

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

2025-2026

Year in Review

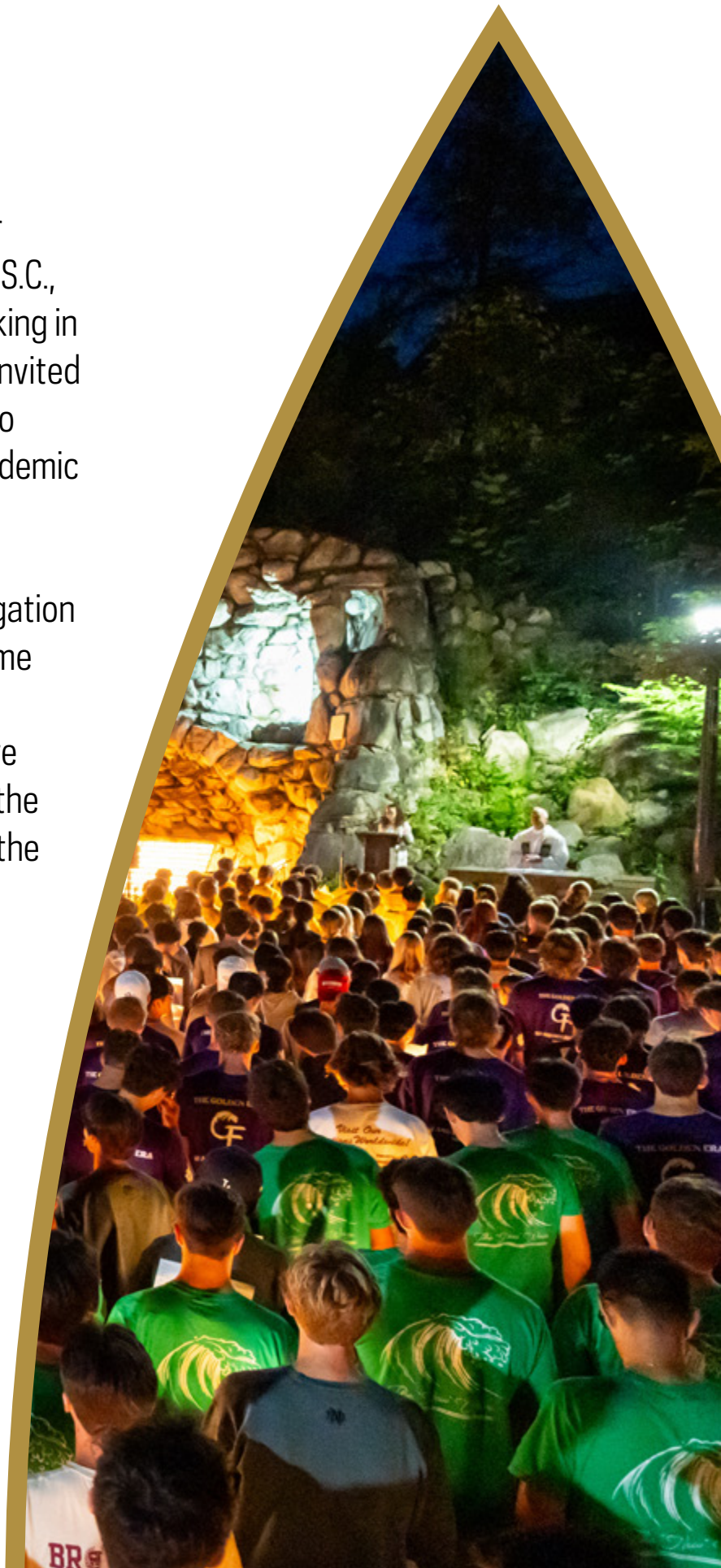


Overview

At the invitation of Vice President for Student Affairs, Rev. Gerry Olinger, C.S.C., students and professional staff working in the Division of Student Affairs were invited to engage with the theme of “Hope to Bring” throughout the 2025-26 academic year.

Rooted in the mission of the Congregation of Holy Cross, the year’s guiding theme was evident in both staff members’ support and accompaniment of Notre Dame students and in their work on the priorities outlined in the six goals of the Division of Student Affairs’ Strategic Plan.

