

## President Robert B. Taylor February 2024

Our five-year strategic plan, *S. Thomas 2025*, was approved on 6/26/23. The narrative is one below. Our next plan will look to the subsequent five years in the fall of 2024. We will assess our full plate of ongoing priorities, continue as well as focus on pressing priorities. The strategic plan was developed through community conversations with key campus stakeholders. We will seek input from our alumni and partner communities. We will seek input from the board at the fall 2024 retreat. The board will also review the *S. Thomas 2025* at the November 2025 meeting.

### LEARNING STEAM Education

On February 5, we officially opened the doors to the Schoenecker Center, a major milestone towards our goal of leading in STEAM Education. The Schoenecker Center features marquee learning spaces for STEM and arts education, including an engineering high bay, a 150-seat music performance hall, science classrooms, media studios and an art gallery.

Classes on the first day showcased the exciting connections and opportunities. Students took their first chemistry lab. Physics and engineering students were experimenting in Electromagnetic Fields. Science and communication students are on the side in the interdisciplinary course, "Science, Media and Society."

The five-level, 130,000-square-foot complex is poised to help us become a model for interdisciplinary learning and has received a significant amount of media attention and owned media.

U.S. Representative Betty McCollum visited the Schoenecker Center to highlight federal partnerships that improve sustainable energy sources and address skills gaps are coming to life. McCollum, who served as the chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee from 2021-

current appropriations bill is signed into law. In addition, we have increased grant activity by about \$2 million annually and are working to

Key achievements include:

- x Expansion of our program offerings, including St. Thomas Online for distance education, and new graduate programs in Nursing, Special Education, Artificial Intelligence, and Management.
- x The launch of the Master of Arts in Diversity Leadership (MADL) program, offering a dynamic and flexible learning environment that caters to part-time students through an online, asynchronous delivery model.
- x Collaboration among eight departments from three different colleges (Arts and Sciences, Business, Education) to deliver the MADL program, showcasing our ability to break down organizational barriers and foster interdisciplinary integration.
- x Co-development of curricula with industry partners, ensuring our programs remain relevant and responsive to employer needs.

As we move forward, our goal is to continue to innovate and adapt our educational offerings to meet the needs of our students and the demands of the evolving job market. We are committed to becoming a leading institution for values-based graduate education and a sought-after partner for professional development.

#### **F u t u r e B e l o n g i n g & D i v e r s i t y R e s u l t s**

Our campuswide climate survey, conducted in 2023, received over 3,000 responses and showed an improved sense of belonging across all groups. Disparities persist among some groups indicating that there is still progress to be made. The survey findings were shared with the campus community through a community forum, with a dedicated session specifically tailored for students and facilitated by student interns.

We continue to cultivate the cultural competency skills of our community, using the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). Trained administrators allow us to offer this assessment to more units, including Campus Ministry, the Center for Common Good, and University Advancement. Additionally, Kha Yang, our Associate Vice President for Inclusive Excellence, provided training to the Brooklyn Center Police Department.

The Truth Racial Healing and Transformation Center (TRHT) was established with support from the GHR Foundation to enhance St. Thomas's internal racial equity efforts. The objective is to foster dialogue across differences and learn how to repair harm. Campus-



project and pay equity analysis, and established an HR DEI strategy. We continue to make progress toward modernizing and aligning our outdated human resources systems. Our new service center model is in place and has proven successful.

**Project Excellence Department**

Maxfield Elementary School serves as the center of our strategic initiative to prepare educators to dismantle disparities. Our robust Maxfield 2030 strategic plan offers a bold commitment to moving the needle on K-12 student achievement and preparing educators and leaders to be forces for justice and change. We are prepared to actualize movement toward our core goals by crafting a program of work, including research, that will guide the

Student Affairs staff

of transfer course policies and processes (also approved by the Faculty Senate and President).

St. Thomas is also in the process of establishing major-specific pathways for transfer students (as one of our goals from our Quality Initiative). Thus far, we have pathways for the Psychology and Biology majors with seven different community colleges: Anoka-Ramsey, Century, Inver Hills, MCTC, Normandale, North Hennepin, and Saint Paul College. We will be adding additional major-specific pathways in the coming years.

#### **C o m m u n i t y R e s i d e n c y C o n t e m p o r a n e y**

We have made great gains towards our goal of creating a robust residency culture for students on the St. Thomas campus. We have raised \$7.5M towards housing grants and have met 96% of our goal of ensuring a supportive environment on campus.

We conducted a survey of first-year students in fall 2023 to measure satisfaction across the resident student experience. The scores range from 1 (low) to 7 (high) with the national/industry b

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St. Thomas just received a gold STARS rating as measured by the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). Our performance improved from the 2021 STARS report in all areas.