



**State of the College 2025**  
**President Roger J. Thompson, EdD**  
**October 22, 2025**

Good afternoon, everyone.

Though she is under the weather and unable to be with us today, I want to begin by thanking **Regina Molitoris**, our Associated Students President, for her leadership. I meet monthly with the A.S. leadership, and those conversations consistently sharpen our focus and ensure student voices inform our decisions.

The Associated Students team serves this community every day—from finance and student organizations to sustainability, wellness, Title IX, and inclusive excellence—ensuring that student voices shape the life of the College. I am grateful for the partnership of our student leaders and for the responsibility they carry on behalf of their fellow Gaels.

Please join me in thanking Regina and all members of Associated Students for their service. *(lead applause)*

**Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.**

It is my privilege to welcome you to this year's State of the College address. I plan on making this a Fall tradition that we will continue in the years ahead, and a moment for reflection and renewal as we look back with gratitude and ahead with determination.

As a Lasallian, Catholic, liberal arts college, our mission remains our anchor. It is the compass guiding us through both challenges and opportunities. This year, we have taken as our theme "Respect for All Persons" — a Lasallian Core Principle and value that has long defined our community, and one that will continue to shape every aspect of our work.

Before I begin, I want to recognize several partners whose collaboration strengthens Saint Mary's and our region.

- To our **Town of Moraga** representatives (Mayor Steve Woehleke, Town Manager Scott Mitnick, and Council Member Lisa Maglio): thank you for being such good neighbors to our Gael community.
- To our friends from the **Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce** (Bob Linsheid, Nicole Hankton, and Jessica O'Dea): thank you for your partnership with local employers and community leaders.
- And to the **Office of Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahn** (Cherise Khaund), thank you for your advocacy for students and families in District 16.

Thank you all for being here today, for your partnership, and for everything you do to strengthen Saint Mary's and the communities we serve.

### **Institutional Health and Sustainability**

Before I begin my remarks, a brief word about our financial position and institutional health.

Over the past year, we have been candid about the choppy waters in higher education and here at Saint Mary's.

Upon my arrival as President and the days since, my primary focus has been to build financial stability for Saint Mary's. The operating deficits of the past several years **must** become relics of the past. So we are navigating the rough waters together—faculty, staff, and administrators—with our mission as the anchor and shared stewardship as the chart. That work continues.

To steady the College, we have made difficult choices and asked nearly every division to do more with less, while protecting core commitments—most notably the work of Inclusion and Belonging. None of this has been easy, and frankly, it can be a bit disheartening at times. Colleagues have brought forward worthy ideas we could not fund, and leaders have rolled up their sleeves to realign budgets and timelines. I remain grateful for the professionalism, patience, and care that many of you have demonstrated in serving our students throughout this period.

Saying “no” in the short term allows us to say a larger “yes” to Saint Mary's—yes to a durable future, yes to student success, yes to mission. Our fiscal challenges developed over many years; they will not be solved in a single semester or even a single fiscal year. **But we are on course.** We will continue to budget conservatively, prioritize student recruitment and success, and expand philanthropy, even as we examine our expenses with prudence.

As I understood my charge from Day One of my presidency 15 months ago, we must set the College on a sustainable course for the long term. This year's plan reflects our shared responsibility to be thoughtful stewards of Saint Mary's resources. We will keep investing where it matters most for students, while building the partnerships and support that strengthen the whole institution.

We are entering a new chapter with clarity and momentum.

With our mission as our anchor and a disciplined plan as our chart, we will **stay the course**—working collaboratively, creatively, and strategically—so that Saint Mary’s moves from **choppy waters to calmer seas** and stands on solid financial footing for years to come.

With that context, let me turn now to the four themes that set our direction and define how we move forward: the **Student Experience, Academic Excellence, Access and Belonging**, and our **Places and Spaces**. I will end by looking toward the future — a future guided by our mission, strengthened by our values, and shaped by all of us who call Saint Mary’s home.

Let us begin with the Student Experience.

## 1. The Student Experience

The heart of Saint Mary’s is — and has always been — our students. Inside the classroom, they encounter a deeply personalized education, rooted in our Lasallian values and centered on relationships — teacher to student, and student to student. This fall, we welcomed a 4% increase in new students, and while it was nice to see growth in our new students, I am not at all satisfied with this level of growth.

