

# 2016

## Report from the President

DR. ROBERT SUMMERBY-MURRAY



**SAINT MARY'S**  
UNIVERSITY SINCE 1802

# IT'S ALREADY BEEN ONE YEAR SINCE I STEPPED INTO THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE.

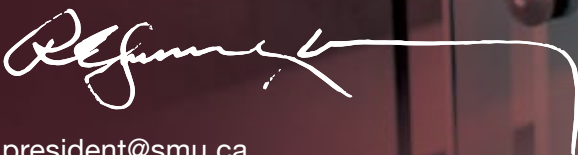
And as I reflect on all that has happened in these last 12 months, I can honestly say it's a pleasure to be a part of an organization as vibrant as Saint Mary's.

I am pleased to provide an update on our progress and successes aligned under the pillars of our Institutional Strategic Plan. None of this would have been possible without the entire university's commitment to excellence.

I have heard from so many members of the university community and the broader community—thank you for your meaningful feedback.

I hope you will share in my excitement and use the momentum demonstrated within these pages as inspiration—I know I will—for the next 365 days and beyond.

I want to continue the dialogue and encourage you to share your comments with me. I welcome your views on this report and on the path forward for Saint Mary's University.



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## DISCOVERY AND INNOVATION IN A LEARNING-CENTRED ENVIRONMENT

One of the most fundamental roles of a university is to advance knowledge. But we don't just exist to advance knowledge; we're here to create it. Over the past year we've built on our strong foundation of institutional support for research, our tradition of experiential learning, and have introduced new curricular innovations. We've renewed several of our Canada Research Chairs—a reflection of the national prominence of our scholars. Most importantly, Saint Mary's remains committed to academic excellence, community-engaged research, and support for teaching.

As a member of the provincial government's Transition Task Force, I see alignment between the province's efforts and the university's approach to support young people as they

transition from high school. At Saint Mary's, our students benefit from learning communities, peer mentoring, campus-wide transition programs, and the Global Commons Studio for Teaching and Learning.

This past year we have seen the development of the new Change Lab Action Research Institute (CLARI) that will play an important role in pursuing community-based and partner-focused research at Saint Mary's and our partner institutions. Much energy and expertise has gone into the development of a proposal for our new Entrepreneurship Development and Innovation (EDI) Hub—this will be a game changer for Saint Mary's and will make a significant contribution to the innovation agenda for Nova Scotia.

## INTERNATIONALIZATION AND INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Saint Mary's is acknowledged as Canada's International University. Our global reach, welcoming environment for international students, faculty and staff, and our leadership role all contribute to our strong reputation in this area. This past summer, the Globe and Mail profiled two Canadian universities which are taking internationalization to new heights: the University of Calgary and Saint Mary's University.

I had the opportunity to represent Saint Mary's on diplomatic and recruitment trips in South Asia and China, as well as to accompany the Premier on a trade mission to China. This is part of the legacy of my predecessor, Dr. Colin Dodds, and I applaud his leadership in working with the provincial and federal governments to adopt immigration policies that are already making a difference in helping international

students remain here in Nova Scotia to make a lasting impact on our local economy.

The relationship between Saint Mary's University and China is strong. Our university and Beijing Normal University Zhuhai (BNUZ) have agreements for academic collaboration across all faculties. We run a joint Bachelor of Commerce program on site at BNUZ where Chinese students take Saint Mary's courses, and are taught by professors from the Sobey School of Business. For the past two summers, we have hosted successful institutes for administrators, professors, and students from BNUZ. We look forward to hosting a third delegation in 2017. Our relationship with BNUZ is exactly the sort of relationship envisaged in the NS-China Strategy announced by the Government of Nova Scotia earlier this year.

## FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Saint Mary's enjoys a sound financial position.

Thanks to the diligence of all members of the community, operational costs are managed carefully and we finished the 2015–2016 fiscal year in balance—an extremely strong start to our three-year budget recovery plan.

We have also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Province of Nova Scotia, which guarantees our grant funding through to 2019. The same MOU allowed us a tuition increase, which we have used judiciously both to increase that particular revenue stream and to address financial barriers to university education.

Consulting with Saint Mary's University Students' Association (SMUSA), an important priority is to boost funding for student financial aid. Currently, the university commits \$6 million annually to financial aid and scholarships.

This past year we took a new direction in fundraising and we completed the search for a Vice President, Advancement, to support an ambitious fundraising agenda. The university received major gifts from Scotiabank, the Joyce Foundation, David Wang, and alumni, including Mike and Catherine Durland. Combined with the support of our loyal annual donors, we have raised over \$5 million in 2015–2016.

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## VALUE AND VALUES: THE SANTAMARIAN EXPERIENCE

One of the most interesting parts of my first year as President and Vice-Chancellor has been encouraging discussion around value and values. I have been incredibly impressed by the level of engagement from so many members of our community.

The 2015–2016 academic year saw the reinvigoration of our Latin motto Age Quod Agis meaning 'do what you

do.' This has become a rallying cry for the entire campus and a call to action that unites us across academic disciplines, varied backgrounds, and broad perspectives.

I applaud the leadership by SMUSA in working with faculty and staff to redefine Welcome Week and develop activities that extend throughout the entire academic year.

In July, I was honoured to speak at the annual meeting of lieutenant-governors and territorial commissioners. Presided over by the Governor General, this meeting focused on the ways in which provinces are responding to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I highlighted how Saint Mary's is making progress on the recommendations from the Commission, the Universities Canada guidelines on Aboriginal education, and our own internal task force on Aboriginal education. On our campus, advancements include changes to our ceremonial practices, the dedication of space specifically for Indigenous students, research agreements with local First Nations, and progress on the establishment of advisory committees.

I am reminded daily that we are a scholarly community engaged in the pursuit of learning, seeking to advance knowledge, and transform the world for the better. None of this would be possible without the Saint Mary's community and our friends and supporters. Please accept my sincerest gratitude for a great first year and for the continued success of Saint Mary's University.







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