

# ACADEMIC LIFE

Saint Mary's College offers students an outstanding curricular program. Undergraduate students are able to pursue several degrees and majors as well as minors and certificates. These programs of study are supported by the offices and services in the Divisions of Academic Affairs. This division also implements the academic policies and procedures of the College. This section of the Bulletin describes these two aspects of academic life at Saint Mary's College.

## Division of Academic Affairs

The staff of the Division of Academic Affairs support student learning that is achieved in the academic departments and interdisciplinary programs of the College. Headed by the Provost and Senior Vice-President for Academic Affairs, this division includes the Provost, the Dean of Faculty, One Associate Dean and Senior Advising staff, the Division of Student Academic Services, the Department of Information Technology, the Center for Academic Innovation, the Cushwa-Leighton Library, the Office of Special Events, and 29 academic departments and interdisciplinary programs.

Additional offices in this division provide direct support for students seeking advising, ranging from registration for courses each semester and advice on success strategies to information on many opportunities for global education and women's leadership. The Office of Academic Advising and Registrar, the Office of Retention and First Year Experience, the Office of Student Success, Pre-Professional Advising, the Career Crossings Office, and the Center for Women's Intercultural Leadership (for information about international programs and study abroad) are the offices which provide this direct advising support to the student.

## Academic Offices, Programs and Services

### The Office of Academic Advising and Registrar

The Office of Academic Advising and Registrar is the central advising office at Saint Mary's College. The advising records of all undergraduate students are maintained in this office. In addition to administering academic policies, advisors in the office work closely with faculty advisors and professors to promote the academic life of all students. First Year Students are assigned a First-Year Faculty Advisor during their first summer. The faculty advisor helps First Year Students plan their schedules during the first year. When students decide on a major they will be assigned a departmental advisor in their major.

### Accessibility Resource Office

The mission of the Accessibility Resource Office is in harmony with the overall mission of the College and the nation's legal framework in its anti-discriminatory principles in promoting equal access and opportunity to all. The Accessibility Resource Office works to ensure that reasonable accommodations are made to provide programmatic and physical access. Saint Mary's College recognizes its obligations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended.

- **Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973** states that "No otherwise qualified disabled individual...shall, solely by reason of...disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."
- **The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** of 1990 provides for access to employment, public services, public accommodations,

transportation and telecommunications for people with disabilities. An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as "a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment."

The Director and Associate Director of the Accessibility Resource Office coordinate services and accommodations for students with disabilities who provide appropriate documentation. The office is located in Room 103 of the Academic Resource Center in Madeleva Hall.

### Office of Retention Strategies

The Office of Retention Strategies is committed to the success of first- and second-year undergraduate students as they navigate the transition to Saint Mary's. This will be achieved by employing a mix of one-to-one student contact, program development and review of existing policies and procedures.

In order to better understand reasons for attrition and identify trends across years and populations, the Office of Retention Strategies will utilize data collected through institutional and national research. This data will inform the continued work of the executive director, as well as collaborations between departments and offices that directly serve students. In addition, the Office of Retention Strategies strives to bring to light social, emotional and academic needs of our students, and to build upon the existing cross-divisional relationships that serve as resources and support to students at risk of attrition.

The College's mission and core values of Learning, Community, Faith/Spirituality and Justice guide the work of the Office of Retention Strategies. In addition, the work of the Office supports and finds inspiration in *Revere and Revise: Saint Mary's College 2030 Strategic Plan*.

### Office of Student Success (OSS)

Select students are offered admission to Saint Mary's College through the Student Success Program (SSP). Run out of the Office of Student Success, the SSP guides and supports these students as they adapt to the new challenges and expectations of life at the College. The SSP's formal programming takes place throughout the Success Student's first year and includes enrollment in EDUC 100 Strategies for Academic Success. Taught by the OSS director Aaron Bremyer, this two-credit course focuses on identifying and developing productive habits and evidence-based learning strategies. In regular conversations with the director, SSP members actively reflect on their academic progress, learning to recognize their specific challenges and strengths while exploring their motivations in order to devise effective academic strategies.

SSP members and any other student who chooses may participate in the S.H.A.R.P. Success Program ([https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf8ydVP6zqUqFxi30eZZnZjg-qYjJg1BYfctmWxV7C1wyu\\_w/viewform/](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf8ydVP6zqUqFxi30eZZnZjg-qYjJg1BYfctmWxV7C1wyu_w/viewform/)), a popular Success Program available to any student at Saint Mary's. Designed to cultivate and establish healthy academic habits, S.H.A.R.P. begins with a mandatory "study hall" of at least four hours each week. Held in the Library and structured around each student's individual schedule, S.H.A.R.P. builds effective habits while promoting academic accountability and perseverance for all participating students. The OSS offers additional programs for all students, including: a year-long workshop series focused on research-based approaches to learning and resilience; regular community-building events designed to cultivate a sense of belonging

and purpose among SMC students; and Courage Keepers, a formal peer-mentorship program.

Any student is welcome to meet with the director of the Office of Student Success to discuss individual academic challenges.

## Pre-Professional Advising

### Pre-Health Advising

See the Pre-Med/Pre-Health Professions (<https://catalog.saintmarys.edu/undergraduate/programs/pre-med-pre-health-professions/>) section for advising information.

### Pre-Law Advising

Pre-law advising is provided to students through the Career Crossings Office. The pre-law advisor provides information to students about the application process, the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), and membership in the Notre Dame/Saint Mary's Pre-Law Society.