We are finding that more and more students and families are interested in Saint Mary’s as demonstrated by double-digit application growth thus far for the Fall of 2026. That confidence in Saint Mary’s is being noticed beyond our campus as well. In his new book *Dream School*, higher education author **Jeff Selingo** highlights Saint Mary’s as one of just a handful of institutions nationwide that are redefining what it means to deliver a transformative, student-centered education. Selingo’s book focuses on the qualities that foster student success—a strong sense of belonging, meaningful outcomes, and value. Saint Mary’s checks all of those boxes.

The value of a Saint Mary’s education is reflected in the vibrancy of our learning.

Our students are not just reading about ideas — they are testing them in internships, labs, and research projects. The first cohort of our **Bachelor of Science in Nursing** program, for example, is already entering clinical rotations, a milestone in our journey to expand health professions education.

Across disciplines, faculty are helping students connect theory to practice — in classrooms, laboratories, and field experiences — all while fostering habits of ethical inquiry that last a lifetime.

Both inside and outside the classroom, our students find a richness of opportunities that deepen their education. Whether through music, art, literature, theatre, or outdoor adventure, students are discovering talents and passions that shape who they are becoming.

Our proximity to San Francisco, the broader Bay Area, and other regions of California creates unique pathways for engagement and exploration.

An environmental science student of ours named **Adrian Madrigal**, for example, scaled California mountains in the Sierra Nevada this past summer to study the effects of dust storms from China. This was just one of several projects that took place under the umbrella of our terrific **Summer Research Program**, a great example of how Saint Mary's empowers students to turn curiosity into discovery and discovery into purpose.

Our commitment to student exploration extends across every discipline.

Consider **Isabelle Ly**, a third-year student pursuing an interdisciplinary course of study with a minor in Creative Writing. Through our **Liberal Arts Bridge (LAB) Program**—which provides financial support for Liberal Arts students pursuing unpaid or underpaid internships—Isabelle spent her summer working with a **national nonprofit organization** on education-focused projects.

Isabelle's internship gave her the chance to bring her studies to life. She co-developed a learning resource that will soon be published, combining creativity, scholarship, and purpose.

As Isabelle said, Saint Mary's has allowed her to "follow my curiosity wherever it leads." And that is exactly what we want for every Gael—a chance to discover their gifts, to pursue their passions, and to transform those passions into purpose.

The stories of students like Adrian and Isabelle remind us that learning does not stop at the classroom door. It continues in every space where students connect, grow, and discover who they are becoming. That is why residential life remains so central to the Saint Mary's experience. Student learning happens in the spaces where students study, learn, recreate, and live.

As we look ahead to the upcoming year, I will continue to encourage the fuller use of the spaces that already make Saint Mary's special—the 1928 Pub, the Saint Mary's Redwood Grove, Cafe Louis, and the Joseph L. Alioto Recreation Center, to cite just a few examples of where our students congregate and spend time together.

Building on the strong work already led by our Student Life colleagues, and in partnership with Associated Students and other units across campus, we want to expand evening and weekend programming:

- DJ nights and coffeehouse sets;
- Outdoor films and cultural showcases in the Quad and Grove;
- Late-night recreation and intramural events;
- And more robust Pub-based events, watch parties, and live music.
- Opportunity to explore the Bay Area.

The goal is simple: We wish to provide students more reasons to stay, connect, and enjoy their community on campus—and to ensure that every weekend offers welcoming, low-cost ways to belong and find your place at Saint Mary's.

This is one of the main reasons why we have implemented a two-year residency requirement — to strengthen community, support wellbeing, and help students more fully participate in the life of the College.

One of our Resident Advisors, junior **Galilea Candida**, described it beautifully. She said, *“When you create a welcoming environment, a lot of residents feel comfortable just coming to your door and stopping by and talking. It makes them feel at home, and welcome.”*

She went on to say that those simple conversations often lead to trust — the kind that allows students to reach out when something is really on their minds.

And she is absolutely right. We are seeing it: more new students are joining activities, taking on leadership roles, and finding their sense of belonging.

One student who embodies this spirit is **Cole Carnahan**, President of **Gael Force**, our student-led team that builds school spirit and drives engagement with Division I athletics. Cole is an Honors student pursuing a B.S. in Biology on the pre-med track, and he serves as a Resident Advisor. He reminds us that leadership at Saint Mary’s grows across campus—on the sidelines, in the classroom, and in the residence halls.