Select accomplishments from the 2025-26 academic year for the goals of Faith and Formation; Belonging and Engagement; Health and Well-being; Connection and Community; Reflection and Discernment; and Staff Recruitment, Development, and Retention are as follows.



Faith and Formation

A shared vision for the development and formation of Notre Dame students in the Catholic, Holy Cross tradition continued to be a divisional focus throughout the academic year.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Welcomed more than 2,000 members of the tri-campus and South Bend communities to the celebration of Candlemas Mass at [St. Olaf Ice Chapel](#). Members of the Coyle Hall community constructed the chapel entirely of ice and snow and worked with Campus Ministry staff to organize the Mass.
- Continued to pursue strategic partnerships in support of holistic student formation through the reimagined [Moreau First-Year Seminar](#), which launched in fall 2025 in cooperation with the Office of Undergraduate Education.
- Expanded pilgrimage opportunities through the Camino de Santiago and Mexico City pilgrimages, creating new avenues for students to share intentional encounters with global Catholicism.
- In partnership with the Office of the Provost, convened a campus-wide community of practice for those engaged in student formation and development to contribute to the [University's strategic efforts](#) and "think like an institution."



**EXPERIENCED A
32% INCREASE IN
GRADUATING STUDENTS
REPORTING THAT THEY
FREQUENTLY ATTEND A
RELIGIOUS SERVICE.**



**OBSERVED 162% GROWTH IN JUST
TWO YEARS IN THE NUMBER OF
STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN
SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION DURING
THEIR TIME AT NOTRE DAME.**



**94% OF GRADUATING
STUDENTS REPORTED
THAT PRAYER AND
MEDITATION ARE
IMPORTANT TO THEM, AN
INCREASE FROM 82% IN
2021.**

Belonging and Engagement

The Division actively engaged with the broader University community to showcase students' many gifts and talents and help further their sense of belonging at Notre Dame.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Welcomed students to the newly designed [Sister Thea Bowman Center](#), which now includes artwork and photography sharing the story of her inspiring, joy-filled life.
- Hosted the Sister Thea Bowman Center Belonging Showcase concurrently with the University's annual [Walk the Walk Week](#) celebration.
- Facilitated 15 engagement sessions with students that invited further reflection on the results of the most recent [Inclusive Campus Student Survey](#) and provided valuable context to complement existing quantitative data.
- In collaboration with the Moreau First-Year Seminar, installed a collaborative mural in the Sister Thea Bowman Center titled "[This Is Us](#)," featuring the original artistic contributions of over 1,200 members of the Notre Dame community.



**THE OFFICE OF STUDENT
ENRICHMENT SUPPORTED OVER
1,200 STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN
\$1,380,000 IN TOTAL FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE THROUGHOUT THE
COURSE OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR.**



**94% OF STUDENTS AGREED
WITH THE STATEMENT, "I FEEL A
SENSE OF BELONGING AT NOTRE
DAME," AN INCREASE FROM 89% IN
2022.**

Health and Well-being

Through strategic and intentional partnerships and programs, the Division continued to build a campus-wide culture of collective responsibility for student health and well-being.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Introduced a more collaborative and comprehensive approach to student-centered care that makes finding resources easier and more accessible to students through the launch of StudentHealth.nd.edu and the creation of complementary visual standards and messaging.
- In collaboration with the Office of Undergraduate Education, implemented new policies that better support undergraduates as they navigate the University's time away and return process.
- Adjusted Sara Bea Accessibility Program Testing Center procedures to increase utilization and help staff focus more intentionally on students with approved testing accommodations.
- To help students fulfill the University's insurance requirement, University Health Services began the process of transitioning first-year undergraduate students and all new transfer students to automatic enrollment in the University-sponsored student health insurance plan.



OVER **400 STUDENTS** ENGAGED IN
SUBSTANCE-FREE TAILGATES
SPONSORED BY THE McDONALD
CENTER FOR STUDENT WELL-BEING IN
PARTNERSHIP WITH THE STUDENT
ACTIVITIES OFFICE.



ACCORDING TO THE HEALTHY MINDS STUDY,
NOTRE DAME CONSISTENTLY RANKS
HIGHER IN STUDENT FLOURISHING
COMPARED TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS, AND
EXPERIENCED A **32% INCREASE IN**
STUDENT FLOURISHING OVER
THE LAST 5 YEARS.

