



St. Thomas always has been a student-centered university with a powerful mission and a focus on academic excellence. Its educational distinction relies on outstanding faculty, a vibrant liberal arts foundation for undergraduates, graduate programs that respond to community needs, and an ability to stay relevant in a rapidly changing world. Inspired by its Catholic mission, St. Thomas prepares students and alumni who are committed to advancing the common good.

We are experiencing unprecedented challenges in our society and world. It is important for any organization, no matter its trials, to continue planning to move forward and thrive. **St. Thomas 2025** is an ambitious yet focused five-year effort designed to propel the university toward a new level of impact. It is a guide to help us reach higher in serving our students, our community and the world.

In the coming years, what we pursue and how we focus our efforts will define the future of St. Thomas for decades to come. As community members and campus leaders developed **St. Thomas 2025**, they envisioned what St. Thomas can become and what that would look like a decade from now. This aspirational vision helped frame themes and priorities for the next five years.

Not only will this five-year plan help us strengthen what we do best; it will encourage us to embrace new opportunities, gain stature and continue to thrive in an increasingly challenging and competitive landscape for higher education.

## WHERE WE HAVE BEEN

**St. Thomas 2020** guided the work of the university since 2015 and led to many important accomplishments. Recent successes include:

- Creation of the Dougherty Family College
- Launch of the Center for the Common Good
- Founding of the Morrison Family College of Health
- Establishment of a new undergraduate core curriculum
- Holistic and integrated health offerings through the Center for Well-Being
- Retention success through the Center for Student Achievement

- New resources and support for students through the Veterans Resource Center and the Intercultural Center
- Opening of the Iversen Center for Faith
- Historic renovation of the Chapel of St. Thomas Aquinas
- Opening of two new residence halls
- Nearly \$100 million in philanthropic gifts to scholarships

Thanks to the steadfast hard work of so many in our St. Thomas community, we are on a vibrant path toward expanding our impact. *St. Thomas 2025* will help us recommit to ongoing priorities, leverage new opportunities and intentionally build the future that we collectively envision for St. Thomas.

## HEADWINDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

It is critical for our community to understand trends that will impact St. Thomas and the current state of higher education. As we prepare to navigate an ever-changing landscape, we need to keep key opportunities and challenges top of mind.

### Shifting Demographics

Our ability to maintain the university’s viability depends on us being able to successfully recruit from a broad pool of prospective students. In the next decade, however, we will face major shifts in demographics of those prospective students. In 2026, we will begin to experience a marked and sustained decline in the number of 18-year-olds graduating from high school. This decline will be nationwide, but it will be most apparent in the Northeast and Midwest. Because of growing economic disparities, there will be a diminishing supply of 18-year-olds who are able to pay for a traditional residential experience. Younger populations also are more racially diverse. We need to reach students we haven’t reached before. More rapidly increasing the racial and geographic diversity of the undergraduate student body and welcoming transfer students will become absolutely essential for St. Thomas.

### Affordability and Access Barriers

Predictions show that the high school graduates we enroll in the coming years will be more economically diverse than ever. We should expect and prepare for an increase in the number of students with financial need.

### Extreme Educational Disparities

A recent report by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis documents that Minnesota has some of the largest achievement gaps in the nation, and they are getting worse. Children from low-income families and families of color have shockingly lower educational opportunities and outcomes in Minnesota. If we do not close these gaps, some of these children might never fully participate in our economy, limiting Minnesota’s economic competitiveness. These racial and income disparities continue to higher education and compel us to engage in solutions.

### Challenges to our Value Proposition

The value of a bachelor’s degree in terms of lifetime earnings and flourishing is at an all-time high. However, higher education has come under increased scrutiny, and we see greater discussion of its value proposition, as well as access and affordability. This criticism has come at a time when tuition and student debt burdens have risen quickly. College education is a basic requirement for many jobs and

careers, but some families are facing the reality of being unable to afford an education. Employers seek graduates with both professional and social-emotional skills, and increasingly, employers report that current college graduates lack the necessary technical and soft skills to succeed. As a result, higher education institutions must demonstrate practical excellence and embrace innovation.

### **Learnings from the Pandemic**

During the pandemic of 2020, staff and faculty quickly adapted traditional models to serve students. Our successful response proved that our university can act nimbly and respond to the rapidly changing environment while maintaining a student-centered focus. Learnings from the pandemic will improve how we work and respond to student needs and underscore efficiencies that can be implemented permanently.

### **Student and Family Demands for Choices**

Technology has revolutionized higher education, and the pandemic has jump-started our foray into online education. As we respond to increased demand for choice in delivery, we will face increased competition from providers near and far who will offer online experiences. We are competing with universities that are innovating with shorter, more flexible online and blended degrees and certificates. Our ability to respond to these demands and compete by offering a personalized, distinctive St. Thomas academic experience will be a key factor in our ability to thrive.

### **Future Workforce Demands**

Our employer partners report a growing need for graduates with both technical and principled leadership skills who can work across differences in a global and increasingly diverse world. Graduates with practical experience and the ability to think creatively across disciplines will best meet the demands of the future workforce. Several specific future workforce needs include:

- Minnesota continues to lose engineering students to other states due to a shortage of reputable engineering programs, while our business community creates continued demand.
- Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce predicts that the demand for health care services will grow twice as fast as the national economy over the next decade. The American Nurses Association says a combination of demographic factors and expanded access to health care will create a renewed critical shortage of nurses.
- More employers are searching for graduates with data and analytics literacy, a demand that is expected to grow in the coming years.
- Employers also want graduates who understand diversity, equity and inclusion and can work skillfully in dynamic, diverse environments.

## OUR 10-YEAR ASPIRATION

**“The University of St. Thomas will advance to the level of excellence, impact and reputation that distinguishes the top 10 national Catholic universities.”**

St. Thomas is at a distinct point in our history – and we are poised to expand our reach across the country and to build a national reputation. Its position as the largest private university in Minnesota, nimble yet comprehensive, gives St. Thomas a unique advantage. With keen focus on strategic opportunities, we will not just survive the headwinds, but thrive and grow.

In the next decade, guided by our mission and convictions, we will take our well-earned, outstanding reputation in Minnesota to a larger geographic footprint to tell our story. This is critical to our future of sustaining a robust demand for a St. Thomas education.