Beyond the residence halls, spaces and events such as our Intercultural Center, Weekend of Welcome, and a robust calendar of student-led and College-sponsored programs have animated campus life—from cultural celebrations and affinity gatherings to speaker series and author conversations; from service and faith-based initiatives to performances in music, theatre, and dance; from wellness and outdoor programs to career networking and undergraduate research showcases.

Together, these experiences invite deeper dialogue and participation, and they provide our students with pathways to lead, reflect, and belong.

We will also strengthen the graduate student experience—with expanded evening and weekend programming, tailored advising and services, and career networking—so that every Gael, undergraduate and graduate alike, finds a place to belong.

This is the Saint Mary’s student experience at its best.

## 2. Turning to Academic Excellence

Our work at Saint Mary's forms graduates who pair intellectual rigor with moral purpose. In addition to the student experience, our commitment to excellence begins with our academic programs.

Nowhere is this more evident than in our expanding programs in Nursing and Public Health. This fall, we officially partnered with nationally recognized nurse theorist **Dr. Maria O'Rourke**, whose *Professional Role Identity Formation Theory* and *Role-Driven Practice*™ framework is now being integrated across our nursing curriculum. This collaboration strengthens our commitment to developing nurses who not only excel clinically but also lead with a deep understanding of their professional identity and purpose.

At the same time, our Nursing program embodies the Lasallian commitment to access and equity.

We have intentionally designed support structures for first-generation students and those from underrepresented backgrounds, advancing health equity both within our classrooms and in the communities our graduates will serve. Through our partnership with the **Gilead Foundation**, we launched the **FirstGenRN** program, which provides mentoring and financial support for nursing students. Participants receive guidance from practicing professionals — and compensation for their engagement — helping them persist, graduate, and enter the workforce prepared to lead with compassion and confidence.

Together, these efforts demonstrate what Saint Mary's does best: combining academic rigor, innovative partnerships, and a moral commitment to serve others.

Our **School of Economics and Business Administration** is growing, with graduate programs up 15% overall. The MBA has grown 22%, and the MS in Accounting has surged 65%.



Faculty are integrating cutting-edge tools, including artificial intelligence, with workshops for faculty and “AI Literacy” training for students.

### **Data Literacy for Every Gael**

And speaking of future technologies that will allow our students to compete in the 21st-century marketplace of ideas, I will be asking our faculty—through the Academic Senate and our shared governance process—to consider a **core requirement in Big Data and Data Analytics** for all students, beginning with the **Class of 2030**.

Once again, the goal is simple: to ensure that every Saint Mary’s graduate can interpret, analyze, and communicate with data—across disciplines and professions—while engaging questions of meaning and ethics that are central to a Lasallian, liberal arts education.

This will not be a one-size-fits-all course; it should be an integrated approach, with pathways appropriate to the arts, the sciences, business, and education, so that students learn to use data in ways that serve the common good and reflect the core Saint Mary’s characteristics—to think logically and live ethically.

The **Kalmanovitz School of Education** continues to meet California’s most urgent educational needs with compassion and purpose. This year, our teacher residency programs expanded into the San Ramon Valley, Mt. Diablo, and Brentwood school districts—placing thirty-eight Saint Mary’s students in high-need classrooms, where they are learning from master teachers and making a difference from day one.

Through **Project CLEAR**, a \$14.5 million statewide literacy initiative, our faculty are preparing teacher-leaders who are helping hundreds of children become confident readers. And through the **Mental Health Service Professional Demonstration Grant**, our counseling students are serving in high-need schools, providing vital support to young people while training to become the next generation of school counselors and mental-health professionals.

In every program, KSOE students embody the Saint Mary's mission—bringing knowledge, empathy, and hope to the communities that need them most.

And, this year, we are taking a bold and thoughtful step to strengthen the **liberal arts and sciences** at Saint Mary's.

Beginning **July 2026**, the **School of Liberal Arts** and the **School of Science** will come together as the **School of Arts and Sciences**—a unified academic home that celebrates the connections among discovery, creativity, and human understanding.

This unification is not a merger of disciplines, but a renewal of our shared purpose: to offer an integrated, student-centered education that prepares graduates to think critically, communicate clearly, and lead with conscience in a complex world.

By bringing our scholars and programs together, we will create new opportunities for collaboration—across the arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences—while ensuring a sustainable foundation for the future.

I want to thank the faculty and staff who have engaged in this work with care and creativity. Their commitment to Saint Mary's mission has guided every step of this process.

