's team has been working double time to prepare for our July 1 transition, navigate athletic activity during the pandemic and finish the seasons for student athletes still competing. Looking to next fall, we have successfully attracted a more geographically diverse pool of student-athletes with strong academic achievement. Our fall 2021 recruiting class is the most geographically diverse in our history, representing 14 states and three countries, with an average GPA of 3.65. These students will bring unique perspectives to the classroom and campus community. After the killing of George Floyd, our athletics

department launched an anti-racism initiative, Shed a Little Light, to take a leadership role on campus in dismantling inequities. Athletics has secured philanthropic commitments of almost \$7.5 million this fiscal year, far surpassing the average over the last two years of approximately \$500k per year. Phil has identified new sources of revenue through strategic partnerships with the top multimedia rights and licensing company in the country, which will support incremental expenses during our transition.

### **Meet Ever-Changing Needs of Students, Alumni, Employers**



We are hiring a leader of our Continuing and Professional Education (CAPE) initiative, to build out our capability to harness expertise at St. Thomas and match reskilling and training needs of our corporate and nonprofit partners. The possibilities for CAPE to expand our reach into online education are just beginning to blossom. For example, the School of Education is working with the State of Minnesota and Groves Academy to develop *Essential Literacy Instruction*, a course designed for teachers that helps schools meet a state mandate that all children are reading at grade level by the end of third grade. Thanks to the GHR Foundation, Catholic Studies is collaborating with the Archdiocese to develop *Mission and Culture and Emerging Questions in Catholic Education* curriculum for all Catholic school leaders, teachers, and staff. Approximately 2,500 Catholic school teachers and staff will complete the course over next five years. At the Turn, a nonprofit that helps underrepresented teens, is working with CAPE on financial literacy for young people. Finally, CAPE is creating a resource and discussion hub for organizations participating in Dr. Yohuru William's Historical Recovery education and reflection.

### **Promote and Leverage Our Comprehensive Academic Excellence**



The St. Thomas School of Law has worked to improve its bar passage rate through its commitment to building a strong community of support and care and supporting the lifetime success of our law students. For the class of 2018, the St. Thomas two-year pass rate was 95.88%. This puts us at No. 42 in the nation. Other schools in the top 50 include the University of Minnesota, No. 22 at 97.1%; Notre Dame, No. 39 at 96.02%; Boston College, No. 46 at 95.05%; and Georgetown, No. 47 at 95.47%.

### **Retain and Attract World-Class Talent**



Our first priority toward strengthening our internal workplace culture to embrace change is to elevate and modernize our human resources function to operate as a strategic asset. We currently are interviewing candidates for Chief Human Resources Officer, a new position that will report directly to me and be part of my senior staff. I look forward to having a seasoned executive leader guide me and other leaders as we create the culture needed to successfully implement our strategic priorities. The search committee is co-chaired by MayKao Hang and Jodee Kozlak, who helped provide extensive outreach to individuals in the corporate HR field and valuable guidance throughout the process. Finalists will come to campus for a final round of interviews by the end of May.

### **Prepare Educators to Dismantle Disparities**



Dr. Kathlene Campbell is taking a leadership role to help Minnesota dismantle disparities in the classroom. St. Thomas is the lead university on the Minnesota team chosen by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) Consortium to recommend and create equitable teacher-education assessments. In addition, St. Thomas is forming a working group to propose anti-racism language and cultural competency expectations for the Minnesota state standards for teacher-education. These standards have the potential to impact the preparation of teachers for the next decade and to improve the experience of every child in Minnesota.

### **Live and Work Sustainably**



Due to intentional work across campus to implement ways to live and work more sustainably, St. Thomas has achieved a gold rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. The collective efforts across campus helped St. Thomas do its part to care for our common home and build a better world for present and future generations. The Sustainability, Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) measures the environmental, social and economic performance of colleges and universities across the country in the areas of academics, operations, engagement, planning, administration, and innovation. In 2018, St. Thomas completed its first STARS report, achieving a silver rating. After tremendous progress in the last three years that included a sustainability strategic plan and achieving LEED Platinum certification of our residence hall, Tommie East, St. Thomas has now achieved STARS Gold rating and a U.S. Green Building Council Leadership Award. It is very exciting to see the university embracing sustainability and to see it directly connected to the core of our identity, rooted in Catholic social teaching.

### **Engage All Tommies as Changemakers**



The Center for the Common Good annually hosts Changemaking Days, designed to encourage students to engage for the common good. On Saturday, May 1, more than 100 students, staff, faculty and alumni volunteered with key local community partners including the Catholic Charities Distribution Center, Mapping Prejudice Project, and Mississippi River Clean-Up. This year, students led panel discussions on topics including the importance of engaging elected officials and housing affordability. A sustainable “clothing swap” in Anderson Student Center invited the community to donate clothes. Finally, Tommie Shelf, our campus food bank effort that has operated on our St. Paul campus for the last two years, partnered with Dougherty Family College and a nonprofit called Good in the Hood to launch a “food-in-a-box” shelf on the Minneapolis campus. The food shelf makes food available monthly to anyone from the St. Thomas Minneapolis campus and surrounding community.