Together, we will work toward our aspirational vision to embrace St. Thomas’ rich past and aggressively propel the university into a bold future on the national stage. The next five years present an unparalleled opportunity to begin this work by promoting our extraordinary strengths and leveraging key opportunities.

## OUR MISSION

*Inspired by Catholic intellectual tradition, the University of St. Thomas educates students to be morally responsible leaders who think critically, act wisely and work skillfully to advance the common good.*

## OUR CONVICTIONS

Pursuit of truth  
Academic Excellence  
Faith and Reason  
Dignity  
Diversity  
Personal Attention  
Gratitude

## 2025 STRATEGIC THEMES

As our community came together through the strategic planning process to develop goals for the next five years, the following themes emerged. These will guide our work, helping us remain true to what makes St. Thomas unique while empowering us to focus on key ongoing and emerging priorities that will help us thrive. St. Thomas will build upon its strengths, invest where we have unprecedented opportunity and make bold progress.

### EVER PRESS FORWARD THROUGH INNOVATION

**We will innovate, grow and excel in ways that align with our educational mission and vision to provide relevant and continuous learning for Tommie leaders of today and tomorrow.**

St. Thomas is a nimble but comprehensive university with a breadth of undergraduate, graduate and professional degree programs. Our undergraduate programs are built on a rigorous and relevant liberal arts foundation, anchored in the College of Arts and Sciences. Our mission-driven graduate and professional programs educate leaders who help move their professions and society forward. All of our programs are bolstered by the teaching excellence of our faculty and provide relevant knowledge and skills that put theory into practice to meet challenges of the times.

In the next five years, St. Thomas will offer new world-class educational experiences that meet the needs of an ever-changing world. In the increasingly competitive higher education market, we will **increase** the value of a St. Thomas degree by pursuing new degree and non-degree programs while adapting and transitioning others.

### BUILD BELONGING AND PROMOTE EQUITY

**We will become a university characterized by radical hospitality and a shared sense of belonging where all are welcomed as we work to achieve social justice and dismantle inequities of all forms.**

The world faces serious challenges and inequities of all types: educational, economic, environmental, health and social. We are called to help create lasting change that upholds human dignity, achieves equity and justice, and advances the common good.

Within our community, we will improve student recruitment and university-wide hiring practices to diversify our community and better reflect the demographics of our society and world. As we become a more diverse campus, we will continue our work to dismantle inequities and create a culture of belonging by cultivating and practicing inclusion for all who learn, live and work in our community.

Beyond our campuses, we will harness our resources and expertise to partner with government, businesses, nonprofits and community members to help create a future where social justice and equity prevail in our larger world.

## ENSURE ACCESS, ACHIEVEMENT AND OUTCOMES FOR ALL



**We will broaden access to a St. Thomas education, ensure all students have equal opportunities to take advantage of the full St. Thomas experience and the academic excellence we provide, and connect all students to career opportunities that leverage our powerful Tommie network.**

By removing financial and transfer barriers to attending and succeeding at St. Thomas, we will increase access to the lifelong, whole-person St. Thomas education for more people. And for every student who comes through our Arches, we will ensure that we provide equitable opportunities to engage in the holistic St. Thomas experience so all students are set up for success.

We will continue to optimize our students' learning, retention and time to graduation through personal attention and equitable immersion in high-impact practices. We will provide opportunities for all students to be fully involved and to feel welcomed in the St. Thomas community, including students of color, LGBTQIA+ students, veterans, first-generation students, students with disabilities and students from all faith traditions. Through co-curricular learning opportunities students will engage in deep self-exploration of their faith and values, make meaningful connections within and outside of our St. Thomas community, communicate effectively across diverse perspectives, learn strategies and develop habits for holistic well-being, and develop as leaders and citizens who make positive contributions to their communities. We will continue to meet the spiritual, physical and mental health needs of our students by providing compassionate care, expertise and resources.

## LEAN IN TO OUR CATHOLIC MISSION



**We will bring the visions of our founder and namesake, our unique charism, and Catholic social teaching fully to life as we encounter the grand challenges of the day, develop principled leaders and contribute to a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable world.**

Catholic social teaching and Catholic intellectual tradition are alive and vibrant at St. Thomas. The history of St. Thomas, the vision of our founder, Archbishop John Ireland, and our patron, St. Thomas Aquinas, contribute to our unique charism. This tapestry gives our students a lifelong gift unique to St. Thomas. Our charism reflects Archbishop Ireland's style of boldly addressing the challenges of our world while contributing deeply to the community.

We will be wholly committed agents for social justice and defend the dignity of all people, whether they are our students, staff or faculty, or members of the broader community. We believe in the compatibility of faith and reason, the need for open dialogue between the disciplines, and the centrality of the development of the student as a whole person. We promote a culture of service where students can actively engage in creating change in service to the common good. While we foster an active Catholic faith and culture, people of all faiths are not only welcome at St. Thomas but invited to fully practice and deepen their faiths. We will seek opportunities for common prayer and social engagement among believers. This interfaith understanding is a priority *because* we are Catholic. St. Thomas will be known for accompanying students on their faith journeys and helping them meet the challenges they will face in life.

## WIDEN THE CIRCLE OF IMPACT

**We will make our mark and widen our impact locally, regionally, nationally and globally by becoming a partner of choice and extending an invitation to students, faculty and staff from near and far to become part of our vision and our work.**

St. Thomas has been on a trajectory of innovation and growth and is now positioned to attract a wider community of students, faculty and staff who will expand our ability to positively impact the world. We have momentum, and our increased visibility locally and nationally fuels a unique opportunity to grow in prominence as a leading Catholic university making positive and transformational impacts.

We will broaden our reach toward a national audience as well as connect more deeply in our local communities. We will take intentional steps to be, as our founder John Ireland promised, a university not only *in* the community but *of* the community. To be a partner of choice to local businesses and other organizations, we will work to deeply understand what partners need from us and respond with relevant offerings and engagement. Strong St. Thomas connections locally, nationally and globally will give our graduates a distinct advantage throughout their career and life.

Through strategic education partnerships and study-abroad opportunities across the world, we will expand our global reach and open international opportunities for students, faculty and staff. We will welcome international students and faculty and flourish from their participation in our community.