You can already see this integrated approach in the work of our students. Sophomore **Rose Velasquez** is pursuing a double major in Politics and Economics, and her impressive academic background led to her selection as Saint Mary's representative for the Panetta Institute's Congressional Internship Program this year. Now serving in the office of Representative Derek Tran of California's 45th District, Rose is putting her education into action — demonstrating how the liberal arts cultivate thoughtful leaders who engage the world with integrity and compassion.

Our artists, writers, historians, and other practitioners of the arts help us ensure the next generation interacts with technology — and with one another — more responsibly than we have done so far. The arts at Saint Mary's do not just enrich campus life; they are a vital part of forming ethical leaders who can navigate a complex world.

The result is a culture of excellence—one that extends naturally to Athletics, where our student-athletes embody the balance of mind and body. This past year, we celebrated WCC championships in basketball, baseball, and softball, and a department-wide 3.43 GPA, with all teams above 3.0. These are achievements we should all be proud of.

And, as we prepare to welcome new student-athletes in men's and women's swimming and water polo next fall, we fully expect that tradition of academic strength amongst our student-athletes to continue. At Saint Mary's, excellence in competition is matched by excellence in the classroom.

### **3. A third theme is Access, Affordability, and Belonging.**

At Saint Mary's, access is not optional — it is essential. Our Lasallian Catholic tradition calls upon us to make education available to all who seek it.

During the most recent financial aid cycle, we disbursed more than \$26 million in federal student aid, earning a clean audit and demonstrating our commitment to student support. Additionally, we provided more than \$71 million in institutional aid, including merit-based scholarships, grants, and graduate fellowships, to support our students. Wow!

But access is about more than dollars. It is about belonging, which is one reason why our Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has been renamed the **Office of Inclusion and Belonging**. This is about ensuring that every student feels seen, heard, known, and supported.

Our ongoing work to strengthen these inclusionary themes continues to evolve, guided by our principle of Respect for All Persons.

That same commitment to access and belonging is powerfully reflected in our **High Potential Program**, which has long been a model for supporting first-generation and low-income students. This fall, the program received a **\$1.3 million federal TRIO Student Support Services grant** to advance its *HP-RISE!* initiatives through 2030.

This competitive award affirms the College's leadership in creating pathways of opportunity and academic success for students from traditionally underserved backgrounds. It will allow Saint Mary's to expand mentoring, academic coaching, and community-building efforts that empower these remarkable scholars — individuals whose talent, resilience, and drive enrich our campus and embody the very best of what Saint Mary's stands for.

That same spirit of access and care extends to every student who joins our community.

This fall, our **PREP Program**—Providing Resources for Educational Progress—is celebrating ten years of helping new students with disabilities make a successful transition to Saint Mary's. The program is offered free of charge, thanks to the generosity of a devoted parent who believed deeply in creating a more welcoming experience.

PREP offers a quieter move-in and specialized programming that helps students feel comfortable and confident as they begin their journey. As Assistant Vice Provost **Julie Scaff** explained, "There is no loud music or pompoms—just a quiet, supportive move-in that gives students the chance to get settled."

For students like senior **Kayla Redman**, who first participated in PREP and now serves as a program leader, the experience has come full circle.

*She says, “Coming to college can be really scary. So, for me, it’s rewarding to make it more welcoming for incoming students like me.”*

Programs like PREP—and our High Potential TRIO initiative—embody the very best of Saint Mary’s. They remind us that access and belonging are not abstract ideas. They are living commitments, carried out every day by the people who make this community what it is.

Affordability is also a priority. Families rightly want to know the return on their investment.

At Saint Mary’s, that return is clear: Gael graduates who are prepared for meaningful work, active citizenship, and lives of purpose. Scholarships and philanthropic support are critical here, and I am grateful to our donors, whose generosity is making a Saint Mary’s education possible for students today and tomorrow.

In fact, our new VP for Advancement, **Jeff Shilling**, has correctly acknowledged that philanthropy needs to become a larger revenue stream for us. This year, donor participation has grown by 10%, with gifts increasing even more. One alumna’s gift of \$100,000, given in honor of **Professor Denise Witzig** of our Women and Gender Studies program, illustrates how faculty-student relationships can blossom into lifelong impact.

