

# Report to the Community



**Saint Mary's  
University**  
WITHOUT LIMITS.





## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Saint Mary's University has always been a community that takes pride in supporting students, academic excellence and research. The university is only as strong as our people, and over the past year, we have continued to prove how strong we can be when working together.

We saw great examples of innovative and effective teaching, student successes and investments in research. Working toward our sustainability goals, we embraced projects to transform our campus and reduce our environmental footprint. We have taken concrete steps to be a community that reflects and promotes equity, diversity and inclusion in all we do. We have come together and accomplished a great deal, much of which is reflected in this report.

These stories showcase many examples of how our students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends have contributed to the greater good of our local and global communities. I hope they inspire us all to continue these efforts and to create a *World without limits*.

**Robert Summerby-Murray, PhD**  
President and Vice-Chancellor







Dr. Sit has been so supportive and encouraging. I never thought I would study wine yeasts and the complexities of natural winemaking. I love telling people that I am getting a PhD in wine."

*– Lauren Grant, graduate student*



## RESEARCHING MICROBIAL TERROIR AND ITS IMPACT ON WINE FLAVOUR

A collaboration between Dr. Clarissa Sit's chemistry lab and L'Acadie Vineyards is marrying Nova Scotia's history of winemaking with modern chemistry.

L'Acadie Vineyards owner Bruce Ewert was excited to partner with Dr. Sit to determine what unique fungi and bacteria contribute to the flavour profiles of wines produced at his award-winning, Annapolis Valley vineyard.

In addition to the climate, weather, terrain and soil that make up the terroir, Dr. Sit specifically studies the soil microbiology of vineyards that grow L'Acadie Blanc grapes, our most region-specific grape. Her work has been instrumental in developing L'Acadie Vineyards' certified organic and vegan wine, Petillant Naturel.

## HELPING THE NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALE REBOUND

At nearly 70 tonnes, the subjects of Dr. Timothy Frasier's research are massive examples of how quickly a species can progress to the brink of extinction. North Atlantic right whales are one of the most endangered large whales globally, with fewer than 400 in existence. While protection initiatives are in place, Dr. Frasier is concerned with the whale's low reproduction rate. Using genomic data, he works to better understand what genetic factors limit the species' recovery.

With \$6 million in new funding, Dr. Frasier and his colleagues from Genome Atlantic and the New England Aquarium are determining which factors limit reproductive success. This work will help focus conservation efforts to save the species from extinction.

