



Esteemed Board of Trustee Members,

With the academic year well underway, I hope our fall accomplishments and events thus far have been as inspiring for you as they have been for me!

During our November Board of Trustees meeting, I will continue to present our priorities in the categories established by the For Every Saint campaign: **People, Place, Purpose, plus Performance**. I am pleased with our initial progress in all four areas – especially Investing in Our People. As a result of the Board's enthusiastic support for the people-centered recommendations that the Cabinet and I brought forward during the September meeting, we are building momentum to make Saint Martin's an employee destination of choice – a place where our faculty and staff are inspired to pursue our mission, feel appreciated for their talents and contributions, and strive to do their best work.

PEOPLE

Equitable Compensation Practices

We are implementing the compensation plans that were approved during the September Board of Trustees meeting. The first action brings all full-time staff to the national median rate for CUPA-HR benchmark positions at private, religious institutions with our operating budget. The second provides all staff a general 1% salary increase. **Both of these staff salary increases are effective Nov. 16**. Feedback from faculty and staff indicate that they appreciate these initial changes, and they also appreciate the Cabinet and Board acknowledging that Saint Martin's salary practices must keep pace with the higher education industry.

A **Faculty Compensation Task Force** has been assembled with representatives from the Faculty Senate, the Faculty Welfare Committee, and the College Chairs, and will be led by Faculty President Elect, Dr. Ian Werrett. The task force is actively researching and evaluating philosophical approaches, criteria and recommendations for modernizing our faculty compensation practices. Their work includes benchmarking peer universities and defining labor market indices to guide salary practices going forward. In pursuing this work, the task force members have highlighted the importance of openness, transparency and good faith, which I fully support.

National Searches for Cabinet Members

We are continuing to dedicate significant time and energy to **two national searches** to ensure we have the right leaders in place at Saint Martin's. Our

national searches for Vice President of Business and Finance/CFO and Vice President of Institutional Advancement are well underway and generating strong applicant pools. We plan to bring finalists for both VP positions to campus in early December.

Regarding the open **Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs position**, our interim Provost, Deans and Faculty Senate are meeting with faculty members by college to gather their inputs about this Cabinet role and to determine if a national search is preferred. I have asked them to present their recommendations by mid-November.

Voice of Community

Throughout the year we gather feedback from our community, which is especially important when we are trying something new and/or making major investments. We recently conducted a survey about the first **Picnic on the Plaza** event. More than 90 percent of respondents indicated the event: a) made them feel more connected, b) successfully welcomed the new president, c) supported student clubs, d) successfully celebrated the new school year, e) was inclusive and engaging, and f) increased feelings of belonging. A significant number of respondents recommended hosting Picnic on the Plaza as an annual event to kickoff the new academic year.

Through my ongoing **Listening Tour** sessions with students, staff and faculty, we are allowing the many voices of our community to be heard and understood on a wide range of topics. I will continue to convene groups through the end of October with the findings to serve as key inputs for our Strategic Plan. During our November Board of Trustees meeting, I will present a summary of the key themes and findings from the Listening Tour.

PLACE

We are continuing to evaluate the spaces on our campus where we live, learn, work, and interact. These spaces enable people to come together in ways that create a sense of belonging for all.

New Student Center

During the first week of October, Steve Meyer hosted the first round of **ideation sessions** for the new student center. He will host the second round the week of Oct. 31 and present a summary of key findings and recommendations during the February Board of Trustees meeting. In addition, we plan to develop a high-level timeline that will establish a target grand opening date for the new student center.

PURPOSE

The [Presidential Inauguration](#) on Saturday, Oct. 8, was a true celebration of 127 years of faith, reason, and service that have made Saint Martin's what it is today, as well as a warm glow of optimism for our future. The mass and installation

ceremony exemplified how everyone - students, staff, faculty, trustees, monastic members - belongs and plays a vital role in our community.

During my speech, I shared three concepts that I consider essential as we pursue our mission: amplifying the benefits of a Benedictine education; creating a profoundly relevant experience for our students; and making this a place of belonging with respect for all people. I look forward to further exploring these concepts and taking the actions we need to make them a reality.

I was deeply honored and humbled by the outpouring of love and hospitality during the Presidential Inauguration festivities. Thank you to everyone who attended and provided their support.

PERFORMANCE

Strategic Plan

We are resuming our work to create a Strategic Plan for Saint Martin's University. This work starts with defining the purpose of a strategic plan as well as the process, framework and methods for managing our investments and progress. A small, nimble **Strategic Planning Committee** will be identified to reconcile many inputs including voice of community and institutional research findings; the strategic plan that was drafted in 2021; reflections and guidance from the Board and Abbey; and external factors such as socio-economic, demographic and market trends. The major milestones are shown in the table below. I will share more details about the process during our November Board of Trustees meeting and welcome your feedback as we launch this important work.

Phase	Strategic Planning Milestone	Due Date
0	Appoint Strategic Planning Committee (publish schedule)	11/7/22
1	Strategic Assessment (internal inputs & external factors)	12/23/22
2	Develop Strategic Plan	4/1/23
3	Deploy Strategic Plan (includes year-1 project plans)	5/1/23 + qtrly reviews

ITS Evaluation

Based on feedback from students, staff and faculty, Chief Information Officer Mary Donahoo will lead an internal audit to evaluate our **Integrated Technology Services (ITS) capabilities and performance**. As part of this evaluation, I have asked Mary and her team to benchmark other universities (staff, budget, service levels, technology performance) and present their recommendations for a three-year ITS investment roadmap. Given the prevalence of the ITS infrastructure and support services in our daily lives on campus, including flexible/hybrid teaching models, I anticipate that an ITS modernization plan and related fundraising will become part of our overall strategic plan next year.

In closing, I see our community taking steps every day to advance our People, Place, Purpose and Performance priorities, which gives me confidence and joy. As we move through the phases of the strategic planning process, the President's Cabinet and Board of Trustees will have opportunities to confirm that we are investing our precious resources in the right projects – ensuring we are aligned and highly-focused in serving our community and fulfilling our mission.

Thank you for the important role that you play in shaping the future of Saint Martin's University!

With heart,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "JB Raacke".

Dr. Jennifer Bonds-Raacke, President
She/Her/Hers

Link to previous [President's Messages](#)

IMPORTANT EVENTS AND DATES

- [Annual Gala](#) - Nov. 5
- Christmas Under the Canopy - Dec. 8