## **Enrollment Growth and Partnerships**

Strengthening enrollment is central to our long-term success and to our mission of access. In addition to enhanced recruitment and student success initiatives, we are building new pipelines through partnerships with community-based organizations—including:

- The **Giants Community Fund**;
- The **Young Center for Academic and Cultural Enrichment**;
- The **Peninsula College Fund**;
- **Prove Your Tomorrow**;
- **AVID**, or **Advancement Via Individual Determination**;
- The **Boys and Girls Clubs of the Peninsula**; and
- The **Chicano/Latino Youth Leadership Project**.

These collaborations help us reach talented students who might not otherwise see themselves at Saint Mary's—and support them through application, financial aid, and the transition to college.

We are also launching targeted **Dean and Presidential engagements** with schools across the region. Together, these efforts align with our Lasallian commitment to welcome first-generation and underrepresented students, strengthen diversity in our applicant pool, and sustain healthy enrollment growth in the years ahead.

#### **4. Places and Spaces**

Finally, we come to our campus itself. Our facilities shape the daily experience of learning, living, and belonging. This year, we have made strides both small and large.

We have invested in beautification — new gardens, cleaner lawns, and refreshed spaces that lift the spirit. We have completed upgrades to the Soda Center, painted historic Madigan Gym, and installed the first phase of new security cameras. Soon, new Amazon Lockers and improved air conditioning in Mitty Hall will meet practical student needs.

On the horizon are projects that will transform our capacity to deliver on our mission. Three come to mind:

- The **Saint Albert Hall Library renovation** will begin this winter and reopen in **Fall 2027** as a hub for academic life.

I would like to thank **Dean Gibson** and our colleagues in **SEBA** for relocating to enable the library to operate out of the Power Plant during construction.

- **New facilities for Nursing in Filippi Academic Hall** will provide modern labs and learning spaces that strengthen clinical preparation and student success.
- **Donor-funded athletics investments**—from baseball field lighting to a new stadium clubhouse—will elevate the student-athlete experience, expand game-day access (including evening contests), and strengthen recruiting and community engagement.

These are more than buildings — they are commitments to the student experience we envision for the future. And **the future** is what I would like to talk about next – specifically, The Path Ahead and A Shared Vision of how we will get there.

## **5. The Path Ahead: A Shared Vision**

What you have heard today is more than a collection of updates. It is a strategic direction. The Student Experience, Academic Excellence, Access and Belonging, and our Places and Spaces together form a coherent path forward—one that honors our mission, advances our values, and positions Saint Mary's for the decade ahead.

Now, we can look toward the future we are building together. As we work to transform Saint Mary's into an institution of choice—positioned as the College of the Future, I am thinking about the possibilities for our school.

### ***Imagine—A Health Sciences Hub for the East Bay***

In the years ahead, I anticipate that we will expand our leadership in the health professions—anchored in Nursing and Public Health—by pursuing a **Health Sciences hub** that serves students and communities across the East Bay.

We are exploring a partnership with an external collaborator to provide advanced facilities—such as labs, simulation suites, and practice environments—that match the excellence of our faculty and the aspirations of our students. This will strengthen clinical pathways, accelerate workforce development, and extend our Lasallian commitment to health equity for the people of our region. I hope to share more details on this in the weeks and months ahead.

### ***A Museum of Art that Teaches, Inspires, and Belongs to the Community***

We envision a new state-of-the-art **Museum of Art**—one capable of stewarding larger collections, welcoming major traveling exhibitions, and serving as a teaching museum for students across disciplines. It will be a place where the arts animate the intellectual life of the College, where K–12 partners are welcomed, and where the broader community encounters beauty, meaning, and dialogue. As the only accredited art museum in the East Bay, we have a particular responsibility to share our art beyond our campus—the **William Keith collection is amazing and must be exhibited, seen, and appreciated!**—and inspire young minds and old to imagine and dream.

### ***The Business School of the Future***

We are exploring a renewed **School of Economics and Business Administration**—designed for the emerging economy and grounded in the liberal arts foundation.

The “business school of the future” will integrate **ethics with analytics, entrepreneurship with social impact, and human judgment with technological fluency.**

It will deepen partnerships with employers from the inner Bay Area to the I-80 and I-680 corridors, offer flexible and stackable pathways for working professionals, and prepare graduates to lead with competence and conscience.



To shape this vision, we will engage leading voices across the Bay Area in technology and business—practitioners who can help us align curriculum with real-world practice. We must take business theory and practically apply this to enrich our students' learning experience and the economic development of our area.

