

St. Thomas 2030 Strategic Plan

Our Aspiration for 2030

Building on our momentum as a national Catholic university, over the next five years, St. Thomas will further its mission by:

- deepening our impact on students through whole-person formation and a relationship-centered culture;
- expanding our reach and visibility by pressing forward on our national aspirations; and
- embedding a culture of bold, human-centered innovation and entrepreneurial thinking.



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.

How St. Thomas 2030 Furtheres Our Mission

Our plan charts a path for the next five years towards a more connected, impactful and innovative university experience—ensuring that our students are not only career-ready but are

equipped to flourish.

It calls us to be faithful to who we are and courageous in who we are becoming. We will focus on forming students of integrity and imagination, build a more vibrant and inclusive university community, and strengthen our capacity to meet the needs of a complex, evolving society. The plan is a call to live out our mission with greater clarity, creativity, and conviction.

Built on St. Thomas Momentum

Over the past five years, the University of St. Thomas has experienced a period of remarkable progress. We have graduated thousands of Tommies who are serving their communities and impacting the world. We have seen historic levels of donor support and fundraising success, along with consistently strong regional enrollment. Our transition to Division I athletics has elevated school spirit and national visibility. We opened the Susan S. Morrison School of Nursing and introduced a two-year on-campus housing requirement alongside major investments in residence halls. New student-centered initiatives – including the Center for Student Achievement, the Center for Well-Being, and the Paul and Sarah Karon Veterans Resource Center – demonstrate our deep commitment to holistic student success. The opening of the Schoenecker Center for STEAM Education marked a bold investment in interdisciplinary learning and innovation, while new national partnerships underscore our rising profile. St. Thomas 2030 will build on this powerful momentum—amplifying our excellence and expanding our impact in the years ahead.



Foundational Pillars

This plan is built upon important core foundations of who we are as a St. Thomas community.

Catholic Mission

As a Catholic university, our foundation is rooted in a Mission-driven commitment to human dignity, the common good, and the transformative power of whole-person education. We cultivate an inclusive community that welcomes all faith journeys while remaining grounded in the richness of Catholic tradition. Our work emphasizes purpose, vocation, and the integration of faith and reason as we seek to form graduates who are ready to lead with empathy and integrity. In partnership with others in our community, we elevate the common good through initiatives that serve our local, national and global communities, strengthen our commitment to sustainability, and embrace our role as a university that prepares students to contribute to a more just and compassionate world.

Culture of Belonging

We are committed to ensuring that every member of the St. Thomas community feels a deep and authentic sense of belonging. This includes intentional efforts to support and uplift students and colleagues from diverse backgrounds who help provide a university experience rich in perspectives. At the heart of our culture is the concept of encounter—where authentic relationships are prioritized, and care for the whole person is central. As a convener of constructive dialogue across difference, we promote understanding, foster inclusion, and elevate St. Thomas as a place where diverse perspectives are valued. This relationship-centered approach extends beyond the classroom, and shapes how we mentor, support, and accompany students on their journeys and empowers both personal and academic growth.

Operational Excellence and Resiliency

We will prioritize operational excellence to help ensure that St. Thomas is financially sound and successfully navigates the higher education headwinds. This includes constant review of systems, organizational structures and resource

allocation to ensure that we maximize our efficiency and steward our resources effectively. These efforts will be grounded in a culture of collaboration, where employees across the university work together to identify opportunities, streamline processes, and drive shared solutions that strengthen our institution. The university prioritizes investing in faculty and staff within the university budget, working to ensure that salaries keep pace with our national benchmark peers.

Our financial resiliency will be further facilitated by donor support, as we prioritize investments in people and their potential through a comprehensive fundraising campaign that will launch in 2026. Strong philanthropic investment in scholarships, faculty, capital projects, and mission-critical programs will ensure that St. Thomas continues to lead, innovate and make lasting community impact for generations.