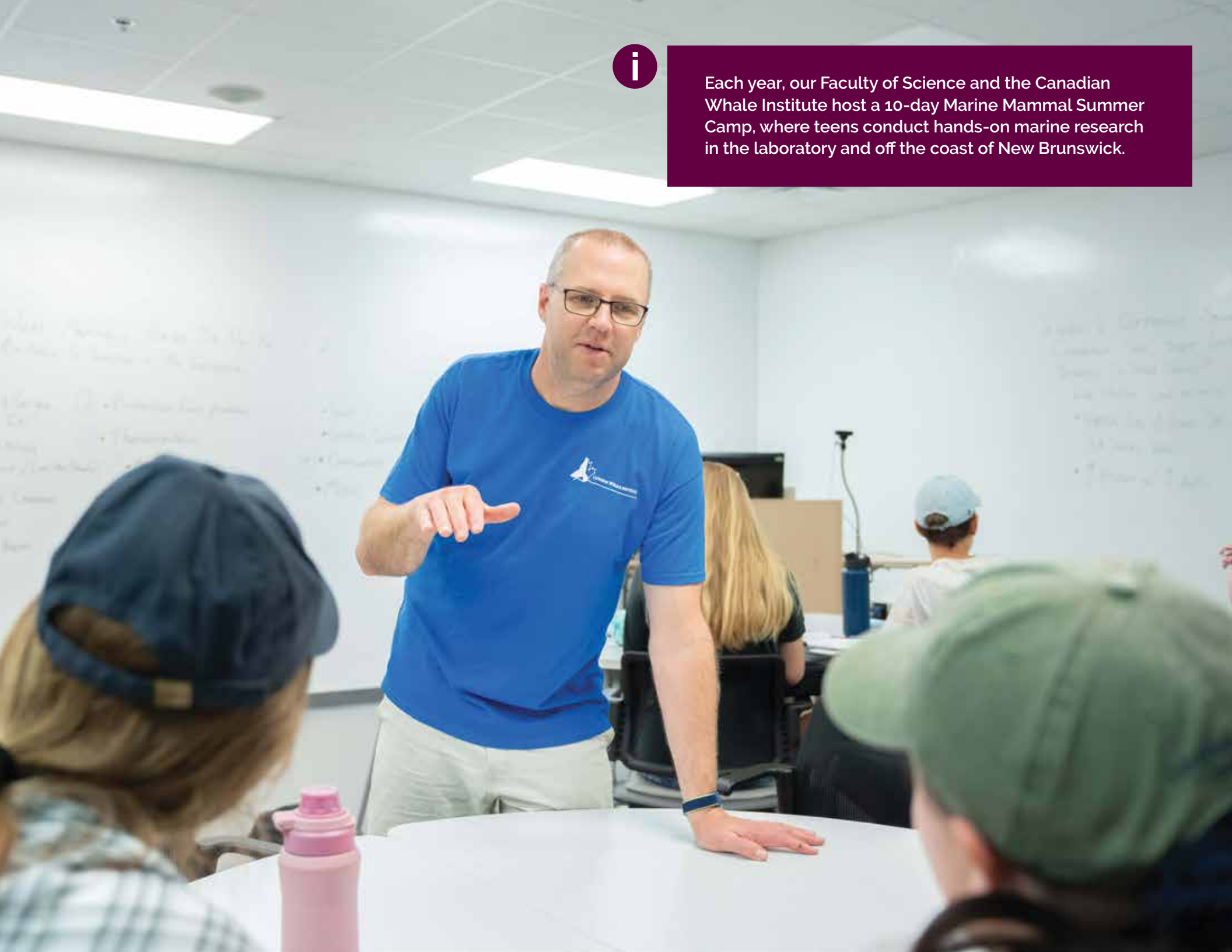
By working with colleagues and governments in Canada and the United States, we can move fairly quickly from research results to impacts on policy and procedures. Right whales are in a very precarious situation, and we need to identify how conservation actions can be changed to improve the chances for the species to recover.

- Dr. Timothy Frasier, Faculty of Science

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Photo credit:  
New England Aquarium  
IUCN/PA





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Each year, our Faculty of Science and the Canadian Whale Institute host a 10-day Marine Mammal Summer Camp, where teens conduct hands-on marine research in the laboratory and off the coast of New Brunswick.







## CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIGENOUS GIRLS IN SPORT

Creating safe and welcoming places on campus and through sport is at the forefront of everything Ryan Francis stands for. In 2019, he co-founded the Indigenous Girls Hockey Program, which operates in Eskasoni, Membertou and Truro, NS (close to Millbook First Nation and Sipekne'katik First Nation), and has seen nearly 200 school-age girls participate. He believes that representation and connection are vital for a positive experience in hockey and that helping Indigenous girls to experience the game with their peers is important.

Huskies hockey player Erin Denny (of Eskasoni First Nation) has been involved since the beginning, providing the girls insight into her lived experience and encouraging them to feel seen, heard and understood in an environment that is comfortable and familiar.

“As a SMU hockey player, it’s great to be able to connect with the broader community,” says Denny. “Through this program, I can contribute to the development of young athletes and show these girls there is a place for Indigenous youth in sport at every level.”

Ryan Francis, the university’s first Indigenous Visiting Fellow, works closely with our Centre for the Study of Sport and Health on initiatives that increase the knowledge and awareness of Indigenous participation in sport, such as the Red Tape Game and Indigenous Sport Week.



## UNEARTHING THE STORY OF ITALY'S INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Saint Mary's students are helping shed light on previously overlooked perspectives from the ancient past thanks to a new research partnership in Italy. Led by Dr. Sveva Savelli, in partnership with Dr. Spencer Pope of McMaster University and under the auspices of the Italian Ministry of Culture, the Metaponto Archaeology Project saw students dig into a new field course at the Incoronata "greca" excavation site near the town of Pisticci (Matera).

Between the 9th and 7th centuries BCE, the site was home to thriving Indigenous communities (the Oenotrians) when Greek settlers began arriving. Past archaeology efforts in the area have focused mainly on the settler experience but this research probes more deeply, investigating the colonial and intercultural dynamics of this pivotal timeframe when the Oenotrians and Greeks first interacted. This spring, field school participants reached a key milestone with the discovery of a structure believed to be an Oenotrian hut with many artifacts.



