



A Community in Partnership...Rooted in Spirit



STM COLLEGE PLAN 2025





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Our Mission

As the Catholic liberal arts college federated with the University of Saskatchewan, St. Thomas More College (STM) courageously explores the “riches of revelation and of nature so that the united endeavour of intelligence and faith will enable people to come to the full measure of their humanity” (Ex Corde Ecclesiae, 5).

We are an inclusive community open to all persons.

Through our teaching we are devoted to a partnership of learning and growth with our students which addresses the synthesis of faith and reason in all aspects of the human condition.

The creative discovery of truth and its open dissemination nourishes our life as teachers and members of the wider academic and Catholic intellectual community.

As a Catholic college we are called to share in Christ’s service to the people of God. Thus, the work of our college is not an end in itself, but must find application for the good of humanity.

Our Vision

St. Thomas More College will nurture its identity as a Catholic liberal arts college, and fulfill its calling as an exemplary embodiment of the Catholic intellectual tradition in Canada.

President’s Message

Strategic planning is still relatively new in the history of STM, dating back only to the early 2000’s. But such exercises have by now become universal in higher education. The shifting landscape in which we find ourselves makes future planning difficult, but all the more imperative: we need a roadmap to the future that is clear enough to guide decision-making, but flexible enough to respond to unexpected developments, like the global pandemic of 2020. A plan is also a statement to our extended STM community and the wider society of where we aspire to go in the next five years and why we hope they will support us in getting there.

As we move toward the end of our 2015-2020 plan, we have considerable momentum in the five priority areas of Catholic mission and identity, student experience, research and discovery, sustainability, and Indigenous engagement. While Catholic mission and the student experience have been defining features of STM from its beginning as a Basilian college, the place of scholarly research has grown at STM as the University of Saskatchewan redefined itself as research-intensive in recent years. Sustainability and Indigenous engagement were new priorities in 2015, and both have challenged us to engage with two momentous issues of our time. While our work on both has only just begun, the progress we have made on each is directly tied to our naming and resourcing them as priorities for our college.

As important as plans are for educational institutions these days, the process of collaborative planning is every bit as important as the final product. The process that produced this plan is our most inclusive yet: with the assistance of Academics Group, we surveyed over 700 STM stakeholders, among them students, alumni, faculty, staff, donors, and key partners, on what we should retain from the previous plan and what we should adopt as priorities for the future. From that input and the many consultations that followed, our priorities took on new shape and new urgency. Our commitment remains strong to our distinctive mission and identity as the Catholic college at the University of Saskatchewan. Closely connected is a firm conviction that our Catholic mission requires us, as an institution on Treaty 6 Territory, to continue working towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. We see also a desire to become even more intentional about building a culture of community, which values and promotes inclusivity, personal development, and mental well-being for our students and all who seek a place of belonging at STM. As a scholarly community that places its knowledge at the service of others, we resolve to engage anew through the liberal arts with the great challenges of our unsettled time. And, finally, in dialogue with the Government of Saskatchewan and its Growth Plan, we recommit to sustainability as a principle informing every aspect of our activity.

After almost two years of intense discussion and reflection, the STM community has produced a new plan that sets ambitious goals for the college over the next five years. At the heart of this plan is a twofold aspiration: both to deepen our sense of community within the college and to broaden our community through partnerships with organizations that share the principles and values to which we are committed. For this reason we have called the plan ‘A Community in Partnership ... Rooted in Spirit’.

Carl N. Still, PhD
President, St. Thomas More College

About the St. Thomas More College Plan 2025

As we read the mission statement of St. Thomas More College, we find reference to one of our foundational documents, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, included therein. This Apostolic Constitution, promulgated by Saint Pope John Paul II in 1990, reminds us that Catholic universities and colleges are born from the heart of the church and are called to explore the “riches of revelation and of nature so that the united endeavour of intelligence and faith will enable people to come to the full measure of their humanity” (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 5). As you will see, St. Thomas More College’s Plan 2025 is shaped by its Catholic identity, mission, and vision, a vision inspired by *Ex Corde* as well as the heritage we received from our founders, the Basilian Fathers. As such, it is meant to strike a balance between the aspirational and practical.