Connection and Community

The Division worked to enhance spaces that enable community, support the ongoing development of peer-to-peer connection, and foster the exploration of campus and the local area.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Initiated the final phases of construction on the two newest residence halls on South Quad: [Therese Mary Grojean Hall](#) and [Coyle Hall](#).
- Successfully piloted the [Lucky Lineup Rewards](#) program through the Student Activities Office, which helps students engage with one another and campus life through events and trivia.
- Celebrated the opening of the student-designed Family Resource Center community garden that serves as a welcoming space for parenting and married students and their families.
- Conducted a year-long review of Welcome Weekend that resulted in closer collaboration with the Office of Undergraduate Education, Enrollment, and other University partners; better communication with incoming students and families; and a more intentional understanding of the wide range of experiences of incoming first-year undergraduate students.



**563 STUDENTS AND
28 COMMUNITY PARTNERS
PARTICIPATED IN THE CAMPUS MINISTRY
[MERCY WORKS PROGRAM](#), WHICH
EXPERIENCED ANOTHER RECORD-
BREAKING YEAR OF STUDENT SERVICE.**



**93% OF STUDENTS
AGREED WITH THE STATEMENT, "I BELIEVE
OTHERS SEE ME AS PART OF THE CAMPUS
COMMUNITY," AN INCREASE FROM 90% IN
2022.**

Reflection and Discernment

The Division developed new opportunities for reflection and encouraged discernment amidst a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Gathered the perspectives of graduating students about their use of artificial intelligence through an updated senior survey designed to better inform Division staff about how students are engaging with new and emerging technology.
- Campus Ministry successfully piloted the “Digital Desert Challenge” during Lent to help more than 100 students form deeper connections with God and community through the prioritization of prayer, silence, and healthier digital habits.
- Further personalized professional discernment initiatives through the Center for Career Development, including the Physicians Connect program in which pre-health majors are paired with alumni for mentorship, job shadowing and gap-year opportunities, and the Student-Athlete Career Exploration Night, which welcomed more than 150 student-athletes.



83% OF GRADUATING STUDENTS AGREED WITH THE STATEMENT, “NOTRE DAME HAS HELPED ME TO EXPLORE AND CLARIFY MY PURPOSE IN LIFE.”



89% OF GRADUATING STUDENTS AGREED WITH THE STATEMENT, “MY PERSONAL VALUES ALIGN WITH MY PROFESSIONAL ASPIRATIONS.”



85% OF GRADUATING STUDENTS AGREED WITH THE STATEMENT, “NOTRE DAME HAS HELPED ME TO EXPLORE AND CLARIFY HOW I MIGHT IMPACT SOCIETY FOR GOOD.”

Staff Recruitment, Development, and Retention

The Division continued to support staff enrichment and connection through cross-divisional opportunities and the strategic recruitment and promotion of dedicated and mission-oriented leaders.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Facilitated a Division-wide Town Hall on the theme of AI, featuring University experts and senior leaders who shared insights regarding student formation in the era of artificial intelligence.
- Engaged staff in a variety of professional development and spiritual enrichment opportunities, including informal training sessions on helpful tools like Google Sheets and gatherings for prayer and reflection during the Lenten season.
- Welcomed several new, dedicated, and experienced leaders to the Division, including Emily First as the Director of the Center for Student Support and Care and alumnus Dr. Paul Popiel as the Kenn and Pamela Ricci Director of Bands.
- Elevated existing talent to new leadership positions, including Dr. Doug Thompson as the inaugural Assistant Vice President for Belonging and Engagement; Emily Orsini as the Director of the Gender Relations Center; and Rev. Matt Kuczora, C.S.C., as the Director of the Office of Student Enrichment.



10 STAFF MEMBERS FROM ACROSS THE DIVISION CELEBRATED SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES OF 20+ YEARS FOR A COMBINED TOTAL OF 220 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY.



45% OF DIVISION STAFF HAVE SERVED THE UNIVERSITY FOR MORE THAN 5 CONCURRENT YEARS.



MORE THAN 20 STAFF MEMBERS WERE SUCCESSFULLY ONBOARDED TO THE DIVISION IN THE 2025-26 ACADEMIC YEAR.