

## St. Thomas University *Strategic Plan | Priority Areas 2019*

### Overview | Focusing our Efforts

Building on the achievements from the implementation of our *St. Thomas University Strategic Plan 2013-2018*, we will now be focusing efforts on the *Strategic Plan | Priority Areas 2019*. Our previous strategic plan resulted from the most extensive consultation process ever undertaken at St. Thomas. That plan established a clear direction that built on inherent and developed institutional strengths and strived to place us on the leading edge of undergraduate liberal arts education and research. The priorities and goals in that plan are still timely and relevant to achieving our aspiration of being the premier liberal arts university in Canada and they will continue to guide our activities in the coming years:

- Strategic Priority 1 | Excellence in Undergraduate Liberal Arts Education
- Strategic Priority 2 | A Meaningful and Memorable Student Experience
- Strategic Priority 3 | A Commitment to Research and Societal Engagement
- Strategic Priority 4 | A Welcoming, Diverse, and Inclusive Community
- Strategic Priority 5 | Financial Sustainability

Over the past five years, we have been reporting to the Joint Board-Senate Committee on the Growth and Future of St. Thomas University on annual progress in implementing initiatives that speak to our priorities. Our accomplishments are presented in the 78 initiatives detailed in the *Strategic Plan 2013-2018 | Progress and Summary Report*. Moving forward as a community, we will continue our progress in these areas, as well as sharpen our focus on emerging issues. To that end, we will continue to develop and present annual operational plans to the Joint Board-Senate Committee based on our existing strategic priorities and bring greater attention to the following objectives.

### Objective | Achieving Greater Financial Sustainability

#### **Goal – Continuing to advocate for equitable funding from the Provincial Government**

Continue to work towards as successful an outcome as possible in the negotiations with the Provincial Government concerning the underfunding of St. Thomas University's operating grant, the conclusion of a memorandum of understanding on funding and tuition, and mutually beneficial initiatives.

#### **Goal – Developing strategy for student scholarships and tuition**

With the completion of the five-year tuition agreement with the Provincial Government in 2018, a strategy related to tuition and student scholarships will be developed. A *Tuition Fee Guideline* will describe the factors and parameters considered in determining tuition fees. Related to this, as the funding of scholarships has become increasingly important, the University will create an internal Standing Committee on Scholarships to establish objectives, operating parameters and, as well, to monitor funding sources and expenditures.

#### **Goal – Complete The Campaign for St. Thomas University and prepare for on-going fund-raising initiatives**

Complete preparations for the public launch of *The Campaign for St. Thomas* with a minimum goal of \$10 million while continuing to meet with potential donors to secure gifts and pledges. Coincident with these efforts, achieve Advancement goals based on the following annual measures: 1000 donors; \$1,750,000 in gifts, pledge payments, matching gifts, and actualized estate gifts; a contactable alumni rate of 73%; and a 10% improvement in the alumni engagement level. As we move forward, fundraising for scholarships will be our top priority.

## **Objective | Excellence in Undergraduate Liberal Arts Education and a Meaningful and Memorable Student Experience**

### **Goal – Revising the *Strategic Enrolment Plan* to continue to attract and retain qualified and diverse students from across Canada and around the world**

Stabilizing enrolment would require achieving an annual enrolment of 1865-1880 and a minimum retention rate of 70% for first-year students. Efforts will focus on refining the *Strategic Recruitment Plan* to stabilize enrolment by maintaining the positive momentum achieved over the last three years in the recruitment of international students, sustaining existing recruitment numbers in the Maritimes, and increasing efforts to recruit students from across Canada. The *Retention Strategy* will be refined to focus on programs that boost student involvement and preparation for success, targets at-risk students and provides them with more assistance, implements mental health initiatives arising from the *Mental Health Framework*, and implements an alcohol harms reduction program to reduce harms related to alcohol.

### **Goal – Creating increased opportunities for experiential, exchange, and career development activities**

Experiential learning and exchange/study abroad activities have been a particular area of success and efforts will continue to expand these programs. There will also be a heightened focus on a career development framework and activities to assist students in making connections between their liberal arts degree and future employment.

### **Goal – Investing in the renewal of our residences and strengthening the support for residence life**

Continued investment in the renewal of our residences as assets for recruitment and retention remains an important goal. The refurbishment of Harrington Hall was completed in 2017 and students living there have a bright, modern, and inclusive residence to call home. The project saw walls, floors, and heating systems updated, and the creation of a kitchenette, modernized theme lounge and study areas, improved washroom layouts, and gender neutral washrooms. The renewal of Vanier Hall, the second large residence on our campus, is tentatively planned for Spring 2020.

## **Objective | A Commitment to Faculty Research**

### **Goal – Continued strengthening support for faculty research**

The *Strategic Research Plan 2019-2024* serves as an internal reference point regarding the development of our research culture. It offers both a descriptive snapshot of research while also serving as an aspirational document. The University has identified eight areas where there is a critical mass of expertise or opportunities for developing capacity: (1) Narrative Studies (2) Global and International Studies (3) Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Knowledge (4) Health, Wellness, and Aging (5) Social Justice, Human Rights, and Identities (6) Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change (7) Arts and Culture, and (8) New Brunswick Studies. The goals of the *Research Plan* are to have faculty conduct high quality, ethically-sound research in these fields and to increase external/internal support for research and its dissemination.