



OUR CENTENNIAL
YEAR IN MORAGA

TRANSFORMATION 2028

February 2023

SAINT
MARY'S
COLLEGE
of CALIFORNIA



MISSION STATEMENT

Grounded in its Lasallian, Catholic, and liberal arts heritage, Saint Mary's College is a student-centered learning community committed to transformative, equitable, and inclusive teaching, the passionate pursuit of knowledge, and expansive access to a practical education that empowers students to make lasting change in the world.

VISION STATEMENT

Saint Mary's College will become a leading innovative, national Catholic university that inspires minds, touches hearts, and transforms lives.

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN

From our earliest days, Saint Mary's College of California has been committed to making exemplary education accessible to all. When Joseph Alemany, San Francisco's first archbishop, first conceived of our college in the 1850s, he envisioned an affordable school for the children of working people—the miners, mechanics, and farmers of the rugged West. This was the mission inscribed into the cornerstone of our first campus, laid on August 3, 1863: "for the instruction of the youth of California, not in literature merely, but what is greater, in true Christian knowledge."

For 160 years, Saint Mary's has fought to hold true to that powerful vision. Stewarded by the Brothers, we have rooted ourselves in our Lasallian Catholic heritage. We have emphasized service, pursued justice—social, economic, and racial—and developed respectful partnerships with underserved communities. As a vibrant liberal arts institution, we have engaged tens of thousands of students in an intellectually rigorous, transformative whole-person experience. Each generation of faculty and staff has encouraged a culture of collective inquiry and innovative thinking that spills out of our Moraga classrooms and into the wider world.

Amidst decades of cultural transition, our college has remained nimble, willing to evolve when required. We have strived to meet our ever-diversifying age with open arms, fostering a campus culture of inclusivity and equity. At times, that vital effort has necessitated critical self-reflection, as we interrogated our own biases and acknowledged systemic power imbalances. But Gaels never shy away from doing the hard work.

As the Bay and the world beyond have transformed, so have we. Saint Mary's has provided our students with the practical tools to thrive in an increasingly interconnected economy. Our very first graduates became leading bankers, politicians, and businessmen in our fledgling state; today, our graduates continue to ride the cutting edge, making ground-breaking scientific discoveries, creating preeminent tech companies, and building bridges across cultures and communities. In line with our long tradition of service, too, we have committed ourselves to environmentally sustainable practices. By appropriately valuing our impact on ecosystems, we contribute to a more just future, for ourselves and all future generations.

Above all, though, our college has remained dedicated to the vision of a student-centered learning community. As we look toward our centennial year in Moraga, we aim to be just that: an inclusive, authentic community grounded in respect for the divine and the dignity of all individuals. Saint Mary's College sets its eyes on "what is greater," as our founders etched into stone more than a century ago.

THE ROAD AHEAD

To look forward, we must first acknowledge the sea change taking place in higher education and its indisputable impact on Saint Mary's and private liberal arts institutions like it. Throughout the nation, at private and public universities, traditional college enrollment is under stress and anticipated to decline. Economic disparities have widened in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing financial upheaval. Public perceptions of a college degree's value, tangibly and intrinsically, are in flux.

Today, the students who choose to pursue a college education often do so with a career-oriented focus; more and more, these students are from populations long underrepresented in higher education. Many students, along with families, accreditors, and legislators, are challenging the ballooning cost of college and entrenched power structures, championing equity and transparency, and prioritizing mental health. That also means students are less willing to take on debt, and what they want and need from an institution is different.

These factors are important to recognize because students' likes and dislikes are more likely to play into where they choose to study. Even a decade back, parents were stronger influencers than with the current generation of students. Institutions need to retool their community to support student needs and priorities; many institutions are already doing so in a big way. Those that do not risk dwindling enrollment.

Saint Mary's has certainly felt these shifting forces. Our recent shortfalls in enrollment and steps taken to reduce costs have reflected the changing market and cultural ecosystem. But we also find ourselves with an increasingly diverse pool of applicants eager to be a force for good and have a lasting impact.



FOUNDATIONS

The Transformation 2028 strategic plan builds on our legacy, recognizes the landscape facing us and rests upon **four foundations.**

- 1** Ensure the College's financial stability and sustaining our mission and propelling it into the future.
- 2** Deepen our commitment to our Lasallian Catholic and Liberal Arts heritage.
- 3** Advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging across our campus community.
- 4** Exhibit leadership in social justice education, research, and advocacy.

OPPORTUNITIES

Through extensive conversation and community input, we have arrived at **six core opportunities** to guide us into our 2028 centennial celebration.

These opportunities will allow us to remain rooted in the essential vision and values of Saint Mary's College while emboldening us to flourish.

- 1** Reimagine, redesign and reinvent Saint Mary's identity as a liberal arts institution.
- 2** Empower diverse learners to succeed at Saint Mary's and beyond.
- 3** Embrace a creative and innovative spirit.
- 4** Cultivate a dynamic, collaborative work culture and environment.
- 5** Position our campus as a connected local and global hub.
- 6** Advance our leadership in environmental justice and sustainability.