Saint Mary's offers field schools in Italy, Northern Ireland, New York and Nova Scotia, with more in development in Cuba, Colombia, France, Germany and South Korea.



I would highly encourage anybody with even the slightest interest in archaeology to sign up for the field school. It's truly a once-in-a-lifetime kind of experience.

– Ken Finlay, fourth-year philosophy major







Dr. Kirrily Freeman is piloting a new course, Museum Fundamentals and Decolonizing Collections, as part of a newly proposed Public Humanities and Heritage major in the Faculty of Arts.





## TELLING UNHEARD STORIES: DECOLONIZING MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

The soul of a community is embodied by culture and the telling of stories, but what happens when the stories are not aligned with lived experiences? Partnering with the Association of Nova Scotia Museums and communities across Nova Scotia, Dr. Kirrily Freeman is working to help museums decolonize their collections and ensure that history is told accurately. Her students gain experience ensuring that the history and heritage of African Nova Scotian, Acadian, Gaelic and Mi'kmaq communities are better represented in Nova Scotian museums.

“Community engagement is integral to the whole process,” says Dr. Freeman.

“Communities are telling us what is needed, what is missing and what needs to be done to move forward. This knowledge will influence not just how we proceed but hopefully will shape the future of museum work in the province.”

Our priority is to make sure that marginalized groups have access to their communities' histories and material culture. We all benefit from having a more inclusive, more nuanced, more comprehensive representation of the past.

– Dr. Kirrily Freeman, Director of Outreach and Experiential Learning, Faculty of Arts



## BUILDING MORE INCLUSIVE WORKSPACES

To see the change, you need to be the change. This is the mentality that Dr. Vurain Tabvuma, Sobey Professor in Management, and his PhD student Katelynn Carter-Rogers BA'11 CertHON'12 MSc'15 bring to their teaching and research practices. Their research, focused on understanding how inclusion within organizations can increase well-being and performance, has been built into the Sobey School of Business Management 1281 curriculum—a foundational course for all Bachelor of Commerce students.

This addition to the course curriculum reinforces the importance of equity, diversity and inclusion in the minds of tomorrow's business leaders. This is a big step forward in fostering more inclusive workplaces.



The Sobey School of Business is a proud signatory of the United Nations Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative. The school is also one of just two in Canada to be selected as a PRME Champion (2020-23), a leadership group committed to advancing corporate social responsibility in education and research.