Strategic Priority #1: Center Student Success

We will demonstrate an unwavering commitment to student success, ensuring that our decisions and actions are aligned with improving student outcomes, retention and lifelong flourishing.

1. Inspire the Search for Purpose

To lay the foundation for a lifetime of flourishing, we will deepen our commitment to guiding students to seek their purpose and vocation—core dimensions of a meaningful life. Through both academic and co-curricular experiences, all Tommies will engage in opportunities to develop the skills of reflection, listening, discernment, and storytelling—essential tools for understanding themselves and their calling in the world.

The Purpose Project will serve as a catalyst for this work, coordinating and expanding university-wide efforts to weave purpose and vocation exploration into the student journey. Anchored in our Catholic mission, we will accompany students as they explore where their gifts and values meet the world's needs—cultivating a sense of purpose rooted in dignity, solidarity, and faith.

Tommies will encounter intentionally designed experiences that not only guide them toward meaningful lives and careers, but also shape their character, sense of responsibility, and capacity to contribute to the common good.

2. Invest in Scholarships

We will invest in undergraduate and graduate students through scholarships, which is our top fundraising campaign priority, ensuring that talented, driven students can access and thrive at St. Thomas.

3. Catalyze Changes that Prioritize Student Retention

We will engage as an entire community in focusing on retention, a commitment that may require changes in operations and culture. By implementing the

recommendations of the Student Success Academy, the entire university community will understand and participate in retention efforts. We will break down silos, integrate university technology systems, enhance and reform advising, and ensure student-centered practices. Recognizing that belonging and whole-person health are essential to academic and personal success and retention, we will further integrate support for well-being into the student experience.

President Rob Vischer: "At St. Thomas, we cultivate a holistic, inclusive and mission-driven community, based on relationships, rooted in our Catholic foundation. We champion the transformative power of purpose-driven, whole-person formation. We prepare students not just for the next step on their career path but for a lifetime of flourishing. It is our differentiator. This must be our highest priority."

4. Expand Distinctive Student Experiences

To further enrich the Tommie experience, we will strengthen resources to expand access to distinctive student experiences outside of the classroom such as internships, hands-on research, community-based learning and meaningful alumni engagement.

5. Launch Compelling Programs and Degrees

We will broaden pathways to St. Thomas by offering accelerated degrees, interdisciplinary opportunities, and degrees and programs that meet critical workforce needs. Through national and global partnerships, and by ensuring our curriculum is student-centered and outcomes-driven, we will prepare students for success in an evolving world. We will answer the call to develop programs in health care that serve critical community needs and advance human flourishing.





Strategic Priority #2: Press Forward on our National Aspirations

We will illuminate our distinctive impact and expand our geographic and reputational reach. We will leverage our momentum to boldly tell the distinctive and powerful story of St. Thomas.

1. Highlight Faculty and Strengthen Academic Excellence

We will uplift our academic programs to attract students, faculty and staff to St. Thomas. Through our comprehensive fundraising campaign, we will endow faculty positions that allow St. Thomas to recruit and retain faculty who have a profound impact on our students through extraordinary teaching, faculty-student research partnerships, mentorship of experiential learning activities, and other

distinctive practices that contribute to our students' academic lives. We will also provide resources for faculty to be effective in their work with students and to thrive at St. Thomas.

2. Energize Campus Life

As we grow into our identity as a national Catholic university, our campuses will reflect that momentum—becoming more vibrant, energized destinations for students, faculty, staff, and visitors. We will invest in on-campus housing that meets evolving student needs, foster a dynamic culture that builds pride and community, and enhance the livability of the surrounding area. We will strengthen the vibrancy of both the Minneapolis and St. Paul campuses, ensuring both campuses support a cohesive and engaging St. Thomas experience. To support these goals, we will evaluate campus operations to maximize energy, activity, and connection throughout the year. We will prioritize athletics, academics, and the arts as opportunities to come together as a full campus community -- improving internal and external communications to improve our sense of belonging, intellectual environment, and Tommie spirit.

3. Deepen External Partnerships to Expand Impact

Our partnerships are central to our mission and can provide opportunities for our community to thrive. To deepen our impact and broaden our reach, we will strengthen collaborations that broaden the horizons of our academic mission—positioning St. Thomas as a convener of ideas, innovation, and inclusive engagement.

4. Advance Athletics Success

We will further promote the vibrancy of athletics as we increase expectations of national competitiveness. At the same time, we will more fully align university operations and systems to support the success of Athletics and enhance the student-athlete experience. Achieving comprehensive excellence and increasing national competitiveness will require deeper collaboration across the university—streamlining processes, improving communication, and ensuring that all

departments are working together to remove barriers and holistically support our student-athletes.



Strategic Priority #3:

Innovate and Empower our Entrepreneurial Mindset

We will elevate ingenuity across the university and prepare for the future by strengthening our culture of innovation.

1. Cultivate Entrepreneurial Thinking Across Campus

Over the next five years, St. Thomas will cultivate entrepreneurial thinking throughout the university—empowering students, faculty, and staff to think creatively, act boldly, and solve problems rooted in empathy, curiosity, and courage. This human-centered approach to innovation will spark bold ideas, strengthen our operations, and deepen our mission impact.

Why Entrepreneurial Education Sets St. Thomas Apart

In today's rapidly changing and uncertain world, students need more than knowledge—they need courage, adaptability, and a sense of purpose. The entrepreneurial mindset—defined by opportunity recognition, experimentation, value creation, and resilience—provides a powerful toolkit to navigate complexity with confidence.

At St. Thomas, this mindset is grounded in Catholic intellectual tradition, where faith and reason come together to elevate innovation as a moral and human-centered pursuit. Here, entrepreneurship isn't just about launching ventures—it's about seeing and responding to human need with imagination, empathy, and integrity.

We will embed entrepreneurial thinking in academics, co-curricular programs, operations, and partnerships. Students across disciplines will be equipped to thrive in a changing world—prepared not only for careers but for lives of meaning and impact. Faculty will be supported and recognized for pedagogical innovation and research that responds to societal challenges. Staff will be encouraged and equipped to identify opportunities for improvement and propose solutions that advance our mission. A culture of experimentation and resilience will take root at St. Thomas—one that embraces

innovation as a way of serving others. We will deepen partnerships with community leaders, industry, and nonprofit organizations to co-create solutions for the common good. Through this integrated and inclusive approach, St.

Thomas will foster a vibrant, responsive ecosystem that extends our impact far beyond campus.

2. Accelerate Future-Ready Technology Strategy

Technology must be a catalyst for innovation. It is a foundational driver of our ability to implement our strategic priorities. St. Thomas will prioritize skills development alongside technology that equips our community to better serve our students, optimize our enrollment strategy, and implement our other key priorities.

- Through the Institute for A.I. for the Common Good, we will prepare A.I.-ready graduates and ensure we harness the possibilities of A.I. to enhance the academic experience and improve and transform workflows.
- Institution-wide, we will implement a new technology roadmap that better governs technology decisions and empowers users and enables our revenue-driving units to realize the potential of their data to reach students, alumni, donors, and other partners more effectively.



Measuring Success

The St. Thomas community and our stakeholders will measure the progress of this strategic plan through high level, university-wide metrics.

1. Improvements in Retention and Persistence Rates
2. Increases in Student Engagement with Purpose and Vocation
3. Steady Overall Enrollment of 10,000 Students, Grad and Undergrad
4. Comprehensive Fundraising Campaign Success: Raising Money for Scholarships, People and High Impact Practices
5. Increases in Meaningful Alumni Engagement
6. Increase in Campus Vibrancy
7. The Launch of Compelling Degree Offerings
8. Adoption of Entrepreneurial Mindset and Initiatives in Schools, Colleges and Units

In addition to these metrics, assigned leadership will report on metrics specific to priorities that stem from this plan.