



UNIVERSITY OF  
**ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE**  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

## **PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT TO COLLEGIUM**

**SEPTEMBER 21, 2016**

If I had to select a single theme for the year we have just completed, it would be “renewal.” Over the last 12 months, this exciting process has been shaped and defined, as it should be, by people. Thanks to an incoming tide of new colleagues, new energy, and new ideas, combining with an already superb team of teachers and administrators, we can confidently say that best days of the University of St. Michael's College are ahead of it.

Over the course of the year, new arrivals have included:

Campus Minister **Angelo Minardi**,

Dean of Theology **Jim Ginther**,

Director of Communications, Events and Outreach (a new position), **Stefan Slovak**,

Assistant Dean Campus Life, **Oriana Bertucci**,

Bursar **Effie Slapnicar**, who in turn brought in Director of Finance **Janet MacMillan** and Manager of Finance **Telma Liu**,

Principal **Randy Boyagoda**, who also serves as USMC's Vice President,

Chief Advancement Officer **Kathryn Elton**.

That we were able to complete this ambitious staffing agenda in a single year owes much to the volunteers who willingly served on selection committees, a group drawn from our student body, from our staff, from other parts of the University of Toronto, and from our Collegium. We also owe a real debt of gratitude to Human Resources Officer Suzanne Ramnauth, who kept all these important files moving forward.

But we also used the hiring process to ask ourselves fundamental questions about our mission. This was particularly true of the process that led to the hiring of our new Principal, something that involved the closest cooperation with the Provost and the Dean of Arts and

Science at the University of Toronto. We consulted widely, and benefitted from the advice and experience of Notre Dame Historian, Fr. Robert Sullivan, who aided us as an external advisor. The effort encouraged us to think anew about both the College and the Principal. In affirming the contribution that both make to the University of Toronto, we acknowledged that the College is at the very heart of St. Michael's, a great centre of Catholic intellectual life. Indeed, we added the title Vice President to the established title of Principal to make clear that the incumbent is also a senior leader within the University of St. Michael's College, and someone who is accountable to its Collegium.

This is leading us to overdue thinking about how the various academic components of USMC fit together to serve our larger mission, something that will be the focus of a new academic planning exercise that Principal Boyagoda will lead, indeed, *is* leading. This is a broadly consultative process that will outline a plan for achieving excellence in research, teaching, technology and, most important, in creating a stimulating and supportive environment for our students.

Two related initiatives aimed at renewing the undergraduate experience are also underway. The first will see us develop a new model for recruiting first-year students interested in the College One seminar program, something that we're calling "Project Gilson." The second will involve the creation of social innovation space, which we're calling the "Angel Lab," that will allow our entire community to engage in the life and mission of the University in ambitious and creative ways.

Dean Ginther has commenced a two-pronged process of renewal in the faculty of Theology. He has introduced a range of administrative changes to tighten up our Basic and Advanced degree programs. He has also helped to raise the profile of the faculty with friends old and new, most notably through the return of signature events like the Kelly Lecture, which featured an address by Cardinal Peter Turkson, and the Meagher Lecture, which featured reflections from Fr. William Irwin, CSB. The faculty has also reactivated the Keenan Chair in Religious Education by setting up a program of visiting scholars, something that will unfold over the next 5 years. We are already happy to have the first such visiting scholar, Dr. Mary Hess of the Luther Seminary in St. Paul Minnesota, with us on campus.

We continue to think through how best to support the faculty of Theology and position it for its future, something that has included extensive discussions about collaboration with the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies, which would enrich our academic offerings and connect us to new communities.

We continue to invest in the Kelly Library, reinforcing its position as one of the most important links in the University of Toronto's library system. Last year the focus for Chief Librarian Sheril Hook and her team was on renewing the library as a centre for research and academic support. This involved restoring our very popular writing centre to the library, and delivering a major upgrade of study spaces, meaning new study tables with electrical outlets and new lockable mini-offices for graduate students. Working with our student union, we have used funds from the annual student levy to make the always popular Kelly Café even

more user friendly. The initiative to keep the Kelly Café open 24/7 during exam periods met with great enthusiasm.

The arrival of a new administrative team, led by Bursar Effie Slapnicar, is allowing us to achieve new levels of efficiency. We have undertaken to reduce operating expenses, exclusive of salary, by 3%. We are also, thanks to the work of Johnathan Warda, Manager Housing and Ancillary Operations, increasing revenues from services such as summer residence packages and film shoots. Thanks to much work by Effie and Director of Advancement (fund raising) Connie Tsui we have completed a major review of our endowed funds, something that will allow us to use this wonderful resource more efficiently and improve our ability to acknowledge our update our generous donors.

Newly arrived Chief Advancement Officer Kathryn Elton is already hard at work. She has benefitted enormously from a review of our advancement program undertaken by the University of Toronto's Vice President for Advancement David Palmer. The Palmer review reaffirms that our generous and hugely supportive alumni represent our most important asset, while reminding us that we cannot take this community for granted, and indeed have the opportunity to reconnect with them in exciting new ways.

We are already well advanced on one of the key recommendations from the review, namely ensuring that Kathryn and her team can focus all their attentions on the twin priorities of fund raising and alumni outreach. To that end, we have restructured things so that all important functions get the attention they deserve. We created a new team focussing on Communications, Events and Outreach, headed by Stefan Slovak and reporting to me as President, and we have placed our very important Continuing Education Division under the leadership of Principal Randy Boyagoda, with a view to aligning our offerings in CE more closely with our academic strengths.

Allow me to close with our most important priority, creating a safe, welcoming and academically stimulating environment for our students. We have used funds raised through our annual Golf Tournament to hire a Wellness Counsellor, someone who is well qualified to support the needs of a diverse population of students on the campus of a Catholic university in the very heart of a major urban centre. We have taken steps to reconnect with our students through new programs and training offered by Dean of Students Duane Rendle and his team, through Angelo Minardi's revamped and reenergized campus ministry, through the energetic outreach of Principal Boyagoda, and through informal initiatives like a weekly meet and greet with students over coffee and donuts in my office.

At the same time, we have not shied away from difficult discussions or issues. Early last year, I came to the conclusion that we needed to set new rules around the consumption of alcohol. Given the significant number of under-age students on campus, hard liquor is no longer allowed in our residences and alcohol no longer figures in student sponsored events on campus. We are also using technology, everything from new lighting to new entry systems, to make our campus safer after hours. And we are engaged in a frank and consequential dialogue with our student government on the subject of their accountability for the student

levy that is made available to them on an annual basis, a fund that totals approximately \$140,000 each year.

The result is that we are now working closely with the Student Union to correct some long-standing problems and, even more important, drafting a new governance document for your consideration that will clarify roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.

Over the past 12 months at St. Michael's an inflow of people, energy and ideas has contributed to a new sense of confidence about who we are and what we are called to be. We have benefitted from the guidance of our Chancellor, Cardinal Collins, who is a frequent guest on campus, and from our founding religious orders. We are extremely proud that Principal Randy Boyagoda is the first to hold the Basilian Chair in Christianity, Arts and Letters, something made possible by the generosity of those good men who have always watched over St. Michael's.

I need to acknowledge a personal debt of gratitude to my Executive Assistant, Debra Matthews, and, finally, to the steady support and guidance offered up by you, our Collegium.

David Mulrone  
President & Vice-Chancellor  
University of St. Michael's College