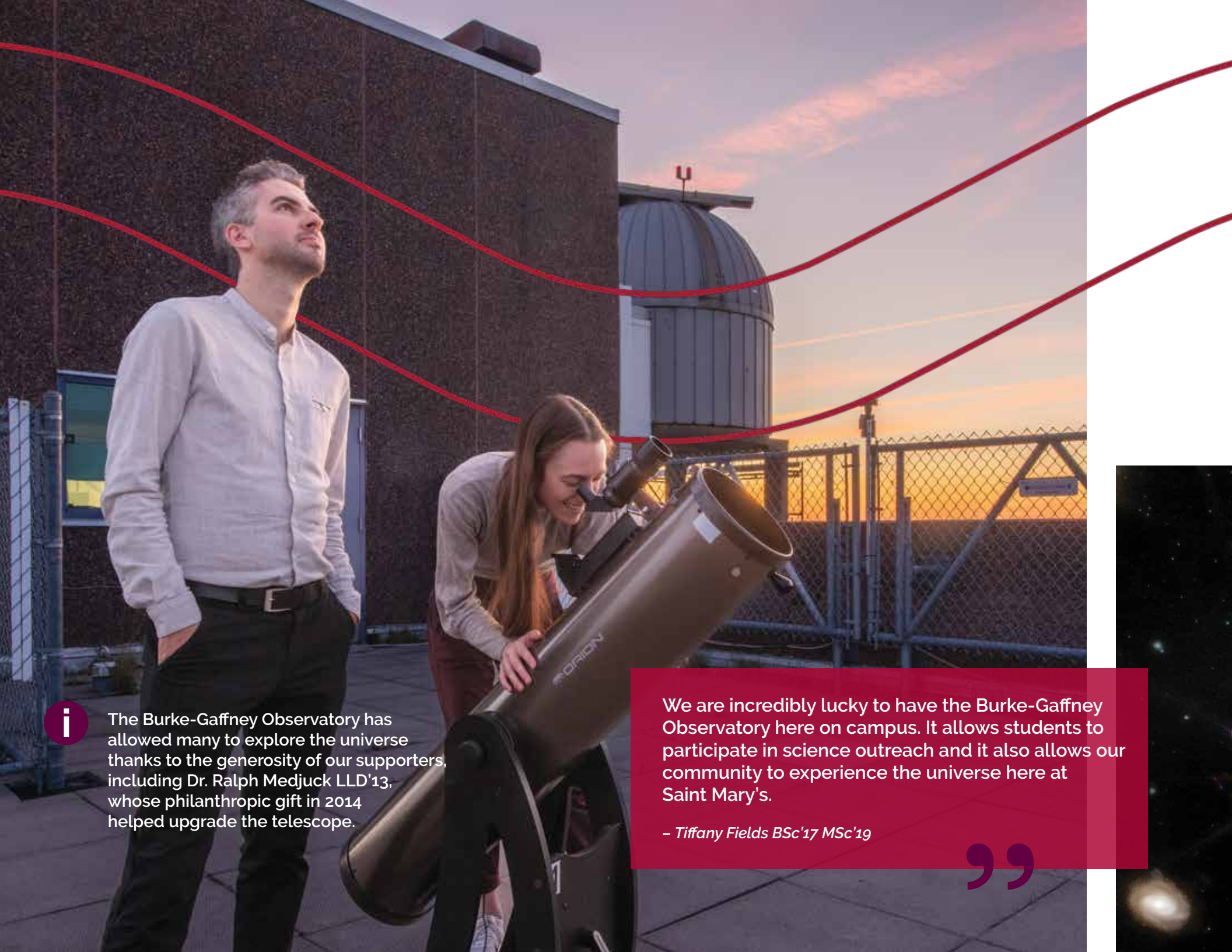




It's important that organizations are able and ready to support people who come from very different perspectives, and include people who understand the world in very different ways.

*– Dr. Vurain Tabvuma, Sobey Professor in Management*





The Burke-Gaffney Observatory has allowed many to explore the universe thanks to the generosity of our supporters, including Dr. Ralph Medjuck LLD'13, whose philanthropic gift in 2014 helped upgrade the telescope.

We are incredibly lucky to have the Burke-Gaffney Observatory here on campus. It allows students to participate in science outreach and it also allows our community to experience the universe here at Saint Mary's.

– Tiffany Fields BSc'17 MSc'19





A decorative red graphic consisting of a curved top edge and a straight bottom edge, forming a partial frame.

## CELESTIAL CELEBRATIONS: 50 YEARS OF RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

A quick 22-storey elevator ride is all it takes to be transported from the heart of a bustling campus into another galaxy at the Burke-Gaffney Observatory. Currently celebrating 50 years in operation, the observatory welcomed a new management team in Dr. Vincent Hénault-Brunet and Tiffany Fields BSc'17 MSc'19. Operating one of two professional-grade telescopes in Atlantic Canada, this duo is passionate about fulfilling their mission to provide astronomy and astrophysics education, research and outreach to communities locally and worldwide.

Fields has always felt the gravitational pull of the observatory. During her time as a student at Saint Mary's, she worked at the observatory before becoming its technician. Similar to her own experience, she wants to give students the opportunity to learn how to use the state-of-the-art observational astronomy equipment with the hopes of preparing them for careers in astronomy and data science.

## WORLD-LEADING RESEARCH WITH THE JAMES WEBB TELESCOPE

The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), the most powerful space telescope ever built, has a Saint Mary's connection. Dr. Marcin Sawicki, Canada Research Chair in Astronomy, is part of the team that developed a key part of the telescope, namely the Near Infrared Imager and Slitless Spectrograph (NIRISS), which records data at near-infrared wavelengths invisible to the human eye.

Dr. Sawicki and his students have unprecedented access to the Webb telescope. "Our postdocs and students will be using JWST to observe the birth of the first galaxies soon after the Big Bang," he says. "The potential for extremely impactful science is enormous. We're eager to use Webb for world-leading research here in Nova Scotia."