1

First, we will **reimagine, redesign and reinvent Saint Mary's identity as a liberal arts institution.** We are a Lasallian, Catholic, liberal arts comprehensive university with a national reputation and global reach. As we press forward, we will leverage our legacy to offer a broad array of exceptional in-demand programs—undergraduate, graduate, professional, and continuing education—that prepare our graduates to make a meaningful difference in their lives, careers, and the wider world.

2

Second, as we consider our responsibility to our students, we will **empower diverse learners to succeed at Saint Mary's and beyond.** We will throw open doors for more students, especially those from underrepresented communities. In the coming years, we will create more opportunities for individuals of diverse backgrounds to access higher education, to thrive as part of a transformative academic experience, and remain connected long after graduation day.

3

Third, to accomplish our goals, we must **embrace a creative and innovative spirit.** Saint Mary's instills inventive thinking and deft problem-solving within our students. The same should be true of our institution. We will become ever more adaptable and nimble in response to the challenges and opportunities in our systems, processes, and organizational strategies.

4

Fourth, we will continue to **cultivate a dynamic, collaborative work culture and environment.** When John Baptist de La Salle first invited his teachers to live in his home in 1681, he modeled the associative dynamism of community, a culture that continues to sustain Lasallian institutions today. We may not all live in the same home, but Saint Mary's will carry on the legacy of life lived together. We will build a dynamic, collaborative, and high-functioning work environment and continue to attract and retain exceptional, diverse faculty and staff. This work will help us sustain an inclusive and generous campus community.

5

Fifth, our future success depends, in large part, on our ability to **position our campus as a connected local and global hub.** Saint Mary's assets are numerous: an advantageous location in the San Francisco Bay Area, our distinctive built and natural environment, a rich heritage and unique character, and our cohesive community. Moving forward, we will synthesize all of these features to become an epicenter, deepening our connections with students, families, alumni, friends, and the surrounding community.

6

And sixth, moving forward, it is imperative that we **advance our leadership in environmental justice and sustainability.** Drawing on the global Lasallian commitment to sustainability and Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si," Saint Mary's will lean into our core values of equity, justice, and inclusion. During the next six years and beyond, we will better equip our students to tackle the most pressing environmental problems. Simultaneously, we will transform the built campus environment into a living laboratory for equitable and sustainable solutions.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In addition to our guiding themes, we have determined **eleven strategic priorities** to pursue during the next five years. With these strategic priorities, we are defining our transformation. We will set our sights on 2028, seeking initiatives that widen our impact and opportunities that propel us into an abundant future.

- 1** Extend our Reach and Expand our Impact.
- 2** Launch Innovative and In-Demand Academic Programs.
- 3** Empower All Students for Success at Saint Mary's and Beyond.
- 4** Increase Access, Affordability, and Equity.
- 5** Attract and Retain an Exceptional and Diverse Faculty and Staff.
- 6** Become a Thriving and Adaptive Learning Organization.
- 7** Develop Saint Mary's as a Hub in the Bay Area.
- 8** Position Saint Mary's as a Global Campus.
- 9** Invest in the Campus and Welcome Internal and External Audiences.
- 10** Fulfill Saint Mary's Climate Action Plan.
- 11** Achieve Financial Health and Growth.

1**EXTEND OUR REACH AND EXPAND OUR IMPACT.**

Saint Mary's will attract an expanded undergraduate, graduate, and lifelong learning student population. We will broaden our appeal to a national audience by building a cohesive and compelling brand identity and leveraging Saint Mary's national reputation and excellence in intercollegiate athletics and club sports to enhance student recruitment and improve retention and student development outcomes. We will implement intentional recruitment, admissions, and enrollment strategies to attract a student population reflective of the region's diversity. We will expand access for non-traditional undergraduate students by extending bachelor completion programs and lifelong learning opportunities.

2**LAUNCH INNOVATIVE AND IN-DEMAND ACADEMIC PROGRAMS.**

Saint Mary's will reimagine its academic portfolio and develop innovative, in-demand academic programs including undergraduate and graduate degree programs, freestanding and stackable certificates, and professional education programs that attract and serve distinctive and growing populations of students. We will enhance our offerings in health sciences, including nursing, computer and data sciences and analytics, and expand the depth and breadth of our interdisciplinary programs that speak to the big challenges and aspirations of the world. We will adopt pedagogical and co-curricular innovations based on discovery and inquiry at the graduate and undergraduate levels. We will create flexible learning environments and invest in emerging educational technologies to enhance student access and learning.



3

EMPOWER ALL STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS AT SAINT MARY'S AND BEYOND.