## STRENGTHEN CULTURE AS WE EMBRACE CHANGE

**As we respond to uncertainty and change in the societal and higher education landscapes, we will strengthen our university culture by expressing the values of respect, honesty and transparency, by engaging in open dialogue, and by committing to continued personal and professional growth.**

Changes in the employment market, global demands and headwinds faced by higher education all require a culture on campus that is adaptable and flexible. We must integrate across academic and non-academic departments and find ways to improve how we work together and make decisions. We must be vigilant stewards of our resources and always remember that they emanate from student tuition and philanthropic support. We must incorporate data and technology, break down silos and integrate operations. In doing so, we will find better and less costly ways to deliver the services that support our students' education.

Valued human traits such as compassion, communication, empathy, ethical decision-making and creativity are key to the health and success of any organization. People are our most essential assets. In this time of uncertainty, we will develop a culture that values community and cares for one another. Communicating openly with faculty and staff and providing transparent access to information will foster trust and encourage full engagement in the university. Our convictions of personal attention and gratitude call us to foster a caring culture that supports the well-being of each member and celebrates the achievements of all members of our community.



## 2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### NEW AND EMERGING PRIORITIES

- Lead in STEAM\* Education 
- Grow the Morrison Family College of Health 
- Meet Ever-Changing Needs of Students, Alumni and Employers 
- Foster Belonging and Dismantle Racism 
- Prepare Students for Work and Career 
- Build National Awareness and Advance Priorities through Athletics 

*\*Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM)*

### ONGOING PRIORITIES

- Promote and Leverage Our Comprehensive Academic Excellence 
- Retain and Attract World-Class Talent 
- Prepare Educators to Dismantle Disparities 
- Expand Pathways through the Dougherty Family College 
- Illuminate Our Mission and Charism 
- Close Financial Gaps for Students 
- Expand Our Pipeline of Students 
- Create a Robust Residency Culture 
- Live and Work Sustainably 
- Engage All Tommies as Changemakers 



## New and Emerging Priorities

### Lead in STEAM Education



St. Thomas will provide exceptional and interdisciplinary Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) programming. With consultation from employers, we will co-create relevant cross-disciplinary curricula that inspire creative problem solving among our students and enable collaboration. As we grow these opportunities, we will intentionally beckon diverse students and faculty toward our inclusive programs and spaces. The new STEAM Complex on south campus will provide world-class space to accommodate intentional enrollment and diversity growth in engineering, health and digital media fields, in close collaboration with arts and sciences programs. The exemplary offerings, along with the physical complex, will attract top students and faculty from around the country and globe who seek premier STEAM experiences and degrees.

### Grow the Morrison Family College of Health



By growing the new Morrison Family College of Health and establishing the School of Nursing, St. Thomas will respond to a shortage of health providers and leaders required to promote healthy families and communities. Our students will learn to provide whole-person care to address the physical, mental, social and spiritual needs of individuals, while also discovering ways to advance systems change to eliminate health disparities. We will welcome our first undergraduate and graduate nursing students and continue to build expertise, resources and partnerships to provide the best possible educational experience to our students.

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



In order to respond to the needs and expectations of future students, alumni and community members, St. Thomas will develop flexible and stackable degrees and programs, including credentials that can lead to a degree. We will creatively redesign programs and their pricing and shorten time to some degrees. We will build an integrated digital platform that meets the needs of students and reflects how they learn best. We will adapt educational content and pedagogy to be relevant to future students and their employers by co-creating curricula with employers (businesses, school districts, community partners, government). We will break down organizational barriers to foster more collaboration and integration, enabling more interdisciplinary programs. St. Thomas will adapt to offer continuous learning for alumni and the broader workforce by becoming a sought-after partner for professional development, skills-based education, and executive education. Our Continuous and Professional Education (CAPE) online platform will leverage our expertise and knowledge alongside our key partners for greater impact through St. Thomas.

### Foster Belonging and Dismantle Racism



Within St. Thomas and in our broader community, we will seek transformative, measurable equity and inclusion. We will develop a university-wide diversity, equity and inclusion strategic plan to ensure that every member of our community shares in the responsibility for our long-term journey to make St. Thomas more inclusive. We will intentionally recruit and retain faculty and staff from diverse perspectives and backgrounds by refining our hiring practices and creating opportunities for

engagement and belonging. We will insist upon a more inclusive campus environment for underrepresented students, including students of color, LGBTQIA+ students, veterans, first-generation students, students with disabilities, and students from all faith traditions. We will coordinate our efforts and measure our progress with the help of an external task force of local leaders and alumni. Beyond our campuses, the Racial Justice Initiative will harness expertise from within St. Thomas to help reimagine a future for the Twin Cities free from racial disparities. In seeking to break down silos and employ strategies that heal racial divides, the Racial Justice Initiative will work alongside corporate and nonprofit partners to eradicate barriers that perpetuate racial injustice. The initiative will host critical conversations and spur actions to promote racial justice while offering a distinctive focus on the work of historical recovery.

### **Prepare Students for Work and Career**

By elevating and restructuring career support, we will intentionally set students on a path toward their career start and a lifetime of continued professional and personal growth, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Through new levels of engagement with the Tommie network of more than 110,000 alumni, located across the country and around the world, our students and the entire university will benefit. In return for their engagement and service, we will provide alumni continuous education that meets their reskilling and professional development needs. Through deeper connection with alumni, as well as industry, employer and community partners, we will increase career opportunities for students, making it possible for every student to have an internship or career experience and interact with employers before graduation. Career education will be scaled to reach every student, who will engage in meaningful career reflection and development of a career plan. Intentional and proactive programming will reach historically underserved populations, ensuring equity and access for all. Through robust quantitative and qualitative data, we will be equipped to measure and evaluate our work – continually driving stronger lifelong career outcomes for our graduates.

### **Build National Awareness and Advance Priorities through Athletics**

St. Thomas will transition to Division I athletics because we aspire to expand the impact of our common good mission. This opportunity will raise our national profile, further transform the differentiated educational experience of our students, and galvanize excitement and pride among our alumni. As we build the infrastructure necessary to succeed at the Division I level, we will maintain high student achievement both in academics and athletics. Increased awareness from athletics will assist in attracting students from across the country. Additionally, as athletics serves as an important partner in initiatives that support university mission, campus and student life, student access and achievement, and donor cultivation, we will further advance institutional priorities. Together this will create an energized culture of student-athletes and fans that generates engagement on campus with students, faculty, staff, alumni and donors. As the newest of the top 20 nationally ranked Catholic universities to join Division I, St. Thomas will emphasize comprehensive excellence to rise even higher among these peers.

