



St. Mike's 180: Rooted in the Future





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A Message from President Sylvester



David Sylvester, PhD
President and Vice-Chancellor

It is the honour and responsibility of a Catholic University to consecrate itself without reserve to the cause of truth. (Ex Corde Ecclesiae 4.1)

[Catholic universities commit to the]... study of serious contemporary problems in areas such as the dignity of human life, the promotion of justice for all, the quality of personal and family life, the protection of nature, the search for peace and political stability, a more just sharing in the world's resources, and a new economic and political order that will better serve the human community at a national and international level. (Ex Corde Ecclesiae I.B32)

THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S College is an institution like no other in Canada. Historically rooted in a Catholic educational mission shaped by its Basilian founders, the Sisters from the Congregations of St. Joseph and Loretto, and the many people who have worked and studied on this campus for well over a century and a half, St. Michael's seeks to build a transformational faith and learning community committed to the rigorous search for truth and meaning in our contemporary world. It currently does so through its undergraduate interdisciplinary program offerings, its faculty of graduate theological studies, its continuing studies division, the Kelly Library, its residential and student life programs, and its local, national and global partnerships.

St. Michael's federated relationship with the University of Toronto and location in the heart of Canada's largest and, arguably, most diverse city offers an incomparable educational environment and requires the university to reflect continually upon its differentiating qualities: St. Michael's is called by its history and commitment to the Catholic Intellectual Tradition to be not only a courageous convenor of important conversations related to the dignity of all people and the search for truth in our increasingly complex world, but an engine for social good locally and internationally.

As the university anticipates its 180th anniversary, this call to leadership will focus on three distinct historic and enduring mandates: the commitment to build authentic and inclusive community, leadership in developing transformational academic programming, and an orientation towards comprehensive sustainability. These priorities are grounded in the university's holistic understanding of the human person and the nature of truth itself, and its foundational commitment to social justice. They are, in fact, St. Michael's competitive advantages and they represent the pillars upon which this community will renew and expand its role as an educational leader, within the University of Toronto, the city, and the country.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David G. Sylvester".

Foundational Statements

The Catholic Intellectual Tradition: A Search for Intellectual, Spiritual and Social Wholeness

ROOTED IN THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING of the dynamic relationship between faith and reason, the Catholic Intellectual Tradition may be described as an ongoing, two-millennia “conversation” that continues to explore and understand the complex relationship between humanity and the cosmos. This systematic search for truth and meaning recognizes the inestimable contribution that science, philosophy, history, works of literature and art, and trans-cultural devotional practices can contribute to the dialogue. Essentially, this tradition develops new knowledge through critical engagement of its rich heritage with reality as we humans experience it. It stands at the forefront of many of the great scientific discoveries in history, and addresses questions about the transcendent, such as “who is God” and “why does evil exist?” This search for wholeness underscores St. Michael’s foundational commitments both to interdisciplinary teaching and research, to community, and to promoting and building up the common good.

Vision

The University of St. Michael’s College will be a recognized leader in promoting respectful dialogue and action on care for our common home (*Laudato si’*) and solidarity with the human family (*Fratelli Tutti*).

Mission

Grounded in the Catholic intellectual tradition, and committed to the education of the whole person, the University of St. Michael’s College challenges all its members to exercise transformative leadership in service of the common good and care of all creation.

Values

Human Dignity

We affirm and respect the intrinsic value of each person.

Community

We foster and celebrate an environment of hospitality and inclusivity.

Social Justice

We treat everyone in a fair and equitable manner.

Service

We invite all persons to develop their unique gifts to build up the common good.

Sustainability

We are accountable for making wise use of the resources entrusted to us.

Our Process

St. Mike's 180: Forging Our Path Forward

THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE launched an institutional visioning process in the summer of 2019 to explore how we can build on our historical and current strengths to enable this community to flourish in the years ahead. Guided by our Advisory Group, we consulted with St. Michael's students, faculty, staff, Collegium members, alumni, and community partners through a variety of means.

Who We Heard From and What We Heard

Imagine it's 2032, St. Mike's 180th anniversary... Here are some thoughts community members have shared with us in response to the "St. Mike's 180: Rooted in the Future" survey.



100

One-to-one Conversations

Alumni and friends engaged in 2019 and early 2020



100+

Participants in 6 Engagement Sessions

Students
Faculty, staff & administrators
Alumni
Collegium members
Community partners



200+

Alumni Reached at 4 Receptions

Vancouver
New York
Alumni Reunion
BMO Donor Reception



34,000+

Survey Distribution

5,000+ students
168 faculty, staff and fellows
174 donors
29,000+ alumni via St. Michael's magazine

What do you want to be able to say about St. Mike's?

“It's a Catholic centre for rich and dynamic debate, research, and intellectual thought.”

“It provides students with the same transformative experience as it did when I was a student.”

“St. Mike's offers an expansive world view within a nurturing and supportive community.”

“St. Mike's supports the student as a whole.”

What are people seeing, thinking, and feeling when they are on campus?

“A revived appreciation for a liberal arts education.”

“Inspiring academic leaders.”

