



St. Stephen's College

Transforming With Care

The Strategic Plan for St Stephen's College.

Who We Are

Our Mission

To be a multi-faith community that offers sacred spaces for learning and transformation.

Our Purpose

St Stephen's College exists to be an academic institution specializing in the exploration and understanding of the spiritual complexities of human life. We offer for-credit academic and professional degrees, diplomas, and certificate programs, and not-for-credit educational opportunities for the wider community.

Our Vision

St Stephen's College holds a creative vision of transformative theological and professional education. It is a community of people seeking to explore the spiritual complexities of human life and to meaningfully integrate this learning in society and the world.

We are deeply committed to the values rooted in our experience and those that shape our response to changing rural, urban and global perspectives. These values help define our life together and are characterized by:

- High standards and commitment to scholarship and academic excellence, with academic freedom to explore theology and spirituality;
- Academic programs and policies that are grounded in adult learning principles and are learner-centered;
- Accessibility to theological education through a multi-faceted program that creates communities of learners;
- Integration of theory and practice;

We seek to achieve these values through:

- Inclusivity and justice in language and practice for all persons, regardless of race, creed, gender, sexual orientation and sexual identities or physical abilities;
- Commitment to social justice and ecological responsibility;
- Honoring and understanding the need to be in care of one another;

- Resiliency and creativity in the presence of a constantly changing social climate;
- Consultative ethos, including academic planning and decision-making processes characterized by open communication, widespread consultation, and transparency;
- Mutual respect for and honouring of diverse cultures, locally and abroad;
- Openness to risk-taking, innovation and flexibility in offering of programs, in our relationship to the communities around us, and in supporting faith communities as they undertake theological reflection;
- Shaping of our theology by the contexts in which we live and work and have our being, and solidarity with those who suffer;
- Financial stability and accountability.

Definitions:

St Stephen's students articulate their vision and practice of ministry using the languages, symbols, and images of the traditions and worldviews with which they identify. In accordance with this diversity of tradition, St Stephen's College has adopted the following definitions:

Multi-faith

St Stephen's College understands that people of all spiritual traditions and explorations are respected and treated with dignity, and encourages the members of its community to experience the sacred by engaging in enriching dialogue from diverse perspectives.

Ministry

St Stephen's College understands ministry from a broad and inclusive perspective as a lifelong spiritual exploration in which practitioners are self-reflectively aware of the nurturing quality of their activities in the service of the human community and Earth. SSC community consists of practitioners from such fields as education, faith/religious community assignments, chaplaincy, mediation, management, media services, the arts, health care, counselling, multicultural relationships, and care of our planet.

The Goals for Our Strategic Plan

Goal #1 - St Stephen's College aims to provide high quality academic programs that focus on embedding the exploration of human spirituality, enriching conversations from diverse perspectives, and students' individual exploration of their own spiritual journey.

Strategies:

- A. All students applying to programs are required to have a minimum grade point average of 72%/B/3.00 during their last 60 credits of course work from

- their transcripts. This ensures that students within our program already have the academic acumen to manage the rigours of graduate studies.
- B. Students' progress is monitored throughout their programs to ensure that the academic standard is maintained. Should the students' writing ability hinder this standard, students are expected to take additional writing courses.
 - C. We welcome and admit to our courses and degree programs students from a wide range of faith and cultural backgrounds. Through the diverse perspectives of their classmates, transformational learning occurs as students examine their personal spiritual journey through this diverse framework.
 - D. Courses, and the instructors who teach them, are consistently evaluated by students and Department Chairs, to ensure that academic standards are maintained and that the courses continue to engage learners in a way that is both dynamic and respectful of all faith traditions.
 - E. Department Chairs and Program Committees ensure that diverse courses are offered to support the professional and theological explorations of students.

Goal #2 - St Stephen's College aims to provide learning experiences for students that incorporate our **values** of flexibility, accessibility and autonomy.

Strategies:

- A. Academic freedom to explore various theological and spiritual traditions.
- B. Integration of theory, faith and personal growth in the practice of ministry as defined above.
- C. Exploration of the frontiers of theological/spiritual thought and action.
- D. Transformation of church and society through personal transformation.
- E. Open learning opportunities such as: part-time students, no upper age limit, accepting students from across Canada and around the world.
- F. Learner-driven models, shown in the design and delivery of programs in features such as: learning covenants, program chairs and associate faculty in coaching roles.
- G. Adult learning methodology, e.g. a community of learners approach.
- H. A variety of program delivery options, such as: in-class, online, intensive courses, on-going credit courses and programs, short-term continuing education opportunities.
- I. Effective use of time, money and people.

Goal #3 - St Stephen's College is a learning community where scholars (instructors and students) can arrive at new insights and knowledge.

Strategies:

- A. Ongoing critical assessment, by means of student, faculty and staff evaluations of present programs in the areas of sustainability, relevance, current professional developments, and emerging areas of interest
- B. Develop equivalency guidelines for the admission and accompaniment of students from cultures with a different academic tradition than Euro-Western society.
- C. Ongoing exploration of possibilities offered by Partnerships with the Centre for Christian Studies (CCS) and Providence Renewal Centre (PRC).
- D. Develop innovative programs using creative energy generated by new partnerships, focusing on diverse cultural and spiritual traditions.
- E. Regular consultation with Faculty and Associate Faculty to keep everyone current, to invite and enable new initiatives, and to attract new resource people where needed.
- F. Address community interests and professional development needs by offering Continuing Education opportunities. Explore credits for teachers and therapists, and Con- Ed certificates for clergy.
- G. Address the existing and emerging needs of Lay Worship Leaders through various denominational church channels.
- H. Expand the use of digital media in both classroom and online courses, including training of faculty and staff. Offer courses in the application of IT for student work as well as use in the workplace, (including church leadership, storytelling, media presentations)
- I. Continue to integrate recommendations from the TRC in our courses and offer help and information to all course instructors in order to achieve this goal.