## Ongoing Priorities

### Promote and Leverage Our Comprehensive Academic Excellence



The strong reputations of our professional schools, including the Opus College of Business, School of Engineering and School of Law, along with a solid liberal arts foundation and programs anchored in the College of Arts and Sciences, uniquely position St. Thomas as a comprehensive university, growing in prominence and rankings. Through enrollment growth, new programs and innovative delivery modes, the School of Engineering will lead its peers and continue to fill the region's need for skilled engineers. New data science programs will increase relevant opportunities for digital and information literacy. With a distinctive faculty and curriculum that support students' integration of their faith and ethical principles into their professional identity, the St. Thomas School of Law will continue to expand its reach and produce student employment outcomes of a top-50 law school. The Schulze School of Entrepreneurship at the Opus College of Business will achieve top rankings in the Princeton Review and become the top choice for students throughout the United States who are committed to entrepreneurship and social ventures. Through the leadership of the Schulze School, entrepreneurial thinking will expand across the university to spark creative problem-solving among all of our students. The Opus College of Business will lead its peers in developing leaders who understand the impact of emerging technologies in business and society, and who can responsibly harness that power for the common good.

### Retain and Attract World-Class Talent



We will retain, attract and develop top talent to work skillfully and collaboratively with each other and our students and partners, ensuring that our employees experience a sense of belonging, feel valued for their contributions and can flourish. We will modernize and align our human resources, finance and hiring functions to optimize efficiencies and reward talent in a way that improves the work experience for faculty and staff. We will offer relevant professional development opportunities to help employees thrive.

### Prepare Educators to Dismantle Disparities



The newly imagined School of Education will exemplify St. Thomas' deep commitment to reaching and serving underrepresented young people who deserve access to an equitable education. It will be a hub where teachers are prepared to be a force for justice in our community and will help eliminate the extreme opportunity gaps in our Minnesota K-12 education system. Our founder, Archbishop John Ireland, opened St. Thomas to educate underserved immigrants and eliminate barriers to their success. One hundred thirty-five years later, by building and operating a proposed lab school, the School of Education will model ways of dismantling disparities and ensuring that all children receive a high-quality education.

### Expand Pathways through the Dougherty Family College



As we continue to grow and strengthen the Dougherty Family College, we will set the standard for academic preparation of traditionally underrepresented students by achieving high retention and graduation rates and by creating pathways for students to earn a four-year degree. We will design and develop preparation for majors in STEM, business and health professions. We will create four-year

degree plans for all majors at the University of St. Thomas. As we set up students for success, we will build their professional competency and help them become transformative community leaders.

### **Illuminate Our Mission and Charism**

Both within St. Thomas' campuses and in our broader community, we will further illuminate the charism of St. Thomas and fully embrace our Catholic mission to educate for the common good. Through new and existing collaborations with global Catholic organizations such as Catholic Charities, Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Healthcare and the Global Catholic Climate Movement, we will strengthen our global identity as a Catholic institution dedicated to mitigating global problems. In our classrooms and throughout our campuses, we will further illuminate the gift of our charism and help our students adopt a lifelong commitment to solving challenges and serving others as principled leaders. Continued and expanded mission and charism conversations and dialogue with faculty, staff, alumni and the Board of Trustees will deepen our community's understanding and appreciation of our unique tradition. We will serve students of all faiths and engage alumni and other community members by offering ways to deepen their spirituality and understanding of faith. Campus Ministry will offer rich and diverse opportunities for the spiritual development of all students, no matter where they are on their faith journey.

### **Close Financial Gaps for Students**

St. Thomas will be a leader among peers in closing the affordability gap for students with financial need. Through robust scholarships and need-based aid, we will remove financial barriers to attending and succeeding at St. Thomas. This includes adjusting our financial aid model to meet more need, providing more donor-funded hardship scholarships for incoming and current students, and developing creative tuition and aid models that respond to increasing financial needs of students. We also will address other financial barriers to holistic experiences such as study abroad, research and internship opportunities that otherwise might be unaffordable.

### **Expand Our Pipeline of Students**

We will expand ways to invite students into our community and open new routes to St. Thomas. We will broaden our recruitment strategies in order to reach students across the country and the world and intentionally increase the racial and geographic diversity of the undergraduate student body. Athletics is one way of broadening our student recruitment. We also will remove academic and operational barriers for undergraduate students who begin their education at another college or university. We will make transferring to St. Thomas more seamless and seek partnerships with two-year colleges.

### **Create a Robust Residency Culture**

As we implement our two-year residency requirement for bachelor's degree-seeking students, we will deepen our commitment to an exceptional residential experience. Guided by our mission-based Tommie Advantage learning goals, we will ensure that every student can engage fully by creating more opportunities for living-learning communities, strengthening our First-Year Experience and designing a Second-Year Experience program.

### **Live and Work Sustainably**



Every member of the St. Thomas community will engage in sustainable practices, and our students will be sustainability leaders as we fully implement our sustainability strategic plan. We will participate in global Catholic networks to care for our common home. A new sustainability hub will foster collaboration among students, faculty, staff, alumni and partners, supporting research, curriculum and practice to accelerate scalable and equitable solutions to global sustainability challenges. All students will be offered multiple pathways for engagement, skills development and professional experiences across academic disciplines, preparing them to advance sustainability in any career. The university will achieve an AASHE Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) gold rating by 2025, obtain a minimum of LEED silver certification for new buildings larger than 25,000 square feet, and reduce annual carbon emissions while working toward a goal of carbon neutrality by 2035.

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



Through expansion of the university's Center for the Common Good (CCG), every St. Thomas student – undergraduate and graduate – will have the opportunity to learn from and contribute to advancing the common good through safe, ethical and mutually beneficial engagement with local and global communities. Through transformational partnerships with nonprofits, schools and government initiatives, students will participate in volunteerism and course- and research-based engagement. These experiences will help students discern their role in addressing civic and community challenges and more deeply embedding social equity and justice in every aspect of their lives. With community partners and engaged alumni serving as mentors, The Under-Told Stories Project educating audiences on the consequences of poverty, and Tommie Corps that immerses students and young alumni in service opportunities in the community, students will translate their gifts into action. These Changemaking for the Common Good commitments will inspire our university community to more clearly understand, lead and work together with the skill and empathy needed to create a better world – one that is indeed all about human flourishing and work for the common good.