A deep-field image from the James Webb Space Telescope showing a vast field of stars and galaxies. A prominent feature is a bright, multi-colored star with a blue core and red and orange outer layers, surrounded by a complex pattern of light rays. Other stars and galaxies are visible in the background, some appearing as soft, glowing clouds.

"The Sparkler" galaxy—seen here in JWST's first deep image—was found by Saint Mary's astronomers and colleagues and hosts some of the universe's first stars.  
Credit: NASA

## RECENT GRAD MAKING A SPLASH IN THE WORLD OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Combining passion and problem solving is the key to successful entrepreneurship, a mentality that Marlee Armour MTEI'22 embodies daily through her work. Having spent the last decade as a swim instructor, Armour founded Summer Swim Academy in 2015, providing private backyard swim lessons and on-demand lifeguarding services across Southern Ontario. Through this endeavour, she and her team of instructors noticed a glaring issue with children's personal flotation devices (PFDs).

"We swim with our arms, but PFDs don't allow for horizontal movement," says Armour. "Typical PFDs train kids to swim vertically in what we call the drowning position. Three years ago, I started cutting the PFDs and turning them around, making it easier for the kids to learn to swim safely and properly from the beginning."

With more than five years of entrepreneurial experience under her belt, Armour has now developed a prototype for SwimTrainer and looks forward to applying her knowledge from the Master of Technology Entrepreneurship & Innovation (MTEI) program and the Saint Mary's University Entrepreneurship Centre (SMUEC) to her business.





Each year, the Saint Mary's University Entrepreneurship Centre organizes a national entrepreneurship competition for post-secondary students across Canada. Modelled after the NCAA basketball competition, March Madness sees 64 participants compete to win \$10,000 toward their business. With SwimTrainer, Marlee Armour MTEI'22 tied for third place in the 2022 competition.



# PHILANTHROPY IN ACTION



Chancellor Durland and Catherine Durland (centre) with MTEI students

## A historic investment in research

A \$3-million gift from the Durland Learning Foundation and the Durland Family is the most significant investment in graduate student research in the university's history.

"We wanted to invest in the future of research at Saint Mary's—to help recruit great graduate students, to help support the work of our wonderful faculty members, and to encourage researchers from around the world to make Saint Mary's their home," says Chancellor Dr. Michael Durland BComm'87 DComm'10. The Durland Scholarships in Graduate Research grant supplemental awards of \$10,000 per year for graduate students and \$15,000 per year for PhD students, as an addition to other awards and funding from the university.



Kathy Mullane MBA'89

## Paving the way for female student-athletes

Named after the first female coach at Saint Mary's, the newly established Kathy Mullane Fund for Varsity Women's Sport supports female athletes committed to athletics and academics. Kathy Mullane MBA'89 was recruited in the early '70s to grow a women's sports program and remained until 2011. Despite advancements in gender equality, women's teams still lack the opportunities and resources afforded to men's teams. The new fund was established thanks to the generosity of alumnus Denis Huck BA'74 and his wife, Valli, with the hope that others will follow their lead and continue Mullane's legacy.



Floyd Kane BA'92, on the set of *Diggstown*, the show he created

## Alum creates scholarship for aspiring writers of African Nova Scotian descent

Floyd Kane BA'92, the East Preston filmmaker who created the hit TV series *Diggstown*, established the Edna and Velma Thomas Kane Writers Award to support aspiring writers of African descent after graduation. The award is named for his mother, Edna, and his late aunt, Velma, who bought him his first typewriter in seventh grade. "The first things I ever wrote were on that machine," he says. "So I wanted to honour those two great Black Nova Scotian women who never had the opportunities I had."

## New scholarship celebrates diversity excellence

The Scott McCain and Leslie McLean Diversity Excellence Award was made possible by a \$500,000 gift to support full-time undergraduate Indigenous and Black students with financial need. "Leslie and I both recognize the importance a high-quality education can make in the lives of Canadians, and we want to help reduce barriers to post-secondary education," says Scott McCain.



Baden Mercer BA'22 receives warm applause after his valedictory speech

## A place for everyone

Baden Mercer BA'22 has a simple message for students with diverse needs: "There's a place for everyone" in post-secondary education. "It's important that all students have a chance to succeed, regardless of their individual barriers," says Mercer, who is on the autism spectrum and credits much of his success to the Fred Smithers Centre for Student Accessibility, which is supported through the generosity of many donors, including Dr. Fred Smithers DComm'12. Mercer was valedictorian at his Faculty of Arts convocation and has returned to Saint Mary's to begin a master's degree in religious studies.