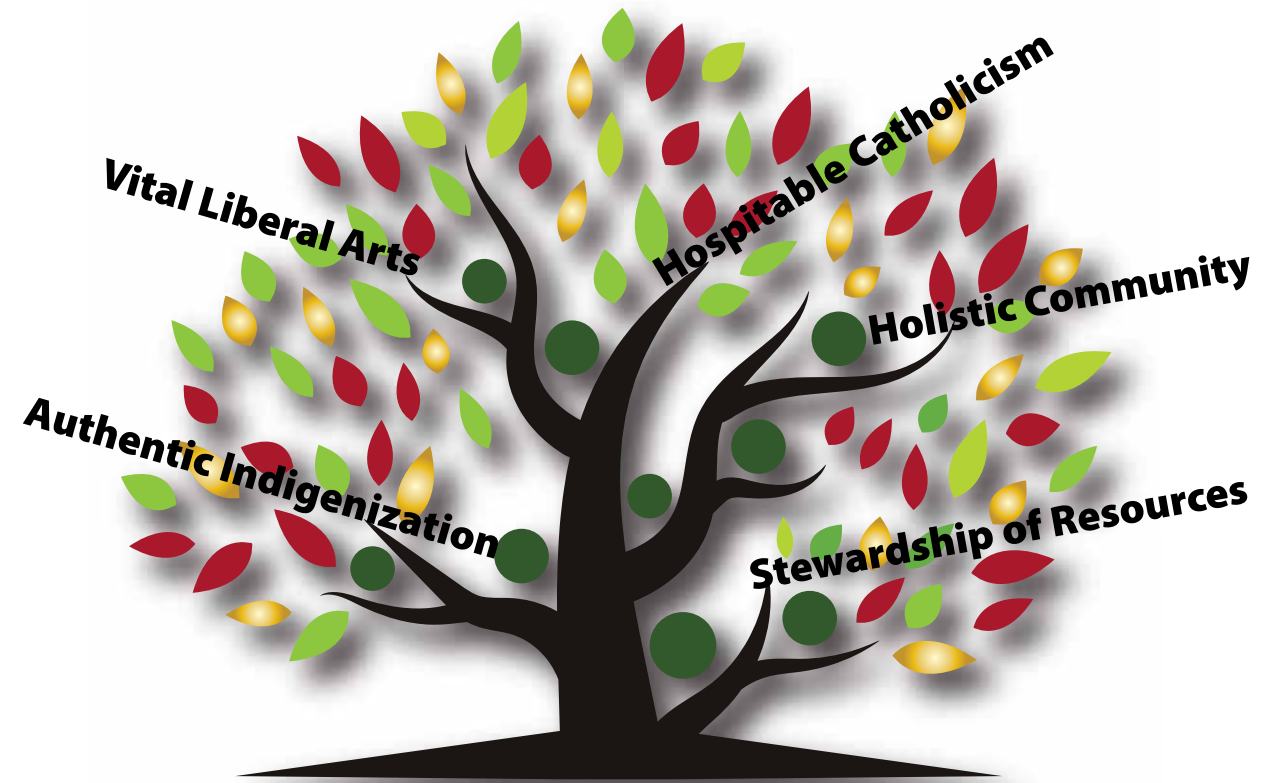
The aspirational dimension is shaped by our Catholic identity and commitment to the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. Within the plan, this aspect is articulated most clearly in the five priorities we have chosen: *Authentic Indigenization*, *Hospitable Catholicism*, *Vital Liberal Arts*, *Holistic Community*, and *Stewardship of Resources*. These priorities are of equal importance, interdependent, and directly linked to our mission and vision as a Catholic college. Furthermore, they illustrate our continued desire to live out the three-fold charism left us by our founders, the Basilian Fathers. *Authentic Indigenization*, for example, reflects our desire to be a reconciling community on Treaty 6 territory and the traditional homeland of the Métis. *Hospitable Catholicism* and *Holistic Community* both illustrate how we are a learning community of faith that reaches out to the diversity of the student body, our university colleagues, and the wider community. *Vital Liberal Arts* cultivates our particular expression of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition as a federated partner with the University of Saskatchewan. Finally, *Stewardship of Resources* takes to heart Pope Francis’ call to care for our common home (cf. *Laudato Si’*) by caring for those resources that have been entrusted to us as a College.

The practical dimension of the plan illustrates how we are called to live out our mission and respond to our current context. It is general practice to begin strategic planning processes with an environmental scan and SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis. These processes allow us better to understand the context in which we are called to serve. Key factors that shape our current context include the ongoing need to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; to ensure our financial sustainability; and, to contribute to scholarly reflection on the social and ecological concerns facing our planet today. Again, hearkening back to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, we are reminded that our work must include a “study of serious contemporary problems in areas such as the dignity of human life, the promotion of justice for all, the quality of personal and family life, the protection of nature, the search for peace and political stability, a more just sharing of the world’s resources, and a new economic and political order that will better serve the human community at a national and international level” (ECE, 32). A bold calling indeed! STM’s College Plan 2025 is our response.