## Advising for Four Years and Beyond

Academic, Mission, and Student Affairs divisions collaborate to provide a more robust approach to advising. As a college committed to the legacy of the Sisters of the Holy Cross the advising system focuses student's attention on several key questions. In the first year, programs such as First-Year Faculty Advising Program, Peer-Mentoring, and Common Experiences, allow all first year students to explore answers to the question, "Why am I here?" In the sophomore and junior years, students explore the answers to the questions "What are my gifts and passions?" and "What do my community and the world need from me?" through programs sponsored by Campus Ministry, the Office of Civic and Social Engagement, the Center for Spirituality and the Career Crossings Office. These programs include retreats, experiential learning opportunities, Sophomore Pathways, Real Life Calling seminars, StrengthsQuest workshops, and internships. In their senior year, students will prepare to leave us with some provisional answers to the question, "How can I make a difference in the world?"

All first-year students are enrolled in the following one-credit in the fall semester:

**AVE 101 College in Practice** This one-credit course offers a basic introduction to many facets of the academic experience at Saint Mary's College. In it, a variety of topics are discussed: practical tips such as course selection, registration, time management and learning strategies; techniques for finding a major; information about unique opportunities and important resources on campus; and, of course, deeper questions about the core values that characterize the Saint Mary's community, as well as the value of the liberal arts, integrative learning, and higher education.

This class generally meets three times a week during the first half of the semester in groups of 20 students and is taught by a faculty member who serves as the students' academic advisor. An upper-class student who serves as a peer mentor to this group of students also participates. This common course is designed to introduce first-year students to the many facets of their academic experience at the College and encompasses the following learning outcomes:

- Reflect on the nature and value of a liberal arts education;
- Draw connections between her educational goals and larger issues raised by the Common Experiences and common texts;
- Develop attitudes and strategies for lifelong learning – in college and beyond;

- Apply their knowledge of elements of the Sophia Program to the crafting of their own educational program and goals;
- Continually build on their knowledge, transferring their learning between a variety of experiences and courses.
- Understands the distinctive core values and mission of Saint Mary's College, as well as the legacy and continuing influence of the Sisters of the Holy Cross in relation to those values and that mission.

## Career Crossings Office

The Career Crossings Office (CCO) offers career services for all students throughout their studies at Saint Mary's and beyond with access to lifetime services. Information on career resources and programs are available by contacting the office in 114 Spes Unica, calling (574) 284-4775, or emailing [cco@saintmarys.edu](mailto:cco@saintmarys.edu). Appointments with the CCO staff can be made by logging into Handshake.

### Choosing a Major/Exploring Career Options

Instrumental to the foundation of career development and growth of students, the CCO provides support and guidance in choosing a major and exploring career options associated with fields of interest. The CCO can provide counseling and access to:

- Career assessments including the PathwayU, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and CliftonStrengths
- Job shadowing and informational interviewing
- "What Can I Do With a Major in...?" and alumnae career path resources

### Internship Searching

The CCO assists students in the internship search process including exploring goals, searching techniques, and applying for opportunities. The office hosts internship preparation workshops throughout the year and provides one-on-one appointments with students.

### Job Searching

The CCO helps students explore career goals and strategies to meet their individual needs and maximize job search results. Information and resources are available to develop networking, researching, and résumé and cover letter writing skills.

### Résumé and Cover Letter Writing

Résumés and cover letters are an opportunity to provide a great first impression with potential employers. The CCO assists with developing and fine tuning job search correspondence to make a positive impact on employers. Resources on writing effective résumés and cover letters can be found by logging onto Handshake.

### Networking and Interviewing Skills

Networking and interviewing skills are critical to the success of landing opportunities. The CCO provides LinkedIn coaching, mock interviews, and alumnae networking resources. The CCO hosts programs that allow students to utilize and develop both networking and interviewing skills.

### Graduate and Professional School Preparation

The CCO provides the resources and information needed to explore graduate and professional schools, uncover financial aid options, create effective personal statements, prepare for entrance exams, and much more. The office also serves as the primary law school advising office.

### PostGraduate Service

Students from Saint Mary's not only enter into jobs after they graduate, but may pursue volunteering and service opportunities. The CCO can assist with the exploration of how short-term plans can compliment long-term career and life goals. The office works closely with the Division

for Mission to provide information on various volunteer and service opportunities at the local, regional, national, and international level.

### **On-Campus Recruiting Program**

Employers from various industries visit the Saint Mary's campus each year to recruit for jobs and internships. Employers conduct campus and virtual sessions interviews, information sessions, and information tables. The office also hosts an annual career and internship fair in the fall and recruiting events throughout the year.

### **Handshake**

All students have access to Handshake for finding job and internship opportunities. On Handshake, students can connect with employers, apply for positions, post résumés, make appointments with the CCO, and more. Access the site at <https://saintmarys.joinhandshake.com>

### **Alumnae Resource Network**

The ARN is a database of 8,000+ alumnae who have opted in to be available for students and alumnae to reach out to them for the purposes of networking, mentoring, and hosting for internships and interviews. Access the ARN at <http://connect.saintmarys.edu>.

### **The Center for Academic Innovation**

The Center for Academic Innovation was founded in 1993 to support the academic excellence of Saint Mary's College. The CFAI administers research and teaching grants for faculty, collaborative research grants for faculty teams (COSTAR), and the Student Independent Study and Research (SISTAR) program, in which student and faculty partners work together on scholarly or creative projects. The CFAI also supports student travel grants that enable students to travel to academic conferences and environments in which they can either share or engage in their own scholarship or research.