



PROGRESS REPORT FEBRUARY 2022

Lead in STEAM Education

We are on track for an early May 2022 ground-breaking for the Schoenecker Center. Much progress has been made on the design of the building, as well as on the preparation of student experiences that will fill its spaces.

The project received preliminary site plan approval from the City of Saint Paul, and the schematic design and design development phases have been completed. More than 80 faculty and staff from 11 different academic departments and 5 service departments provided input to ensure we maintained a collaborative design process. In addition, several inclusivity-focused sessions were held with students, alumni, and corporate partners during each design phase.

As the Academic Affairs committee will hear, we are increasing our federal grant funding activity in a way that will help propel St. Thomas to the level of the top 20 Catholic universities. Faculty are applying for more research opportunities as well as funding that will improve our students' experience and increase scholarships for underrepresented students.

We have experienced some early success in this area and are excited about our possibilities to grow our reputation in this area. In fact, this month, we await news of a \$10 million federal appropriation for our Center for Microgrid Research in the School of Engineering. U.S. Representative Betty McCollum is currently the Chair of the U.S. Defense Appropriations Subcommittee and has helped us secure this appropriation, to be shared with the Army Research Labs.

Grow the Morrison Family College of Health

The School of Nursing is abuzz, preparing to enroll its very first cohorts of students in Fall 2022. In late November, the Higher Learning Commission approved our two pre-licensure nursing programs, Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and Master's of Science in Nursing (MSN). Our projections for the incoming cohort exceed our expectations. Our goal is to have cohorts of 50 MSN students, and 50 BSN Students.

Currently, we have 157 potential MSN students who have started applications and 51 applications are complete. Our final MSN application deadline is March 15th, and we expect these numbers to increase. We have also accepted 330 FTFY students who have indicated their primary interest in BSN. So far, 22 students have confirmed. The deadline to confirm enrollment is not until May 1, 2022, so we expect more FTFY students to confirm.

Dr. MayKao Y. Hang continues to promote our unique approach to equity and to build awareness of the college and I urge you to link to these clips. She shared her [personal story](#) to inspire and convey goals for the college. She also spoke about how St. Thomas will help to fill the workforce needs of an increasingly diverse population with **KSTP's Minnesota Live**. In [the Pioneer Press](#), she reiterated that the goal is to have 30% of the inaugural class be students from rural, historically excluded, and underrepresented populations. She [spoke with the Star Tribune](#) on this ambitious approach to re-envision nursing with an eye toward underserved communities. I continue to be impressed with the partnerships she is developing to create unique clinical placement and learning opportunities with students; including libraries, the downtown council, and community-based nonprofits.

Foster Belonging and Dismantle Racism

To amplify the work of the Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (ODEI), St. Thomas was selected by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) to host a Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Campus Center, a national college collaboration, that will help spur activity on racial equity, healing and justice for students, faculty and staff. Thanks to a grant from the GHR Foundation, we will leverage the Center to implement new efforts to reach faculty with training around classroom interactions to help ensure a welcoming and inclusive learning environment.

At the recommendation of staff and faculty leaders, St. Thomas will now recognize both Indigenous Peoples Day and Juneteenth as official University of St. Thomas holidays and observed as such on the academic calendar. Recognizing these two days reflects our commitment to the continued work ahead around honoring history, truth, and reconciliation and supporting our diverse communities across campus.

The Racial Justice Initiative (RJI), continues to work with corporate leaders, community partners and the media to provide leadership on racial justice. Dr. Yohuru Williams was one of 15 leaders **recently named to Governor Tim Walz's Council on Justice**

Reinvestment. The council is charged with building data-driven policies that will reduce crime and recidivism, and make Minnesota's criminal justice system more effective, fair, and equitable.

Several corporations have secured RJI for speaking engagements in February, including Best Buy and Delta Dental. And, RJI is partnering with the Melrose & The Toro Company Center for Principled Leadership, and Guthrie Theatre for a learning and discussion event in conjunction with the *A Raisin in the Sun* production in May. Multiple corporate sponsors are supporting the event including US Bank, Target, and Ryan Companies.

RJI will welcome Kathlene Campbell as its first Racial Justice Fellow this June. Although we are losing Kathlene as dean of the School of Education as she moves on to become the CEO of the National Center for Teacher Residencies, she will stay connected to RJI and to St. Thomas by continuing to speak about and advocate for dismantling disparities in education.

Build National Awareness and Advance Priorities through Athletics

Our teams are successfully competing in their new conferences, and our student-athletes have already experienced some exciting success. In the fall, our athletes maintained an average grade-point average (GPA) of 3.41.

Football ended the season in 3rd place in the Pioneer League and ranked second in the league for attendance. In our first year of D1 competition, Tommies have competed in 28 states! Our fans have been enjoying radio broadcasts on Skor North AM 1500 and ESPN 1500, as well as on ESPN-Plus, Midco, Big Ten-Plus, and Flo Sports for away games.

Athletics has participated in a unique testing partnership with the Health and Exercise Science (HES) academic program in the Morrison Family College of Health. HES students are getting unique, hands-on experience working with coaches and athletes, while our D-I athletes can participate in quality athletic testing on campus rather than off-site at a corporate-run medical facility. The partnership is an example of the unique leveraging of our D-I move.

Finally, we are looking forward to cheering on our women's hockey coach, Joel Johnson, who will be coaching the U.S. women's hockey team in the Beijing Winter Olympics, as well as Tommies, Saskia Maurer and Nicole Vallario, who will be competing on the Swiss women's hockey team.