Of course, when we began working on this plan, we could not have predicted the radical change in context brought on by COVID-19. Reflecting on this “new normal,” the Steering Committee affirms the priorities, goals, and strategies outlined in this plan. We offer them as guideposts for decision-making both during the crisis management phase of the pandemic and, later, during our measured return to more normal operations. This plan represents the collective wisdom of our community that, together, created the vision for the future it contains. This wisdom serves as a beacon even when we face unexpected and unprecedented changes to the context in which we find ourselves.

Both the aspirational and practical dimensions of our plan are woven through with the core facets of our identity: we are a Catholic college, committed to the liberal arts, and open to all who wish to participate in the life of our community. There is a vibrant interplay between the aspirational and practical elements of our plan, between our identity and our response to the context in which we find ourselves. We recognize that these are not mutually exclusive categories. Rather, it is the dynamic relationship between these facets of our College that breathes life into our plan. This is how we become a “Community in Partnership... Rooted in Spirit!”

ST. THOMAS MORE COLLEGE PRIORITIES 2025



¹ Put succinctly, the Basilian charism calls us to foster the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, social justice, and pastoral care of students within our College.



STM Faculty and Staff Retreat

Authentic Indigenization

We will be a reconciling community led by the ideals of holistic interconnectedness and accountability as represented by the Cree concept of wahkohtowin.

1 BUILD CAPACITY FOR AUTHENTIC INDIGENIZATION AT ST. THOMAS MORE COLLEGE (STM)

Strategies

- Provide opportunities for all staff and faculty to take at least one Indigenous studies content course over the period of this College Plan
- Create an effective strategy for hiring and retaining Indigenous faculty and staff
- Support curriculum development to authentically integrate Indigenous content and pedagogy into existing courses and newly developed course offerings

2 COLLABORATE AND CONSULT

Strategies

- Create and update annually an inventory of current consultations with Indigenous communities and partners
- Engage Indigenous students to assess their needs and provide sustained and periodic follow-up throughout the year
- Strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities and groups, including units at University of Saskatchewan (USask) and the local and provincial community
- Review and broaden the mandate of the Indigenous Advisory Circle to advise on overall Indigenization efforts at STM

3 HONOUR INDIGENOUS CULTURE

Strategies

- Organize an annual Treaty Day celebration in partnership with the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre
- Increase STM participation in USask events like the Graduation Powwow and Indigenous Achievement Week
- Support ecological justice and environmental movements led by Indigenous communities
- Integrate Indigenous Ceremony into College processes and celebrations



Annual STM Academic Mass

Hospitable Catholicism

Nourished by our faith, we will live out STM's distinctively Catholic identity and mission, advancing the Catholic Intellectual Tradition to foster the integration of faith and reason, social justice, interfaith respect, and conversation.

1

BUILD CAPACITY TO LIVE OUT STM'S CATHOLIC IDENTITY AND MISSION

Strategies

- Educate students, faculty, and staff about the rituals, beliefs, and practices of the Catholic faith
- Ensure that faculty and staff can grow in their understanding of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition
- Communicate the diversity of our community so that people know we are an inclusive community open to all
- Showcase our distinctively Catholic programs and initiatives
- Launch the Centre for Faith, Peace, and Justice, which will serve as a hub for distinctive programming and research related to our Catholic identity and mission
- Host a national conference exploring how the Catholic Intellectual Tradition is being lived out in Canada today

2

ENGAGE WITH ECUMENICAL AND MULTIFAITH PARTNERS

Strategies

- Engage in ecumenical and multifaith outreach projects in collaboration with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon
- Be recognized as a public forum for ecumenical and multifaith dialogue both at USask and in the City of Saskatoon
- Establish a fruitful ecumenical partnership with the Saskatoon Theological Union
- Dedicate space in the College that is conducive to Smudging and other forms of prayer

3

CREATE SPACES FOR RESPECTFUL AND INSIGHTFUL DIALOGUE AROUND CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL AND MORAL ISSUES

Strategies

- Expand who feels comfortable, respected, and celebrated in our space (reaching out across the spectrum)
- Create forums for dialogue on contemporary social and moral issues that model respect across difference (cf. ECE, 32-33)
- Stay attuned to the current teachings of the Catholic Church including those emerging out of recent Synods on Youth, the Family, and the Amazon
- Explore links between Catholic teachings on ecological justice and contemporary eco-justice movements
- Initiate conversations about decolonizing Catholicism
- Courageously and with integrity explore those issues where Catholic teaching and secular society are in tension



STM Political Studies Class Group Discussion

Vital Liberal Arts

We will support and celebrate, through excellence and innovation in research and teaching, the essential contributions of the humanities and social sciences to the local and global common good.