In November of 2021, more than \$27,000 was raised as part of Giving Tuesday. These funds were used for student support initiatives related to food insecurity and the distribution of wellness kits. Individual gifts were matched through the generosity of the J.W. Murphy Foundation and the SMU Alumni Association.

# HAPPENINGS



## Taking action on Black inclusion

Saint Mary's took an important step in signing the Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education: Principles, Actions, and Accountabilities.

Participating institutions commit to taking concrete action to combat anti-Black racism and promote inclusion. Work at Saint Mary's has already begun: an Associate Vice-President, Diversity Excellence has been appointed, who will help form a Black caucus of faculty and staff. A hiring strategy to increase and retain Black and Indigenous faculty and staff is also in development.



## Sounds of community and reconciliation

A community drum is now a permanent part of campus life thanks to a partnership with the Saint Mary's University Students' Association (SMUSA).

Called a teaching drum by Elders, the *tugamatesg* is an instrument that is alive and facilitates cultural expression. The drum will feature in important university events, facilitate learning and raise the visibility of Indigenous cultures.

"This is a time for community to come together to embrace and celebrate Indigeneity," says Kyle Cook, Vice-President Advocacy, SMUSA. "The drum will provide the platform to foster a sense of welcome, community and reconciliation."



## Dr. Alexander MacLeod's *Lagomorph* wins Nova Scotia's top art prize

A special handbound letterpress edition of *Lagomorph* was the 2021 winner of the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia Masterworks Arts Award, the largest award for a single work of art in any medium in the province. First published in *Granta* magazine, Dr. Alexander MacLeod's short fiction about the impact of a family's pet rabbit has earned international accolades, winning the prestigious O. Henry Prize in 2019. Dr. MacLeod collaborated with bookmaker Andrew Steeves of Gaspereau Press to immortalize the story as an exquisite hand-crafted book, garnering the \$25,000 award.



## Students win double silver at venture capital competition

Two student teams from the Sobey School of Business took home silver medals at the Venture Capital Investment Competition (VCIC) held at Boston University.

Competing in the New England division, the two teams of five (one at the undergraduate level and one at the graduate level) placed second in their respective divisions, beating out teams from top-tier American schools that included Cornell, Tufts, Babson and New York University.

# BUILDING OUR CAMPUS



## Inspiring spaces, inspiring minds

A gleaming new addition to the south end of campus is taking shape. The 62,000-square-foot space is the future home of the Sobeys Inspiration Hub and the Exchange, dedicated to supporting entrepreneurship and innovative multidisciplinary work at Saint Mary's.

When the doors open in Fall '23, visitors will find a large collaborative gathering space, a new home for the Saint Mary's University Entrepreneurship Centre, research centres, the university art gallery, retail labs, maker spaces, project studios and dedicated rooms for student societies.

## Green Saint Mary's

Saint Mary's reached its 2025 target for greenhouse gas reduction three years early. The university has reduced emissions by more than 40% thanks to actions like:

- changeover to a high-efficiency hot water plant
- switching from oil to natural gas for heating
- using compact fluorescent lights and replacing less efficient lights with LED lights



## Huskies Stadium sports a fresh new look

Spanning 10,305 square metres, the new turf at Huskies Stadium features a two-toned surface with updated university branding, including the new fierce Husky head at midfield and maroon-coloured end zones. The FIFA-quality turf uses a crumb rubber infill made from over 25,000 recycled tires. Sharp eyes will spot the "1 FLYNN" marking in the north end zone, placed in honour of famed former Husky and Canadian university football legend, Chris Flynn BA'97.

## Saint Mary's rises to third in the nation

# #3

Our investments in students, faculty and programming have propelled Saint Mary's to third in Canada for the 2023 Maclean's University Rankings undergraduate category. For the second successive year, we've remained the top-ranked primarily undergraduate university in Nova Scotia.

"At Saint Mary's, community is at the heart of all that we do," says President Summerby-Murray. "We know success requires our entire community's time, talent, passion and commitment. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our Santamarian community—our students, faculty, staff, alumni and donors. We continue to rise and achieve excellence through your support and efforts."