Goal #4 - St Stephen's College strives to be a respected and positive influence in the religious and secular community.

Recognizing our mission and values, we acknowledge the complexities found within community including secular and religious realities. Held in tension is the sense of 'community' (including local, national, global) where our audience is found. We offer sacred space and become a container for mentorship and partnership in leadership development.

Strategies:

- A. Seek allies by ensuring a relationship with each of the current practicum sties through staff-staff, faculty-executive directors/supervisors, and board-board with the goal of building sustaining relationships.
- B. Initiate or sustain relationships with the judicatory levels of local and/or national religious bodies including but not exclusive to; The United Church of Canada, The Anglican Church of Canada, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese, and Jewish faith communities.
- C. Develop an alumni association in an effort to sustain and enhance the relationship built with students after they graduate.

Goal #5 - St Stephen's College aims to ensure fiscal stability and long term advancement initiatives that sill sustain the institution and its commitment to remain flexible and relevant in an ever changing society.

Strategies:

- A. Short term: 1 to 3 years
 - Grow the donor base and key donor information starting with alumni, open studies students, and recent contributors.
 - Develop programming that is consistent with the mission of the college that is timely and responsive to community needs with a primary focus on the University of Alberta CH RTP courses and programs within the Department of Psychotherapy and Spirituality.
 - Find corporate sponsorship for courses, programs or events.
 - Develop a sound promotional plan that engages with current known supporters, donor prospects, and the broader educational and business communities.
 - Continue to engage in a robust donor retention and relationship building plan that increases both the donation amounts and the number of individuals and businesses donating and investing in the college.
 - Seek grants for continuing capital expenditures.
 - Continue to raise the visibility of the College on the University of Alberta campus.
 - Engage in discussion with the University of Alberta on cost cutting measures.
 - Ensure that tuition and related fees are comparable to those charged by other Canadian members of the Association of Theological Schools and local institutions.
 - Ensure that the institution attracts leaders in administration and within the Board that have a sufficient business and development acumen.

B. Medium term: 4 to 7 years

- Develop a vigorous evaluation tool for programs to ensure relevance, responsiveness and financial viability with a minimum 15% surplus of income over expenses.
- Work on an arms-length society, with a view to accessing provincial gaming revenue.
- Partnering with other institutions to a) cut administrative costs; b) develop complementary programming, c) enhance visibility with a view of ensuring that the programming returns net income.
- Create an intentional Board development plan to ensure that the Board is comprised of members from the community who, not only believe in the mission of the college, but also bring professional expertise and a commitment to provide both a personal financial investment and bring outside financial investments to the college.

C. Long term: beyond 8 years

- Create an advancement program focused on rebuilding endowment funds.

Goal #6 - St Stephen's College seeks to obtain and maintain memberships in accrediting bodies at various levels.

St Stephen's College programs have a solid educational and theoretical foundation and its graduates have competencies leading the way in innovative spiritual foundation and theory in Theology and Professional Practice in Mental Health. Accreditation is proof to professionals and the public that the College's programs have met standards essential to produce graduates ready to enter the critical fields of those accrediting associations.

Strategies:

- A. Retain Associate Member status with the Association of Theological Schools with the intent to work towards gaining Accredited Member status for the DMin, MTS and MPS programs. In part, this would require the college to prove fiscal solvency, the financial means to gain the required FTE, and Board of Governors development.
- B. Obtain institutional accreditation with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association. Currently the MPS, MPS-AT, and Post-Master's Art Therapy Certificate programs are recognized by the association since St Stephen's College has all the required academic, personal, and practicum work that enables students graduating to apply for accreditation independently, which is a lengthy process. Investing the time and finances to obtain institutional accreditation may streamline the process for our students, as well as, increase our profile.

- C. The college is currently accredited with the Canadian Art Therapy Association. Faculty to continue to annually review standards and ensure that the MPS-AT and the Post-Master's Art Therapy Certificate programs are compliant in order to maintain accreditation in good standing.
- D. The college is currently accredited with the Canadian College of Professional Counsellors and Psychotherapists. Faculty will continue to annually review standards and ensure that the MPS, MPS-AT, and Post-Master's Art Therapy Certificate programs are compliant in order to maintain accreditation in good standing.
- E. The institution is currently accredited with the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care. Faculty will continue to annually review standards and ensure that programs and courses involving spiritual care, such as the MTS and DMin-SE programs, are compliant in order to maintain accreditation in good standing.
- F. The DMin specializing in Supervisory Education degree offers students accreditation as a CASC specialist
- G. As programs such as Spiritual Direction become available, the college will maintain every effort to ensure that the programming made available will provide graduates the opportunity to obtain accreditation as individuals, with a review of the benefits to student and college for applying for institutional accreditation.
- H. Inquiry into and analysis of the benefits to student and the institution of obtaining accreditation with American associations in the areas of Psychotherapy, Art Therapy, Spiritual Direction, and Spiritual Care.