1 BECOME A LEADING AND VISIBLE ADVOCATE WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY AND PROVINCE FOR THE LIBERAL ARTS

Strategies

- Create a syllabus model that faculty could use to highlight human skills outcomes for their courses
- Increase marketing initiatives to signal the value/applications of a liberal arts education in line with recent studies, job market, and governmental projections
- Equip student advisors with the most up-to-date information to share on the human skills acquired in humanities and social science classes
- Encourage faculty to engage in public scholarship

2 INCREASE STM INTER/CROSS-DISCIPLINARY INITIATIVES IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Strategies

- Create policies and incentives for cross-disciplinary team teaching
- Prioritize innovations in cross-disciplinary teaching and research methods
- Pursue inter/cross-disciplinary faculty hires
- Grow distinctive STM programs/certificates, many of which are cross-disciplinary

3 DIVERSIFY STM EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OFFERINGS

Strategies

- Augment resources for the Engaged and Experiential Learning program, including incentives for faculty participation
- Develop more ties with international institutions and pursue two-way study abroad activities
- Establish STM-provided internship opportunities through partnerships with local businesses, building where possible on alumni connections



Holistic Community

We will strengthen bonds among students, faculty, staff, and alumni through opportunities for shared projects and shared life, seeking to care for the whole person.

1 CREATING A HOME IN A DIVERSE WORLD

Strategies

- Host community-building events and develop partnerships that engage student groups looking for a safe, welcoming space on campus
- Enhance STM study abroad opportunities in order to promote global citizenship
- Establish a student-focused lecture series that includes a focus on diversity and addresses the concerns of a pluralistic student body
- Designate a dedicated safe space/community gathering space for student group bookings

2 STM STUDENT SUPPORT PATHWAY

Strategies

- Grow transition support for new students
- Provide lectures and resource opportunities to support academic success and career readiness
- Expand Engaged and Experiential Learning opportunities and internships to support student career building
- Enhance curriculum and interdisciplinary programming to support career opportunities, including collaborations with professional colleges