# SAINT MARY'S BY THE NUMBERS

## STUDENT SUPPORT

- Scholarships, fellowships and bursaries: **\$15.7M**
- Philanthropic support: **\$9.3M**
- Paired **1700+** new students with Peer Success Coaches for support during their first year
- Supported **628** students through the Fred Smithers Centre for Student Accessibility
- **270** students participated in Service Learning in 2021-2022
- **470** students enrolled in co-operative education
- The International Student Centre helped **650+** students with immigration advising

## ENGAGED ALUMNI

- **53,000+** alumni world-wide, in **119** countries
- **2nd** highest alumni engagement in the country

## RESEARCH LEADERSHIP

- Total external funding to support research: **\$11.4 M**
- **119** industry-sponsored projects per year at **\$5.6 M**
- Sponsored **35** undergraduate research awards valued at **\$246,000** for internship positions in Science, Arts and Business
- Graduate student scholarships and fellowships: **\$5.2 M**
- Nova Scotia's **2nd** largest research university by research income
- Home to **6** Canada Research Chairs

## STUDENT ATHLETE EXCELLENCE (2021-22 Huskies Varsity Sports Achievements)

- **103** Academic All-Canadians
- **8** U SPORTS All-Canadians
- **23** AUS All-Stars
- **5** AUS Major Award Winners
- **1** AUS Champion
- **5** teams nationally ranked in U SPORTS **Top 10**, including Women's Hockey **#1** ranking for multiple weeks

## SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE

- **400+** coaching engagements with students, businesses and community members
- **200+** students attended the SMUEC Talks Entrepreneurship Speaker series
- **\$25,000+** in prize money given to students
- **\$12,500** in student entrepreneur support through the Ignition program
- **\$310,000** given to local small businesses in wage subsidies



## POINTS OF PRIDE

- Ranked **3rd** among primarily undergraduate universities in Canada (2023 Maclean's University Rankings)
- Sobey School of Business ranked **4th** in Canada and **13th** overall in the Corporate Knights Better World MBA Ranking
- Home to the **most powerful telescope in Atlantic Canada** and the first Twitter-controlled telescope in the world (@smubgobs)
- One of the widest selections of **humanities and social science** programs in Atlantic Canada
- Only English **Forensic Science program** east of Ontario
- **1st** university in Atlantic Canada with an esports club and on-campus esports arena



Annual Giving raised \$487,570 from 687 donors, including alumni, faculty and staff.

## FAST FACTS

- 6711** full-time and part-time students
- 112** countries represented by students
- 1514** degrees, diplomas and certificates awarded annually
- 86%** average entering grade
- 45** degree, diploma and certificate programs
- 148** Indigenous students

## STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- 5936** undergraduate
- 775** graduate
- 71%** Canadian
- 29%** International
- 3609** Nova Scotian
- 857** rest of Canada
- 30** undergraduate average class size
- 10** graduate average class size





## BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Dr. Michael Durland BComm'87 DComm'10, Chancellor  
Dr. Robert Summerby-Murray, President and Vice-Chancellor  
Alan Abraham Jr. BComm'80, Chair  
Mark Gosine BA'95, Vice-Chair

Dr. Tony Charles  
Kyle Cook  
Kimberly Doane BA'92  
Dr. Mohamed Drira  
Archbishop Brian Dunn (Visitor)  
Philip Fraser MBA'88  
Sylvia Gawad BSc'14  
Floyd Kane BA'92  
Dr. Rituparna Kanungo  
Dr. Lucie Kocum  
Jamie MacNeil BComm'00  
Anna Marenick MBA'07  
Bafana Mashingaidze BSc'14 MBA'16

Dr. Margaret McKee PhD'08  
Joseph Metlege EMBA'12  
Jane Roy BComm'84  
Kellie Sauriol BA'99  
Dr. Robert Singer BSc'86  
Vivek Sood MBA'98  
Francesca Southwell  
Collette Robert BSc'15 MSc'19  
Isobel Tyler  
Juliana Wiens (Staff Observer)  
Alex Wilson  
Sian Wren BA'94



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**2022 Report to the Community**

Cover image: Tiffany Fields  
BSc'17 MSc'19 and Dr. Vincent  
Hénault-Brunet at the  
Burke-Gaffney Observatory



**Saint Mary's  
University**