## COMMUNITY INPUT PROCESS

Co-chaired by Dr. Ed Clark, vice president for innovation technology services and chief information officer, and Dr. Katherina Pattit, associate professor of ethics and business law in the Opus College of Business, the **St. Thomas 2025** Strategic Planning Task Force worked with campus partners to lead community conversations and to gather input.

A robust resource web site was developed for the community with information about the draft strategic themes that helped guide the conversations. The four draft themes were Student Access and Success, Expanded Reach and Impact, Mission Integration, and Responsive and Relevant Education.

Through a survey and community conversations, community members provided insights about the successes and obstacles related to each of the strategic themes. The data were analyzed, and “challenge” questions were posed to generate solutions. More than 1,900 individual solution ideas were offered by community members. The data were coded and analyzed. Major topics emerged during analysis that helped provide ideas for each strategic theme.

In addition to community input sessions, feedback was gathered from students, the President’s Cabinet, members of the Board of Trustees and various advisory boards. Ideas also were gathered from the strategic plans of individual colleges, schools and other divisions. As a result, this plan reflects both university-wide planning efforts and specific planning efforts from units across the university.

The process started before the pandemic and prior to the May 2020 killing of George Floyd. An additional community survey in fall 2020 offered the community the opportunity to reflect on how these challenges impact our priorities and goals. This feedback clearly indicated the necessity of emphasizing our commitment to our people, the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion, and the need to respond to the headwinds facing higher education. As a result of this feedback, two themes were added to the initial four to help address the urgency of key issues. These themes include Strengthen our Culture to Embrace Change, and Build Belonging and Dismantle Inequities at St. Thomas and in our broader world.

## REALIZING OUR VISION

**St. Thomas 2025** is a living document, designed to help guide decisions about our focus. As we pursue strategic opportunities in the next five years, we will remain nimble and responsive to changes and challenges that may arise and adjust our plans as necessary.

Implementing these priorities will require significant focus, commitment and resources. To achieve our goals, St. Thomas will launch a comprehensive campaign.

In order to effectively monitor progress toward each strategic priority, we will develop key metrics for each initiative. Implementation updates, plan metrics and related news will be shared through a dedicated website.



# Metrics and Milestones

## Lead in STEAM Education

Eddy Rojas, Executive Vice President and Provost  
Deans of College of Arts of Sciences, Engineering, Morrison Family College of Health  
Mark Vangsgard, Vice President of Business Affairs and Chief Financial Officer  
Erik Thurman, Vice President of University Advancement

### **METRICS AND MILESTONES (will be refined by late Fall 2021)**

1. Finish program planning and begin building for the STEAM complex, incorporating inclusive design in the process. Break ground Spring 2022 and open the building January 2024.
2. Before construction begins, secure an additional \$34.9 million in funding for the STEAM complex, for a total of \$75 million raised at project's end.
3. Expand opportunities for students enrolled in STEAM programs to participate in at least one high-impact practice per year by 2025. These practices include:
  - Faculty-led undergrad research
  - STEAM-based learning communities
  - Community-based learning
  - Internships
  - Senior design clinic (ENGR students)
4. Expand cross-disciplinary collaborations in STEAM fields that inspire creative problem solving. Once baseline is established, determine targets for increasing collaborations of faculty and number of students engaged with cross-disciplinary collaborations and learning experiences each year.
5. Increase federal grant funding to improve student experience and discovery, especially to increase opportunities for underrepresented students. Make annual progress toward achieving funding levels comparable to top 20 national Catholic universities (\$8 million - currently at \$4.9 million).

## Grow the Morrison Family College of Health

MayKao Hang, VP and Dean of the Morrison Family College of Health (Primary)  
Martha Scheckel, Founding Director, School of Nursing

### **METRICS AND MILESTONES**

1. Achieve a 20 percent increase in Exercise Science, Public Health, and Bachelor of Social Work degrees awarded by Morrison Family College of Health (MCOH).
2. Achieve a level of at least 30 percent of MCOH students admitted to graduate programs in Professional Psychology, Social Work, and Nursing will be from diverse, underrepresented backgrounds and at least 30 percent of new faculty and staff will be from diverse, underrepresented backgrounds.
3. Enroll at least 400 net new College of Health students to St. Thomas.
4. All MCOH programs will have at least one community partner engaged in activities and initiatives that substantively advance MCOH strategic priorities.
5. All MCOH programs will meaningfully integrate the MCOH guiding principles into required coursework for majors.
6. Three new alternative pathways will be identified and implemented that enable student access into MCOH of students from diverse and traditionally underrepresented backgrounds.
7. Fall-to-fall retention for students from diverse, underrepresented backgrounds will match retention of majority students, closing the current gap.
8. At least 90 percent of MCOH graduates are gainfully employed or participating in a graduate program within one year of graduation.
9. Achieve five-year fundraising goal of an additional \$31.4 million for operations. In addition, make progress toward a \$40 million longer-term goal for MCOH facilities.



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

Eddy Rojas, Executive Vice President and Provost  
Karyn McCoy, Associate Vice President for Alumni, Corporate and Careers  
Academic Deans

### METRICS AND MILESTONES

1. Assess our offerings against needs in the region's employer market, measured by U.S. labor market reports and state and federal workforce data.
2. Innovate in our *delivery* of programming and degrees. Increase development of alternative formats, creative course designs and different modes of delivery that meet the needs of current and prospective students and attract new students.
3. In all schools and colleges, **innovate** programs and develop new relevant offerings.
  - a. Grow graduate programs, including stackable credentials, and corresponding revenue.
  - b. Grow Continuing and Professional Education (CAPE) offerings and corresponding revenue.
4. Improve reputation as partner of choice.
  - a. Track and increase satisfaction of students and alumni in meeting their lifelong career needs, measured how alumni view St. Thomas as a viable choice for them as they think about continuing their education and upskilling.
  - b. As we create programs and credentials, measure their success by carefully tracking participants' satisfaction in meeting career goals. Increase satisfaction of our employer partners, measured through surveys of our colleges and schools' advisory boards and/or University Advancement (UA) corporate relations surveys.
  - c. As measured by the annual awareness perception tracking survey, increase the percentage who agree that St. Thomas produces employer-desired graduates and offers real-world opportunities to learn.