“Not just a train station taking students from A to B, but a community, a world.”

“Space within St. Mike's has flowers and greenery.”

Today, what do you think are St. Mike's most important assets and strengths?

“It is not overly inward looking.”

“The beauty of St. Mike's is one of our biggest assets.”

“Our values, like connection with the broader community, tolerance, acceptance & diversity, make us unique.”

“The College system: St. Mike's offers a unique experience to students while being a part of U of T, one of the world's leading universities.”

Where do we go from here?

“Develop leadership and a voice in current prominent issues such as climate change, Indigenous relations, and inter-faith dialogue.”

“Bring Catholic sensibilities into societal conversations.”

“Continue building on distinctive first-year programming.”

“Don't be shy to tell the world the good things St. Mike's is doing!”

Strategic Priorities

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Community

Providing a supportive and challenging community for all its members

ROOTED IN A HOLISTIC UNDERSTANDING of the human person, St. Michael's seeks to foster a diverse and engaged community equipped with the tools to succeed on—and beyond—campus, ready to tackle the world's most pressing challenges with compassion and courage. The university will cultivate a healthy, welcoming community, supportive of all members in their intellectual, spiritual, personal and professional journeys. It will strive to be a place where students, faculty and staff can flourish, offering integrated programs in student services, residential life, comprehensive campus ministry, situated within the beauty of its physical spaces. Its richness will be visible in its diversity, accessibility and inclusiveness. Every member of the St. Michael's community will be invited to develop and contribute their unique gifts to campus life and to building up the common good.

In this world that races ahead, yet lacks a shared roadmap, we increasingly sense that “the gap between concern for one’s personal well-being and the prosperity of the larger human family seems to be stretching to the point of complete division between individuals and human community... It is one thing to feel forced to live together, but something entirely different to value the richness and beauty of those seeds of common life that need to be sought out and cultivated.” (Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti of The Holy Father Francis on Fraternity and Social Friendship 31)

GOALS

- » **Build a welcoming community where people want to live, study, work and visit.**
- » **Respect and encourage diversity in all its forms.**
- » **Prioritize the wellness of our community members.**
- » **Support and encourage members to share their gifts in service to community.**





“We want all students to feel welcomed and at home on our campus. If you talk to a St. Mike’s student, they will say our greatest asset is the warm community. Having comfortable, clean, functional spaces that allow students to engage with each other is essential to this feeling. Any SMCSU member would tell you that the COOP is where some of our best memories are made, surrounded by friends, laughing, joking, eating pancakes.”

*Cianna Choo, President,
St. Michael’s College Student Union*

“St. Michael’s helps students succeed on and beyond campus because courses offered often have a practical aspect to them, allowing students to apply their learning in their workplace. If I can use one word to describe the concept, it would be that of ‘Praxis’ (action and reflection). It is applied in all aspects of St. Mike’s curriculum and that helps students to approach the world’s problems with compassion and care.”

*Dr. Agnes Thomas, Executive Director, Catholic Crosscultural Services,
Instructor, Diploma in Interfaith Dialogue program*

“Diversity training teaches us about communities we never have encountered before but will as dons. As a commuter don, I can ensure all students feel welcomed and accepted on campus, and ensure that the community on campus is there for them as well.”

*Natalie Barbuzzi, Senior Commuter Don,
University of St. Michael’s College*

“Campus Ministry is a reflection of St. Michael’s commitment to holistic student development—mind, body and spirit. By developing opportunities for students to pause, breathe and reflect, campus ministries support students in engaging in the important work of integrating their academic studies, parental and peer expectations and their own hopes, passions, beliefs and values. Campus ministry offers trusted companions and programs to walk with students in their faith journeys.”

*Richard Chambers, Director, Multi-Faith Centre
for Spiritual Study and Practice, University of Toronto*

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Education

Empowering students, faculty and staff to develop their unique gifts and carry those forward in service to the world

Students are challenged to pursue an education that combines excellence in humanistic and cultural development with specialized professional training. Most especially, they are challenged to continue the search for truth and for meaning throughout their lives, since “the human spirit must be cultivated in such a way that there results a growth in its ability to wonder, to understand, to contemplate, to make personal judgments, and to develop a religious, moral, and social sense.”
(Ex Corde Ecclesiae 1 2.23)

ST. MICHAEL’S WILL CONTINUE ITS commitment to developing innovative interdisciplinary academic programming rooted in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, with the purpose of advancing a deeper understanding of the dignity of the human person in a complex contemporary world. The University will dedicate itself to providing students with transformational educational opportunities, experiences that will extend beyond the classroom and have lifelong value. As a centre of learning and research, St. Michael’s will prepare its graduates for academic and professional success, marked by a search for meaning and commitment to service. Through its historic academic strengths in the humanities, theology, and social and moral ethics, St. Michael’s endeavours to shape the global conversations around the development of society in an increasingly technological age.