Saint Mary's will improve student persistence, retention, and graduation rates by providing enhanced academic support, advising, and mentoring and ensuring clear pathways for graduation. We will create and implement a signature "Saint Mary's experience" for students that facilitates students' emotional, social, and identity development and creates opportunities for students to experience intellectual and personal growth. We will expand opportunities for students to access experiential and practical learning components in their academic programs and deepen external partnerships throughout the Bay Area to reinforce these educational opportunities. We will ensure that graduates are career ready by embedding career preparation and planning in the curriculum and engaging the National Association of Colleges & Employers (NACE) core competencies. Accordingly, we will design and implement curricula that prepare students to "demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures (and) engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism" (National Association of Colleges & Employers).

4

INCREASE ACCESS, AFFORDABILITY, AND EQUITY.

Saint Mary's will embrace its heritage as an institution committed to placing the advantages of a quality education "within reach of all" by increasing the availability of financial support to increase access to the College and its myriad programs. We will enhance affordability by developing transparent and accessible transfer pipelines with California community colleges and by increasing the flexibility of academic programs to improve the time to degree. We will increase access to high impact practices, particularly for first generation and low income students. Saint Mary's will advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging across our campus community.



5

ATTRACT AND RETAIN AN EXCEPTIONAL AND DIVERSE FACULTY AND STAFF.

Inspired by human and Christian values, and guided by its Lasallian educational mission, Saint Mary's will continue to foster an environment that champions the dignity and goodness of every person. The College will build and sustain an inclusive and equitable campus climate where all students, staff, and faculty experience belonging and are actively engaged in anti-racist reflection, policy, and practice. We will empower employees to make decisions about and take responsibility for how they do their jobs. We will strive to provide total compensation at or above market rates and will invest in professional development opportunities for faculty and staff and create opportunities for growth and advancement. We will institutionalize a family-centered work culture that values colleagues as caregivers and promotes flexibility and a sustainable work/life balance.

6

BECOME A THRIVING AND ADAPTIVE LEARNING ORGANIZATION.

Saint Mary's will develop a culture that values innovation by developing and sustaining systems and processes that empower and reward creativity and risk-taking and fostering adaptability and nimbleness to anticipate and respond to opportunities and challenges. We will improve organizational effectiveness by disrupting institutional silos, integrating across academic and non-academic units, fostering effective communication and increased collaboration, and adopting transparent policies, processes and practices. We will employ continuous improvement strategies throughout the institution that promote accountability and high performance. We will invest in technologies that increase efficiency and use data to inform decision making.





7

DEVELOP SAINT MARY'S AS A HUB IN THE BAY AREA.

Saint Mary's will enrich the student experience and deepen student engagement within the Bay Area by developing partnerships with community organizations and building connections with Bay Area public, private, and non-profit sector organizations to increase internship and community engagement opportunities. We will reimagine Saint Mary's place in the Bay Area by developing meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships that increase Saint Mary's presence and visibility in the community. We will engage alumni and external stakeholders and create and deliver value in ways that are meaningful to these constituents in keeping with Saint Mary's mission.

8

POSITION SAINT MARY'S AS A GLOBAL CAMPUS.

Saint Mary's will expand international student recruitment for undergraduate and graduate programs. We will structure global partnerships, perspectives, and impacts across the College and prepare students for international facets of their lives and careers through experiences on and off campus, including January Term travel, study abroad, and global internship programs. We will deepen partnerships with global Lasallian institutions to implement robust exchange programs that present opportunities to attract international students and enable Saint Mary's students to become better global and local citizens.

9

INVEST IN THE CAMPUS AND WELCOME INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AUDIENCES.

Saint Mary's will develop accessible, flexible, and creative spaces, including spaces that can function as innovative classrooms, meeting spaces, performance centers, and recreational spaces. We will utilize welcoming campus spaces to increase connectedness and inclusivity of our campus community and enhance the sense of belonging of members of our campus community and improve the student experience. We will nurture opportunities to increase the accessibility of campus to the broader community and draw visitors to campus to enhance the vibrancy of campus and create opportunities to attract new revenues.





10

FULFILL SAINT MARY'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN.

Saint Mary's will exhibit leadership in environmental sustainability and environmental justice by fulfilling Saint Mary's Climate Action Plan and adopting energy, transportation, policy, and education solutions that reduce our carbon footprint. We will launch a distinctive, comprehensive, place-based Institute for Environmental Justice & Sustainability to serve as a regional hub for advancing equitable and sustainable solutions for the campus and beyond. We will increase sustainability-related course and degree offerings such that all Saint Mary's students graduate with an understanding, skills, and motivation to make responsible decisions that considers their relationship to natural systems, communities, and future generations.

11

ACHIEVE FINANCIAL HEALTH AND GROWTH.

Saint Mary's will optimize existing and develop new strategic revenue streams while enhancing a culture of philanthropy to sustain our mission and advance our vision. We will implement improved financial and budgetary management policies, procedures, and practices, and we will invest in systems and processes that enhance the teaching and learning environment, and increase operational excellence and effectiveness. We will transition to a new budget model built upon a three-year forecast that aligns revenues and expenses, allocates contingency funds, builds an operating reserve, and ensures transparency and accountability.



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