## Foster Belonging and Dismantle Racism

Kha Yang, Associate Vice President for Inclusive Excellence (Primary Internal)  
Dr. Yohuru Williams, Founding Director, Racial Justice Initiative  
Omar Correa, Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management  
Kathy Arnold, Chief Human Resources Officer

### METRICS AND MILESTONES

**1. Diversity of students.** St. Thomas will intentionally increase the racial diversity of its student population.

- a. Increase percentage of students of color in the First Time First Year (FTFY) four-year undergraduate incoming class to 29 percent by 2025. (Currently at 19 percent)
- b. Increase percentage of students of color in the total student population to 32 percent by 2025. (Currently at 22 percent)

**2. Retention of students of color. Improve the overall first to the second year (fall-to-fall) retention rate** from 87 to 90% by 2025. Continually work to reduce the gap in retention rates for students of color, first-generation, out-of-state, low-income and commuter students through targeted intervention and by ensuring participation of all students in high-impact retention practices.

**Reduce** equity gaps in high-impact student engagement.

- a. Increase the economic and racial diversity of students who study abroad so that the profile of those studying abroad is as diverse as the undergraduate St. Thomas student body as a whole.
  - b. Close career outcome equity gaps for students of color and first-generation students.
  - c. Ensure equitable access to the on-campus residency experience through housing grants.
4. Increase the diversity and sense of belonging of faculty and staff.
- a. **Establish and implement a diversity hiring strategy.**
  - b. Ensure that all hiring managers in every faculty and staff search use best current hiring practices established by Human Resources that help ensure a diverse pool of qualified candidates.
  - c. Establish and implement a retention strategy to increase the retention of diverse employees.
5. Improve campus-wide sense of belonging for diverse populations, including race, gender, LGBTQIA+, religion, as measured through the DEI Campus Climate Survey, National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) surveys, the Employee Pulse Survey and the Campus Pride Index.
6. Incorporate the university's DEI strategic plan across all university schools, colleges, and staff departments and track the progress of the detailed metrics outlined in the DEI strategic plan.

7. Grow the Racial Justice Initiative and measure increase in the number of critical conversations held, corporate partnerships developed, speaking engagements secured, media coverage and dollars raised. Implement an RJI strategic plan in 2022 with clear metrics for success.
8. Increase the percentage of Minnesotans who agree that St. Thomas “welcomes and celebrates diversity” as measured by the annual awareness tracking survey.
9. Achieve five-year fundraising goal of \$5 million for Racial Justice Initiative.

## Prepare Students for Work and Career

Karyn McCoy, Associate Vice President of Alumni, Corporate and Career  
Erik Thurman, Vice President, University Advancement

### **METRICS (Refined by Karyn McCoy August 2021)**

1. Increase student undergraduate participation in high-impact career mobility practices, ensuring that every undergraduate student participates in at least one high-impact practice before graduation by 2025. These include development of a career plan, helpful career conversations, career-related experiences or internships and networking opportunities with employers and alumni. Measure student participation through data collection in career management system (Handshake), student surveys and First Destination Survey.
2. Maintain employment levels of St. Thomas graduates in the marketplace and increase employer engagement with St. Thomas. Measure graduate employment outcomes through the First Destinations survey.
3. Grow the distinctive brand of St. Thomas students in the employer market and our role as leaders in filling workforce gaps. Measure employer engagement utilizing career management system (Handshake) data on employer activity (i.e. participation in on-campus interviewing, information sessions, chats, career fairs, special events, job and internship postings.)
4. Close career outcome equity gaps for students of color and first-generation students. Measure student participation through data collection in career management system (Handshake), student surveys and First Destination Survey.

Increase alumni engagement for the career success of our graduates and the advancement of the university. Measure through CASE Global Alumni Engagement Metric.

5. Achieve five-year fundraising goal of \$5 million for programming and unpaid internships.

## Build Awareness and Advance Priorities through Athletics

Phil Esten, Vice President and Director of Athletics (Primary)  
Intercollegiate Athletics Advisory Committee  
Omar Correa, Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management  
Vice President of Marketing, Insights and Communication

### METRICS

1. Successfully complete transition from Division III to Division I.
2. Establish a culture of Student Success.
  - a. Maintain high student-athlete academic outcomes (GPA, GSR and APR).
  - b. Create a culture of inclusion.
  - c. Maintain positive student-athlete experience as measured through student-athlete experience surveys and exit interviews.
  - d. Build a winning, competitive culture through successful athletic programs.
3. Increase exposure to and awareness of St. Thomas in new markets because of athletics.
  - a. Increase the positive media coverage of St. Thomas outside of Minnesota and in specialty publications as measured by tracked media hits.
  - b. Increase geographic diversity of general student body. Move from 90 percent of U.S. students from Minnesota and Wisconsin to 82 percent by 2025.
4. Increase school spirit and alumni connections to St. Thomas as measured through student and alumni surveys, and student, faculty, staff and alumni game attendance.
5. Engage with key partners.
  - a. Increase corporate engagement through incremental corporate sponsorship/partnership programs with athletics.
  - b. Create internal university partnerships (academic programs, students, alumni) that contribute to the university's overall success.
6. Achieve fundraising goal of \$37.5 million to support annual expenses through the annual fund, major gifts and endowments in the next five years. In addition, make progress toward a longer-term facilities fundraising goal of \$175 million.

## Promote and Leverage our Comprehensive Academic Excellence

Eddy Rojas, Executive Vice President and Provost  
Academic Deans  
Vice President of Marketing, Insights and Communication

### METRICS

1. Enhance and promote the unique academic excellence of each school and college, including:
  - a. Every Opus College of Business will graduate with hands-on experiences in emerging technologies.
  - b. The Schulze School of Entrepreneurship will develop partnerships across the university to spark creative problem-solving among all St. Thomas students.
  - c. CAS and School of Engineering will expand opportunities for students enrolled in STEAM programs to participate in at least one high-impact practice per year by 2025.
  - d. School of Law will produce student employment outcomes of a top-50 law school.
  - e. School of Education will lead in preparing educators in dismantle disparities.
  - f. Dougherty Family College will expand pathways and graduate academically confident scholars.
  - g. Morrison Family College of Health will achieve a 20 percent increase in its programs and enroll at least 400 net new students in its programs.
  
2. Increase the association of key reputation drivers with St. Thomas, as measured by either the MN perception tracking study or national research. annual awareness tracking survey.
  
3. Increase the number and diversity of faculty who are university thought leaders, as measured by:
  - a. Faculty and expert appearances in media.
  - b. Faculty thought leadership such as appearances at key academic conferences, awards earned, publishing/editing journals.
  - c. Increase in federal grants awarded.
  
4. Increase position in certain national rankings where feasible and appropriate; and leverage rankings through marketing and communication.
  - a. Schulze School of Entrepreneurship will continue to increase ranking position in the Princeton Review.
  - b. School of Engineering will experience enrollment growth, develop new programs and innovative delivery modes. It will continue to improve its ranking as measured by US News ranking of undergraduate engineering programs without doctoral degrees.
  - c. St. Thomas will continually improve its overall US News national ranking, including increasing peer scores.

## Retain and Attract World-Class Talent

Kathy Arnold, Chief Human Resources Officer

### METRICS AND MILESTONES

1. **Modernize and align** Human Resources. Ensure that HR operates as a strategic partner across the university. Increase efficiencies in university operations by creating, implementing, and integrating human resource and data systems. Assess and align rewards and compensation to incent, engage and recognize employee success.
2. **Develop talent at St. Thomas.** Establish talent management practices that ensure that the university has the leadership and bench strength to achieve its mission and long-term strategic growth strategies. Increase engagement of employees by offering relevant professional development that helps employees flourish and increases employees' technical and professional acumen.
3. **Attract top talent.** Through a proactive talent acquisition model, establish a positive St. Thomas employment brand. Establish and implement a diversity hiring strategy that increases the diversity of faculty and staff.
4. **Increase employee retention and belonging.** Engage employees to increase belonging. Establish and implement a strategy that increases the retention of diverse employees.

## Prepare Educators to Dismantle Disparities

Amy Smith, Interim Dean of the School of Education

### **METRICS**

1. Annually, recruit and enroll a school administrative licensure cohort to increase the number of school leaders and directors who graduate with a St. Thomas degree.
2. Increase the percentage of teacher candidates of color who complete the licensure programs and receive a Tier 3 (permanent) license from 76 percent to 85 percent.
3. Increase K-12 partnerships to include all of the public school districts in the 7 county Metro Area. (We currently have 36 district partnerships out of 42 metro area districts and 5 intermediate and cooperative districts.)
4. By 2025, establish a K-5 lab school that models inclusive education.
5. Achieve five-year fundraising goal of \$17 million.



## Expand Pathways through the Dougherty Family College

Buffy Smith, Dean, Dougherty Family College

### **METRICS AND MILESTONES (Refined August 2021 by DFC Strategic Planning Process)**

1. DFC scholars are academically confident and accomplished.
  - More than 80 percent graduate with an AA degree from DFC within 2 years.
  - 85% of DFC scholars maintain enrollment from fall to fall each year.
2. DFC has established pathways.
  - Pathways to 100% of University of St. Thomas' BA/BS majors are established.
  - 85%+ of DFC graduates transfer to a four-year college.
  - 70%+ of DFC scholars go on to earn a BA/BS degree within 5 years.
3. DFC scholars are poised for success in their communities, lives and professional careers.
  - 90%+ of DFC graduating scholars complete a professional development class and are placed in an internship.
4. DFC's financial model is balanced and sustainable.
  - More than 170 scholars are enrolled each year.
  - Achieve five-year fundraising goal of \$15 million
5. DFC is a collaborative, supportive and inclusive community.
  - 50%+ of the DFC team (administration, faculty and staff) is representative of the college's scholars (traditionally underrepresented)
  - Year over year retention rate for faculty and staff is 75%+
  - Annual event centered on DFC's stated values (anti-racist, community-minded, culturally-sustaining, empowering, holistic, rigorous, student-focused)

## Illuminate our Mission and Charism

Fr. Christopher Collins, Vice President for Mission

### **METRICS AND MILESTONES (Refined by Fr. Chris Collins July 2021)**

#### **1. Strengthen connections to our mission within the St. Thomas community.**

- a. Expand opportunities for faculty and develop opportunities to staff to experience our Catholic mission. Measure expansion by the number of Office of Mission offerings for faculty and staff and the number of faculty and staff who participate in these offerings. Deepen connection to the Mission for all new employees through intentional and continual programming.
- b. For students, increase welcoming and belonging in mission programming through inviting and engaging programming for all. Broaden outreach to all students and expand the number of students who participate in Campus Ministry and Office of Mission programs, including student participation in interfaith offerings.
- c. Continue to develop the Board of Trustees' formation around mission.
- d. With faculty, develop a mission inventory to track engagement of the mission across the university and measure the program's impact on sense of belonging, meaning, purpose and engagement with the St. Thomas mission.
- e. Increase Office of Mission community engagement opportunities throughout campus, including events hosted at the Iversen Center for Faith (organ concerts, art gallery showings, etc.)
- f. Engage alumni with our mission through programming and service opportunities.

#### **2. Establish and maintain partnerships with local and national Catholic organizations**

- a. Build and maintain strong relationship with Archdiocesan partners and Catholic schools, parishes and local nonprofit organizations.
- b. Convene conversations and provide education and understanding to the broader Catholic community on Catholic Social Teaching, including social justice and racial justice.
- c. Establish and maintain connections with the Catholic Health Association

#### **3. Deepen connections to the global Church**

Build on our relationships with the Vatican Congregation for Education and the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development through regular interactions and communication.

## Close Student Financial Gaps

Omar Correa, Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management (Primary)

Lisa Waldner, Associate Vice Provost for Student Achievement (equity in high-impact best practices)

Tonia Jones Peterson, Director of Retention and Student Success (equity in high-impact best practices)

Tim Lewis, Associate Vice Provost for Global Learning and Strategy (measuring equity in study abroad)

Erik Thurman, Vice President, University Advancement (scholarships)

### **METRICS**

1. Increase the number of economically diverse students enrolled at St. Thomas.
  - Increase the number of Minnesota State Grant-level eligible (including out of state) students from 30 percent to 35 percent of the First Time First Year (FTFY) class by 2025.
2. Increase the percentage of financial need met at St. Thomas.
  - Increase the percentage of the unmet financial need awarded to Minnesota State Grant-level (including out of state) students in the incoming (FYFT) class, from 75 percent to 85 percent by 2025.
3. Increase the economic and racial diversity of students who study abroad so that the profile of those studying abroad is as diverse as the St. Thomas student body as a whole.
4. Improve the overall first to second year (fall-to-fall) retention rate from 87 percent to 90 percent by 2025. Continually work to reduce the gap in retention rates for students of color, first-generation, out-of-state, low-income and commuter students through targeted intervention and by ensuring participation of all students in high-impact retention practices.
5. Achieve five-year fundraising goal of \$125 million for new scholarships and housing grants.