GOALS

- » **Attract and retain a diversity of students, faculty and staff recognized for their intellectual engagement and commitment to mission.**
- » **Enhance and expand our academic programs and partnerships to extend the reach of our mission.**
- » **Challenge students to participate in local and global learning, research, and service opportunities.**
- » **Mobilize new knowledge in service to the common good.**





“St. Mike’s is a Catholic institution, and the Catholic intellectual tradition at its best has sought harmony in diverse strands of thought. At St. Michael’s, with our distinctively interdisciplinary programs and cross-appointed faculty, we have the opportunity not just to study this tradition, but to carry it forward in a significant way.”

*Adam Hincks, SJ, PhD, Assistant Professor,
Sutton Family Chair in Science, Christianity and Cultures at the University of Toronto,
with a joint appointment between the Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics and St. Michael’s College*

“St. Michael’s can help reclaim the role of the university in the building of society. It can teach and witness to the reality that knowledge is not just a personal good for those in ivory towers but a gift to the common good. It can share this gift in providing forums for education of the entire community.”

*Nuala Kenny, SC, OC, MD, FRCP, Ethics and Health Policy Advisor,
Catholic Health Alliance of Canada*

“During my time at St. Mike’s and U of T, I faced some memorable personal stresses and strains. I recall where people helped me, and the impact they had on me was profound and lasting, likely in a much bigger way than they could ever have known. Reflection on that graceful support is an inspiration to try and have a similar impact on others at a time when I am positioned to help.”

*Dr. Andy Smith, President and CEO,
Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre*

“The Graduate Diploma in Social Responsibility and Sustainability program gave me the knowledge and confidence to enter a new phase in my career—one where I am committed to using my time and talents to make as much of a positive impact on the world around me as possible.”

*Sarah Thirnbeck, 2019 Recipient of the President’s Capstone Project Award,
Graduate Diploma in Social Responsibility and Sustainability*

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Sustainability

Stewarding our resources and relationships wisely in service to our University community and the common good

Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature. (Laudato si' 215)

ST. MICHAEL'S COMMITS TO ENSURING it continues to grow and develop as a resilient and thriving institution that is led with transparency and integrity. In keeping with its long-standing commitment to social justice, and in response to *Laudato si'* and *Fratelli Tutti's* call to establish new relationships with the environment and with all humanity, St. Michael's will commit to orient itself proactively and lead as an institution that is dedicated to social justice and sustainability, whether environmental, social, or financial. In order to extend its mission and augment its programs and social impact, St. Michael's will strengthen its existing partnerships and explore new opportunities to work with community and educational allies, ensuring St. Michael's ability to remain a powerful voice for justice and the advancement of the common good.

GOALS

- » **Build financial resilience to advance our mission.**
- » **Lead with transparency, accountability and good governance.**
- » **Embed environmental and social responsibility into all university operations, urging community members to do the same.**
- » **Strengthen mutually beneficial institutional and community partnerships to advance the common good.**





“Loretto and USMC derive mutual benefit from the co-operation and collaboration of administrative personnel and students, from don training to social events, campus ministry, and celebrations. Students from all parts of the world come together to foster a sense of community spirit and shared commitment to ‘the common good.’”

*Sr. Evanne Hunter, IBVM
IBVM Canada Leadership Team*

“Alumni, faculty and friends need to be encouraged to participate in ensuring the support, present and future, of St. Mike’s. Public education is this single most important and valuable investment that a democratic society can make.”

*Dr. Tony Comper, CM, LLD,
Retired President and CEO of BMO Financial Group*

“USMC has taken a leading role in shareholder engagement in Canada, using its position as an investor to contribute to building a more sustainable, inclusive, and productive economy.”

*Kevin Thomas, CEO, Shareholder Association,
for Research and Education (SHARE)*

“By agreeing to work more closely together, Regis and St. Michael’s can offer the broader community an approach to education that is more than the sum of its parts while allowing each school to benefit from the other’s riches and charism.”

*Thomas Worcester, SJ, PhD,
President, Regis College*



Next Steps

AS WE HAVE BEEN DEVELOPING *St. Mike's 180: Rooted in the Future*, we have started creating an implementation plan including identifying activities, a timeline and lead(s) for each goal. In the New Year, the President will brief Collegium on the development of the implementation plan, which will be published at a later date as part of the plan. The President's Advisory Group will be charged with the ongoing oversight of the institutional and divisional decisions related to the activities and timelines of the plan. Each year, the President will provide a report to Collegium on the progress related to the implementation of St. Mike's 180.

*Approved by the Collegium
of the University of St. Michael's College
on December 9, 2020.*

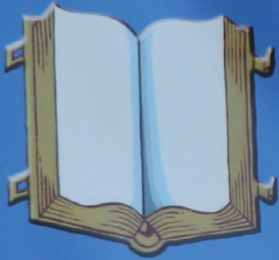
LEARN MORE ABOUT ST. MIKE'S 180

*Please contact
usmcpresidentsoffice@utoronto.ca*

*Office of the President and Vice-Chancellor
University of St. Michael's College*



UNIVERSITY OF
ST. MICHAEL'S
COLLEGE





University of St. Michael's College
in the University of Toronto
81 St. Mary Street
Toronto, ON M5S 1J4

stmikes.utoronto.ca
@uStMikes  

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ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO