

Creating A Stronger Future 2025

FINAL STRATEGIC PROGRESS REPORT



Creating a Stronger Future 2025 Final Strategic Progress Report

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Mission: Grounded in equity and inclusion, Saint Paul College educates and empowers students to lead purposeful lives and discover rewarding careers.

Vision: Saint Paul College advances racial equity; enriches community vibrancy; and inspires students to reach their full potential.

Values

WE BELIEVE STUDENTS ARE THE HEART OF OUR WORK.

With compassion and dedication, we collaborate to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment to meet student needs, interests, and goals. When all students have access to resources and support, they are empowered to achieve success.

WE ARE EXCELLENCE-MINDED, EQUITY-DRIVEN.

Diversity enriches our intellectual and professional community. Saint Paul College cultivates an environment of safety and transparency where all members are heard, valued, and respected. We apply anti-racism, trauma informed practices that work to eliminate racism and increase access and opportunity for all.

WE ARE GUIDED BY EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION-MAKING.

As a learning organization, we continually strive for improvement through purposeful and transparent decision-making with intentional consideration to identify what will best serve our students and the community.

WE STRIVE TO BRING VALUE TO OUR COMMUNITY.

We value collaborating and establishing partnerships that foster and enhance community connections. We are dedicated to meeting the needs of the changing labor market, supporting economic vitality and preparing students to contribute to a more socially just world.

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Executive Summary

Creating a Stronger Future 2025 was Saint Paul College's three-year strategic plan to advance equity, strengthen student success, cultivate organizational excellence, and deepen community partnerships. While the plan has concluded, this report provides a final reflection on what was accomplished, what was learned, and how those achievements prepared the College for the future.

Over the plan's lifetime, Saint Paul College made meaningful progress in advancing its mission and vision. Faculty and staff strengthened anti-racist and trauma-informed practices across the institution and participated in efforts to make the campus more welcoming and inclusive for an increasingly diverse student population. Those efforts helped create a more inclusive, responsive, and student-centered institution, reflected in consistently strong student survey results, with students reporting that Saint Paul College provided a welcoming environment supported by caring and helpful employees. The College also expanded student support services, increased opportunities for career-connected learning, and improved internal processes that help students navigate their educational journeys. These collaborations created new opportunities for students and reinforced the College's role as a driver of economic mobility and community well-being.

The accomplishments highlighted in this report represent more than individual initiatives or programmatic successes. Together, they strengthened the College's capacity to serve students. They also reinforced the value of equity-centered decision-making, cross-campus collaboration, innovation, and strong community partnerships as drivers of institutional success.

As Saint Paul College closes the chapter on *Creating a Stronger Future 2025*, it does so with a clear understanding of both what has been accomplished and what lies ahead. The momentum generated through this work has helped shape the College's next strategic plan, the **Promise Plan 2030**. Building on the lessons learned, relationships established, and successes achieved through *Creating a Stronger Future*, Saint Paul College is well positioned to continue expanding opportunity, advancing student success, and strengthening its impact on the communities it serves.

Creating a Stronger Future 2025 may have concluded, but the work it inspired continues. The Promise Plan represents the next chapter in that journey.

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Strategic Directions Accomplishments

#1 Develop as an anti-racist, trauma-informed college.

The original ARTI plan was incorporated into Strategic Direction One. ARTI initiatives supported student success and SPC's strategic goals by reducing barriers, closing equity gaps, fostering belonging and inclusion, strengthening employee and workforce capacity, building community partnerships, and securing external funding to expand impact.

The following initiatives and accomplishments highlight the progress made over the past two years in advancing SPC's commitment to becoming an anti-racist, trauma-informed institution and strengthening outcomes for students, employees, and the broader community.

Selected Highlights: *Remove barriers to student success*

- *WeThrive* Fellowship provides advising, mentoring, scholarships, and leadership development for historically underserved students.
- *Food Pantry* addresses food insecurity, a significant barrier to academic success.
- *Student Life Care Unit in EAB* creates a coordinated referral system for students needing support.
- *Mantra Health* expands access to mental health services.
- *Veteran Support* initiatives help military-connected students navigate challenges that can affect persistence.

Selected Highlights: *Close Equity Gaps*

- *Moonshot for Equity Partnership* implemented data-driven initiatives around proactive advising, hold reforms, and student stop-outs designed to help address equity gaps in higher education.
- *WeThrive Fellowship* provides tailored support to 25 BIPOC and gender expansive women each year.
- *Equity by Design Faculty Training* facilitates culturally responsive teaching practices combined with a data-driven approach to increase equitable outcomes and build community and inclusivity in our classrooms.
- *Culinary Program Diversity* initiatives educate culinary students on religious and dietary restrictions, and the mobility, developmental, or sensory diversity across communities.
- *Scholarships* for New Americans and historically underrepresented students.

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Selected Highlights: *Promoting belonging and inclusion*

- *BRAVE Conversation Series* allows employees to share thoughts, ask questions, and engage in meaningful, topic-based gatherings with a skilled facilitator.
- *Social Justice Book Club*
- *Library Displays highlighting Black History Month*
- *ASL Studies* -- updated curriculum to better represent diverse Deaf communities, including BIPOC and LGBTQIA identities.
- *Philosophy program* -- Incorporated broader perspectives and contemporary social issues into course content.
- *Trade and Technical programs* -- Completed a Harvard Strategic Data Project fellowship focused on understanding belonging among first-semester students, particularly women, nonbinary students, and students of color.
- *English and English for Academic Purposes* -- Faculty organized National Poetry Month events that engaged students and the campus community.

Selected Highlights: *Advancing equity through people, partnerships, and practice*

- *Faculty In-Service Equity by Design Training*
- *STEM Faculty Equity Lunch Discussions*
- *NCORE Conference Participation*
- *Poverty-Informed Practices Professional Development*
- *Updated Affirmative Action Plan*
- *Bias Response Team*
- *Saint Paul People of Color Career Fair*
- *Partnerships supporting Muslim communities*
- *WeThrive*

Selected highlights: *Leveraging external funding to expand impact*

ARTI attracted external funding that increased the College's ability to invest in students and equity-centered programs. These investments expanded financial and basic needs supports, enhanced student success initiatives, and provided sustainable resources to meet evolving student needs.

- *\$150,000 Women's Foundation grant for WeThrive*
- *\$100,000 Hill Library Foundation scholarship endowment*
- *\$15,000 Minnesota Office of Higher Education Food Pantry grant*

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#2 Cultivate a student-centered learning environment promoting and supporting academic excellence and personal development.

Strategic Direction Two advanced a student-centered environment that supported academic excellence, personal growth, and student success through programs, services, hands-on learning, and meaningful engagement. These efforts strengthened academic support, career readiness, student engagement, access to resources, and holistic support, empowering students to achieve their educational, career, and personal goals and thrive.

Selected Highlights: *Academic Success and Learning Support*

- *Adult Learner Grants* -- Partnership with ReUp Education, Minneapolis College, and Metro State University to support Minnesotans returning to college and completing degrees.
- *Light the Fire* -- Helps Liberal Arts and AA students build confidence in their academic and career choices by connecting coursework to career pathways.
- *Peer Tutoring Enhancements* -- Developed D2L training modules for peer tutors. Implemented a data system to improve continuity of tutoring support for students.
- *New study space* -- Converted the library reference room into a quiet study area with 11 study pods to support focused learning.
- *Adult Learner Engagement Event* -- Student Life event connected new and returning adult learners with educational opportunities and college resources.
- *SPC Engineering Broadfield Student Achievement* -- Student selected as one of only 40 community college students nationwide to complete NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars Phase 3.
- *Science & Engineering Showcase* -- Students presented their research in biology, genetics, engineering, nanotechnology, and chemistry in a collaborative and open setting.
- *Spring Student Art Show* -- Annual showcase for original student artwork and creative achievement.
- *Mu Alpha Theta* -- Students were inducted into the national mathematics honor society in recognition of their academic achievement and leadership in mathematics.
- *Multiple Medals* -- Students earned 5 gold medals at the SkillsUSA Minnesota State Competition and 2 silver medals at the SkillsUSA National Leadership & Skills Conference, demonstrating technical expertise, leadership, and professionalism.

Selected Highlights: *Career readiness and workforce development*

- *Connect for Career Success* -- Students received resume reviews, mock interviews, networking guidance, professional headshots, and LinkedIn support.
- *CNC Internship & Job Fair* -- Connected students, graduates, and alumni with employers and training opportunities.

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- *Handshake Career Platform* -- Expanded student access to job postings, internships, and employer connections.
- *Automotive Career Fair* -- Connected automotive students with local employers seeking technicians.
- *Career Counseling Expansion* -- Added an additional counselor to increase appointment availability and career programming capacity.
- *Career Exploration Support* -- Developed an online training module to help student affairs professionals incorporate career guidance into student interactions.
- *Skills USA Signing Day* -- Celebrated student transitions into apprenticeships and career opportunities.
- *Culinary internships* -- Students completed immersive internships in premier Twin Cities restaurants.
- *Cosmetology & Esthetics Showcase* -- Allowed students to demonstrate technical skills while networking with industry professionals.

Selected Highlights: *Student engagement, belonging, and connection*

- *Student Leadership Series* -- Offered sessions focused on emotional intelligence, leadership development, restorative practices, and career growth.
- *Co-Lab Program* -- Partnered with ECMC to provide mentorship, holistic support, and career exploration for young adults.
- *Women in Trades Luncheons restarted* -- Connected students with women instructors, mentors, and role models in skilled trades careers.
- *New Student Organizations* -- Cru and Bridges expanded opportunities for connection, involvement, community building, and personal growth.
- *Music Therapy Events* -- Promoted student well-being, connection, and stress reduction through therapeutic engagement activities.
- *Massage Therapy* -- Established an Alumni Association that provides mentoring, feedback, networking opportunities, and employment connections for current students.

Selected highlights: *Student access, navigation, and student support services*

- *Wayfinding Devices* -- Installed interactive kiosks across campus to help students locate services, classrooms, labs, and offices.
- *New student orientation* -- NSO transitioned to an online asynchronous format, providing greater flexibility for students and freeing staff to focus on other student needs.
- *Fall 2024 Scholarship Program* -- Provided approximately \$145,000 in scholarship awards to more than 130 students.
- *NSF-funded Science Scholars Program* -- Provided scholarships and mentoring, resulting in strong retention, graduation, and transfer outcomes.

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- *The Career and Academic Planning-Science and Health (CAP-SH) program* -- Continued to support students through mentorship, academic planning, and financial assistance, resulting in higher retention rates and increased credit accumulation.

Selected Academic Program Highlights:

- **Culinary Arts** completed a program redesign that introduced collaborative coursework and peer-to-peer learning opportunities, strengthening both technical and leadership skills.
- **Office Management Professional** integrated durable skills and workplace readiness content into the Customer Service course to better prepare students for today's work environments.
- **Practical Nursing** redesigned its curriculum by adding prerequisite courses in medical terminology, medical math, and pharmacology to address known barriers to student success and improve progression through the program.
- **Respiratory Therapy** adopted *OneVision* to provide students with supplemental learning resources and strengthen licensure exam preparation.
- **History** implemented the *Perusall* social annotation platform to increase student engagement and interaction with course materials.
- **Chemistry** transitioned all courses to OER textbooks, reducing educational costs and increasing access to course materials.
- **Computer Network Engineering** aligned program credentials with *Cisco Certified Support Technician* certifications and expanded opportunities for students to earn industry-recognized credentials.
- **Two new certificates**, Data Science and Science Research, were added to provide students with a more affordable route to enter the workforce sooner.
- **Child Development** revised five courses to align with PELSB standards, ensuring students are prepared to meet current professional expectations.
- **Automotive** launched its first Electric Vehicle/Hybrid course and received approval for a new EV certificate, preparing students for emerging workforce needs.
- **CNC Toolmaking** incorporated new hands-on projects and upgraded industry-standard CAM and CAD software to strengthen applied learning and technical skill development, significantly improving both classroom instruction and student project quality. A third full-time instructor joined the program as well, improving faculty coverage and reducing student-to-instructor ratios.
- **Automotive** students participated in workshops and demonstrations focused on electric vehicle technologies.

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- **Summer Camps** introduced more than 100 youth to high-demand career fields including healthcare, cosmetology, culinary arts, and manufacturing.

#3 Strengthen the organizational culture by encouraging collaboration, transparent communication, and optimizing operations.

Strategic Direction Three strengthened organizational culture by fostering collaboration, innovation, employee development, and operational excellence. Through investments in leadership growth, workplace engagement, recognition programs, technology, and process improvements, the College enhanced employee success, organizational effectiveness, and institutional reputation. Together, these efforts empowered employees to lead, collaborate, and contribute to the College's mission while positioning SPC for continued success.