## Expand our Pipeline of Students

Eddy Rojas, Executive Vice President and Provost (Primary for transfer, nontraditional )  
Omar Correa, Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management (Primary for Geographic, BIPOC Diversity)  
Vice President for Marketing, Insights and Communications

### **METRICS**

1. Increase overall undergraduate enrollment by 500 total undergraduate students in the next five years, resulting in a FTFY incoming class of 1700 by 2025.
2. Increase undergraduate transfer students:
  - a. Increase our transfer population as measured by an annual increase in the percentage of the available pool of Minnesota transfer students that enroll at St. Thomas.
  - b. Establish articulation agreements with two-year colleges.
  - c. Establish academic policies that ease transfer to St. Thomas.
3. Increase the geographic diversity of undergraduate students. Increase the number of out of state students (both student athletes and nonstudent athletes). Decrease percentage of U.S. students from Minnesota/Wisconsin from 90 percent to 82 percent by 2025.
4. Increase the percentage of incoming FTFY 4-yr students of color to 29 percent by 2025.

## Create a Robust Residency Culture

Karen Lange, Vice President for Student Affairs (Primary)  
Rachel Harris, Student Affairs

### **METRICS AND MILESTONES (Refined 9/2021)**

1. Ensure a supportive environment on campus. Improve disparities among students of color, first generation students and LGBTQ+ students as reported in surveys about on-campus housing.
1. Increase opportunities for all students through living-learning communities.
2. Increase student participation in co-curricular experiences.
3. Improve the holistic well-being of St. Thomas students as measured by the American College Health Association – National College Health Assessment (ACHA-NCHA).
4. Retain more students into their third year at St. Thomas. Reduce attrition between second year and third year by 1.5 percent.
5. Ensure equitable access to residency experience. Achieve 5-yr fundraising goal of \$7.5 million for housing grants.
6. Market our two-year residency requirement and on-campus living options with excitement to incoming students and provide an equitable exception process.

## Live and Work Sustainably

Dr. Elise Amel, Sustainability Director  
Wendy Wyatt, Vice Provost, Academic Affairs  
Mark Vangsgard, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

### **METRICS AND MILESTONES (Global metric added 7/21)**

1. Achieve gold rating as measured by the AASHE Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) sustainability ranking.
2. Obtain a minimum of LEED silver certification for new buildings larger than 25,000 square feet.
3. Reduce annual carbon emissions by over 50 percent below our baseline while working toward a goal of carbon neutrality by 2035.
4. By 2025, 20 percent of all undergraduate courses offered by the university include sustainability components.
5. Achieve a solid waste diversion rate of 70 percent by 2025 and explore strategies to work towards a zero-waste goal.
6. By 2025, 60 percent of students and 25 percent of employees will be served by a sustainability peer educators program.
7. Deepen our engagement with the global Catholic climate movement organizations including the Laudato Si' Network and the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.
8. Achieve five-year fundraising goal for sustainability efforts of \$5 million by 2025.

## Engage All Tommies as Changemakers

Theresa Ricke-Kiely, Director of the Center for the Common Good (Primary)  
Fr. Christopher Collins, Vice President for Mission

### **METRICS**

1. Increase the number of undergraduate and graduate students who engage with Center for Common Good by 4 percent annually, resulting in more than 4,000 students engaging by 2025. Measure by participation in the Tommies Together Volunteer Center (TTVC) and Academic Community Engagement (ACE).
2. Increase the number of hours spent in service to communities by members of the St. Thomas community by 8 percent annually as tracked by the Center for the Common Good. By 2025, expand the number of hours to more than 125,000 hours.
3. Create reward systems for faculty for ACE courses, as mandated by Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement and Campus Compact. Ensure that all St. Thomas programs follow prescribed best practices in these assessments, which is expected by the Higher Learning Commission.
4. Ensure quality partnerships with nonprofits and cultivate long-term relationships rather than episodic relationships. Track the impact to partner nonprofits through partner surveys conducted at the end of the spring semester each academic year.
5. Increase the long-term impact of the Center for the Common Good. Track the impact of student mentors over years by asking alumni about the impact volunteering has had on their life and career.
6. Achieve five-year fundraising goal for TommieCorps/Center for the Common Good of \$5 million by 2025.

## St. Thomas 2025 Strategic Planning Task Force

### Co-Chairs

Clark, Edmund U.  
*Vice President, ITS*

Pattit, Katherina G.  
*Assoc. Prof. - Ethics & Business Law*

### Staff Representatives

Ricke-Kiely, Theresa  
*Exec. Dir., Center for the Common Good*

Yang, Kha A.  
*Assoc. VP, Inclusive Excellence*

Gates, Bryan W.  
*Assoc. Dir, First-Year Admissions*

Nadav, Amir J.  
*Asst. Dir., Campus Sustainability*

Jacobson, Megan K.  
*Sr. Assoc. Athletic Director*

### Undergraduate Representative

St. James, Aria R.

### Graduate Representative

Pancoast, Sierra

### Representative for Adjunct Faculty

Hirschey, K. D.  
*Adjunct Faculty - 12 Months*

### Staff Council Representative

Hjort, Heidi M.  
*Systems Analyst*

### CFNE Appointed Faculty

Orzolek, Douglas C.  
*Prof. - Music*

Anthony, Cara L.  
*Assoc. Prof. - Theology*

Sawin, Jason E.  
*Assoc. Prof. - Computer & Info Science*

Goltz, Caleb  
*Asst. Prof. - Political Science*

Owens, Ernest L.  
*Asst. Prof. - Management*

Cavalieri, Consuelo E.  
*Assoc. Prof. - Psychology*

Trost, Jennifer L.  
*Clinical Faculty*

Sommers, Jayne K.  
*Asst. Prof. - Education*

Barlow, Jordan B.  
*Asst. Prof. – GPS*

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