3 INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY

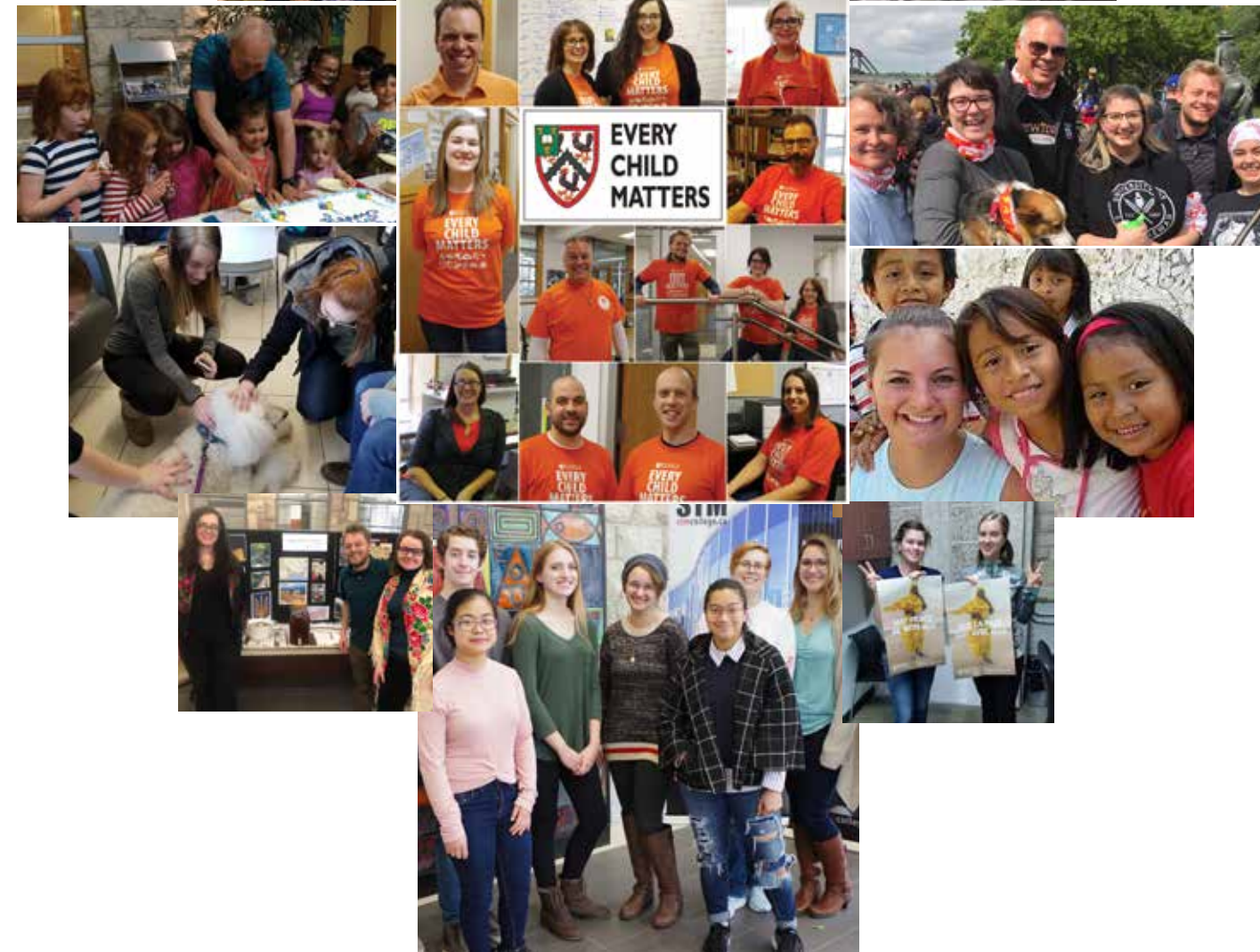
Strategies

- Establish regular staff meetings to share current work and find points of collaboration
- Increase occasions celebrating College success and make space for social engagement
- Improve awareness of College information/policies that relate to roles and supports available
- Incorporate more intentional initiatives to engage STM alumni and build on community legacy
- Improve our current communication structures between employee groups and units by identifying weaknesses and implementing solutions

4 MENTAL HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND LIFE BALANCE

Strategies

- Ensure awareness of available pastoral care and mental health supports and facilitate access to these supports for all staff, faculty and students
- Participate in campus, community and provincial mental health initiatives as appropriate
- Develop and implement practical work-place wellness and life-balance initiatives to support employees





Annual STM Student Scholarship Event

Stewardship of Resources

We will strengthen our college's position and adaptability by reinvigorating our fundraising; supporting and acknowledging the valuable work of our people; and pursuing excellence and accountability in our fiscal management, program delivery, and operations.

1 INCREASE REVENUE CAPACITY THROUGH A RENEWED FOCUS ON PHILANTHROPY AND ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

Strategies

- Establish and communicate 3 to 4 key areas to focus on and streamline our fundraising efforts, reviewing and reassessing these areas of focus at least annually to adapt as needed
- Enhance and develop consistent communication and outreach initiatives with donors and alumni
- Create and roll out a new fundraising campaign

2 BECOME A PREFERRED EMPLOYER TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN QUALITY EMPLOYEES WHO ARE COMMITTED TO THE COLLEGE AND ITS MISSION

Strategies

- Develop an employee mentorship program
- Review and cultivate new communication channels to empower employees to share their ideas, be involved in decision making, and feel valued for their contributions
- Establish and execute a new compensation package and model for staff
- Adjust merit to consider an employee's impact on the "people and workplace culture"

3 ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT EFFICIENCY, EFFECTIVENESS, AND SUSTAINABILITY IN PROGRAM DELIVERY AND OPERATIONS

Strategies

- Identify and assign a continuous improvement "champion" to support all departments in improving efficiencies and reporting and celebrating progress
- Implement values-based resource allocation (align budget and spending decisions with strategic priorities) and related targets by unit (e.g., increase spending on areas with high student impact)
- Embrace technology to improve efficiency, reduce redundancies, and increase transparency
- Develop partnerships with other post-secondary institutions in Saskatchewan to better utilize our expertise and academic capacity

**PRAYER BY ST. THOMAS MORE
(1478-1535)**

O Lord, give us a mind that is humble, quiet,
peaceable, patient, and charitable,
and a taste of your Holy Spirit
in all our thoughts, words, and deeds.

O Lord, give us a lively faith,
a firm hope,
a fervent charity,
a love of you.

Take from us all lukewarmness
in meditation
and all dullness in prayer.
Give us fervour and delight
in thinking of you,
your grace, and your tender compassion
toward us.

Give us, good Lord, the grace to work
for the things for which we pray.

St. Thomas More, prayer for us. Amen.