Selected Highlights: *Employee Development, Engagement, and Recognition*

- *Reimagining Leadership Program* – Four cohorts totaling 39 employees graduated from an 8-week leadership development program focused on inclusive leadership, reflection, and professional growth.
- *Personal Development Day* -- Employees selected learning tracks aligned with their roles, including: Basic Needs, Mental Health First Aid, Academic Program Optimization (Gray DI).
- *First SPC Fulbright Scholar* -- Dr. Kristyn VanderWaal Mills became the first SPC faculty member to receive a Fulbright Scholar Award, expanding international research, teaching, and exchange opportunities.
- *Campus Culture Support* – Events such as the annual mini golf competition encouraged connection, engagement, and a sense of community among employees.
- *Outstanding Educator Awards* -- Two faculty members were recognized by the Minnesota State Board of Trustees for excellence in teaching and service.
- *New mascot* -- Skye the Fox made their debut.

Selected Highlights: *Innovation, Technology, and Operational Effectiveness*

- *FAMES Launch* -- Centralized scholarship opportunities and simplified the application process for students. Provides increased access through data imports, streamlined applications, and saved essay functionality.
- *Improved IT Support Systems* -- New IT service portal created a more user-friendly service experience through knowledge-based articles, how-to resources, and a centralized service catalog.
- *Expanded access to data* -- Partnered with Gray Decision Intelligence to develop academic program optimization dashboards supporting data-informed planning and evaluation.

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- *Campus Bridge* -- A mission-driven, bi-monthly newsletter designed to provide context for our work, share initiatives, and highlight collaboration opportunities, increasing transparency and open communication across campus.
- *Renovation of Campus Bookstore* -- Inviting location and more space for SPC merchandise and supplies.
- *Mental Health Services suite* -- Constructed to provide expanded access to counseling appointments in a confidential, calming, and welcoming space.

Selected Highlights: *Institutional reputation and External recognition*

- *Awards received* -- A Silver Paragon Award for the website redesign from the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations and three Medallion Awards for the marketing department at the 2024 District 5 regional conference.
- *First SPC Fullbright Scholar* — Dr. Kristyn VanderWaal Mills examined how Danish and U.S. STEM education programs prepare students for laboratory careers, with the goal of identifying practices, including global collaboration, clearer career pathways, and stronger workforce skill development, that can better connect coursework to real-world employment.
- *Outstanding Educator awards* -- Received by Amy Gonyea (Biology) & Garrett Byrne (CNC Toolmaking) in 2024 and Kimberly Slaker (Business) and Jake Yernberg (Automotive) in 2025 in recognition of their excellence in teaching and student support.
- Science and Engineering Technology faculty and students published research in peer-reviewed journals.

#4 Build, enhance, and sustain relationships with community partners that respond to the changing economic and workforce needs of our community and contribute to a more socially just world.

Strategic Direction Four strengthened partnerships that support workforce needs, economic mobility, and community well-being. Through collaboration with employers, schools, government agencies, nonprofits, foundations, and community leaders, the College expanded opportunities for students while advancing workforce development, civic engagement, philanthropic investment, and regional impact.

Selected Highlights: *Community Leadership and Advocacy*

- *Convening for Advancing Economic Mobility at Community Colleges* – SPC leadership collaborated with national community college leaders to address economic growth and student opportunity.

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- *AASA College Readiness Commission* – President Deidra Peaslee was appointed to the national commission which supports initiatives that strengthen student career and college readiness.
- *Legislative Breakfast* – SPC hosted all System Office legislative breakfasts for FY24 and FY24. During the SPC legislative breakfast, SPC leadership advocated for higher education funding and discussed strategies to support student success and workforce development with community and state leaders.
- *Junior Achievement BizTown* – Executive Cabinet members volunteered at JA BizTown, helping students learn financial literacy, business operations, teamwork, and career readiness through hands-on experiences.