As one example, former Apple evangelist and author **Guy Kawasaki**, with whom I have had the privilege of working, has argued that the business school of the future must move beyond static plans toward **practical execution, rapid prototyping, and the development of strong people skills**. He also reminds us that learning does not end at graduation: *“If you are not learning, you are dying,”* Kawasaki has said.

We intend to draw on insights like these—alongside the strengths of our faculty and the values of our mission—to build a SEBA that equips graduates to create value, serve the common good, and lead with integrity in a rapidly changing world.

### ***A Campus Organized for Purpose***

As our programs grow, we will rethink the physical campus through a district model that clarifies identity and improves the student experience. For example:

- A **Science and Health District** that links laboratories, simulation spaces, and community partnerships;
- An **Arts District** that brings together performance, exhibition, and creation;
- A **Business District** anchored by a revitalized School of Economics and Business Administration (SEBA)—integrating entrepreneurship and analytics labs, employer collaboration suites, executive education spaces, and a career hub that strengthens pipelines across the East Bay;

- An **Athletics District** that elevates the scholar-athlete journey.

These districts will be connected by a welcoming public realm—accessible, sustainable, and beautiful—so that movement across campus feels like movement through a living expression of our mission.

### ***A global economy requires an ‘Every Gael Needs a Passport’ approach***

We must deepen our commitment to global learning.

My vision is that **every Gael has a passport**—and, preferably, at least one stamp in that passport—by the time they graduate.

We will continue to encourage off-campus study and experiential learning, both abroad and within the United States, **drawing on our worldwide Lasallian network** to create reciprocal exchanges, short-term immersions, summer institutes, and semester programs.

We will strengthen partnerships with our sister Lasallian institutions around the globe, and we will work to reduce financial and logistical barriers so that anyone and everyone can participate fully. A Saint Mary’s education should open the world—its cultures, its questions, and its needs—to every student we serve.

Graduates formed by data fluency and global perspective will be ready to serve the East Bay economy—the California economy—and the world beyond—with skill, purpose—innovation and ethics.

### ***Saint Mary’s as An Engine for Regional Growth***

As California’s economic energy continues to move eastward toward Sacramento, Saint Mary’s will be the institution of choice that powers this growth from a higher education standpoint. Simply stated—**This is our moment.**

From **Moraga** to **Lafayette** and **Walnut Creek**, and north along the **I-680 corridor** and **I-80 toward Sacramento**, we will prepare nurses, educators, analysts, entrepreneurs, and public servants who are ready to serve the East Bay and the region beyond. We will strengthen internship pipelines and clinical placements, expand teacher residencies and public service fellowships, and deepen employer partnerships with businesses, nonprofits, school districts, and public agencies along these corridors.

We will align our graduate and professional programs with what employers say they need now. That means **short certificates that build toward a degree, hands-on projects with local partners**, and **work-while-you-study opportunities** that help students earn experience and a paycheck at the same time.

Our goal is simple: to ensure that more Gaels **learn here, launch here, and lead here**—contributing to a thriving economy and a stronger common good for the communities we call home.

As you begin to envision this long-term future for Saint Mary's, please know that our values and commitments will not change. Access and belonging will remain at the center of our decisions. Investments in people—students, faculty, and staff—will guide the investments we make. Our Catholic, Lasallian mission will continue to be our anchor and our compass.

### **A Call to Build Together**

This vision is ambitious and achievable. It will require collaboration across divisions, renewed philanthropy, and new partnerships. It will ask us to imagine boldly, to plan carefully, and to execute faithfully.

Most of all, it will require us—together—to believe that the best days of Saint Mary's are ahead. Again, I remind you: **This is our moment.**

I invite each of you—students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and friends—to help shape this future. Share your ideas. Lend your expertise. Join us in the work.

Together, we will build a Saint Mary's that is transformational for our students—and one that continues to honor our heritage, advance our mission, and serve our region with distinction.

May our mission be our anchor.

May our values be our compass and North Star.

May our work be worthy of our students and our times.

And may we, together, build the Saint Mary's our future deserves.

Transforming an institution is no small task—but together, we are prepared for the work and will build the College of the future. Simply stated—**The best days of Saint Mary's are ahead.**

I hope you will now join me for a reception right here in the Soda Center. Take a moment to meet someone new, reconnect with colleagues, and enjoy the fellowship that makes Saint Mary's special.

Saint John Baptist De La Salle ... Pray for Us.

Live Jesus in our Hearts ... Forever.

Thank you for being here today.

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