

Strategic Planning Team Update

November 2015

Strategic Plan. Read these two words again: **Strategic Plan.** What is the first thing that comes to mind? Do you picture a thick document gathering dust on a shelf next to other documents from five to ten years past? Do you picture a boring strategic planning process to get there? Let me assure you that the strategic planning process undertaken by the Strategic Planning Team of Saint Paul School of Theology (2015-2021) been anything but boring.

Words such as **identity, mission, vision, values, stakeholders, environmental scan, trending, SWOT analysis, strategic issues, goals and objectives** have become familiar to the team. These terms, along with others, are part of a traditional approach to strategic planning. But this team has gone beyond the traditional approach and has spent considerable time reviewing and considering emerging trends in society, changes in the church, and new concepts in theological education. A fluidity in the approach to strategic planning has been included with the intention of bringing forth a plan that will not sit on the shelf.

Be assured that members of the Strategic Planning team have listened and learned, reviewed and researched, talked and heard comments from hundreds of stakeholders and others. A strong planning foundation was laid to strengthen the identity of Saint Paul School of Theology, as well as provide the landscape for consideration of strategic issues, goals and objectives.

The team will be working for several more months before the plan is complete. During that time, the team wants you to know that it is fully aligned with Saint Paul's history, heritage and traditions, while embracing the challenges and opportunities of the future. They have been concentrating on putting forth an innovative, creative and sustainable plan for the next five years based on a foundational year of intense "work." The teamwork, respect, diligence, patience and integrity of this group of people for one another, for the process, for the seminary has been impressive. They love God, the church, and Saint Paul School of Theology! And they are committed to the students, current and future, educating people (clergy, lay professional and laity) to make disciples of Jesus Christ, renew the church and transform the world!

A plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees in February that will require flexible and adaptive leadership, creative thinking and innovation, willingness to pursue new concepts of theological education and collaborative opportunities, and a commitment by the Board of Trustees to move in a new and sustainable direction. This plan may require some stakeholders to "let go" of their current thinking and perceptions, to move forward with enthusiasm and eagerness on another phase in the journey of the life of Saint Paul School of Theology. It will not be easy for some to do! Yet, the team is confident that the foundation is strengthened and the pathways are being cleared for an exciting journey into the future.

We are grateful for the support of the planning process and the constructive comments and prayers that have accompanied this process of discernment. All input has been heard and appreciated. Continue along this journey with us through your faithful prayers!

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