Selected Highlights: *Workforce Development and Strategic Partnerships*

- *Trades and Technical Education Investments* – Secured \$270,000 in external funding, including a \$250,000 grant from the Richard M. Schulze Foundation and a \$20,000 donation from the Gene Haas Foundation, to expand career and technical education opportunities and strengthen the CNC program.
- *Community Partner of the Year Awards* – Recognized outstanding partners making a significant impact on student success, including Kitchen Coalition (2024) and Ling Becker (2025) for leadership in workforce initiatives and the Learn and Earn program.
- *Amazon Career Choice Partnership* -- Expanded educational funding opportunities for eligible students and workers seeking career advancement.
- *Medical Laboratory Technician* -- Collaborated with HealthPartners and Wallin Partners to provide clinical experiences, scholarships, mentoring, and internships.
- *Welding* -- Hosted the statewide *Behind the Mask* competition, bringing together students, employers, and industry leaders.
- *Automotive* -- Partnered with Vehicle Response Training to provide EV safety and technology instruction.
- *Cosmetology and Esthetics* -- Students showcased technical and creative skills to industry professionals through the Spring Through the Decades event.
- *Carpentry* -- Students designed and built a porch for a local homeowner.
- *Pharmacy Technician* -- Students participated in statewide professional development opportunities through the Minnesota Society of Health-System Pharmacists conference.
- *“Innovative Partnering and Collaboration”* award – Received by SPC at the MnState Academic and Student Affairs (ASA) annual conference for their partnership with MinnPoly, where students in the CNC Toolmaking, Truck Technician, and electromechanical programs participated in a variety of hands-on projects to prepare them for future careers.

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Selected Highlights: *Student Support through Community*

- *Friends on the Lawn* – Annual fundraising event that attracted more than 200 attendees each year and raised \$45,000 in 2024 and \$50,000 in 2025 to support scholarships, emergency aid, food pantry services, and other student resources.
- *TNT Golf Tournament* – Continued annual fundraising efforts for the Tom Nielsen/Mo-Tech Endowed Scholarship Fund, supporting students in the CNC Toolmaking program.
- *Chili Bowl* – Community event that raised \$17,000 for Culinary Arts scholarships and emergency aid while strengthening engagement with alumni and community supporters.

A Note About Data and KPIs.....

As the college transitions from *Creating a Stronger Future 2025* to *The Promise Plan 2030*, it is important to recognize that changes in personnel, data collection methods, and reporting practices, combined with the absence of formalized data governance and metric standards, limited the ability to consistently measure some key performance indicators. As a result, this report focuses primarily on the accomplishments and progress achieved under the previous plan while acknowledging ongoing efforts to strengthen data governance, standardize reporting, and clarify metrics to support more accurate, consistent, and transparent measurement of institutional progress moving forward.

Welcome to our Promise Plan 2030

Building on the success of *Creating a Stronger Future 2025* and the early achievement of our Vision 2028 goal, Saint Paul College is launching its next chapter through the *Promise Plan*. Our progress shows what is possible when we unite around student success, equity, and opportunity. In a time of growing uncertainty and change, the *Promise Plan* will guide our work and expand our impact through 2030.

The *Promise Plan* is anchored in the pillars of Purpose, People, and Place. Developed through broad campus engagement and shaped by our partnership with Education Design Lab, the plan reflects a shared vision for the future reflecting the voices of students, employees, and community partners. It challenges us to think boldly about what a community college can be and how we can create even greater opportunities for learners whom college once seemed out of reach or beyond imagination.

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As higher education continues to evolve, the *Promise Plan* positions Saint Paul College to lead with adaptability, innovation, and inclusion. It calls on us to create flexible and responsive pathways that meet modern learners where they are, connect education to meaningful career opportunities, invest in our people, and cultivate spaces where learning, belonging, and achievement thrive. Through this work, we will continue expanding opportunity, transforming lives, and delivering on our promises, and our mission to students, employers, and our broader community.

Under *The Promise Plan*, our mission, vision, and values remain unchanged.

PROMISE #1: PURPOSE

We're exploring ways to redesign education across credit and non-credit pathways to make skills more visible, relevant, and career-connected. This could mean creating or modifying programs that better align with workforce needs and empower students to pursue meaningful careers.

PROMISE #2: PEOPLE

We're building an inclusive culture where innovation thrives, and employees are empowered to enhance the campus experience. This commitment encourages collaboration and supports one another in our work. As a learning organization, we create opportunities for students to embrace experimentation, knowing that failure fuels growth—and that progress often begins with trying something new.

PROMISE #3: PLACE

We're committing to Saint Paul College's role as an anchor institution that advocates for equity and works to eliminate socioeconomic barriers to student success. This commitment involves being a positive force in our community and ensuring that every learner has the opportunity to thrive, whether through our support or by connecting students to community resources. As an anchor institution, we strive to bring invaluable benefits to our community.

We look forward to reporting on the Promise Plan progress in September 2027, providing greater detail on our goals, strategic initiatives, and data-supported decisions and action steps.