

Provost's Report to the Faculty
May 1, 2024

*In schomer, when the leves spryng,
The bloschoms on every bowe,
So merey doyt the berdys syng
Yn wodys merey now.*

The lush green of trees, boughs burdened with flowers, and the song of birds resonated with medieval listeners of the ballad of "Robin Hood and the Potter." The sheer joy of summer's promise is ours, too. Crabapple trees and redbuds are beginning to bloom and the air will soon smell sweet from their blossoms. As I write this report, a cardinal is exploring my back yard, its red feathers bright against the spring green of the lawn. In the hustle and bustle of the final weeks of the semester, I encourage you to find some moments to witness nature's grand annual transformation and to feel yourselves part of it.

Friday, May 3, is Honors Day. Honors Day and Commencement are two of the three days that the *Faculty Handbook* calls for faculty participation in procession. This Honors Day, the college will bestow an honorary degree on Philip Geier, co-founder of the [Davis United World College Scholars](#) foundation, which provides students from around the world with funding and support to attend college, including at St. Olaf.

Admissions

At the time that I write this report, the May 1 deposits are flowing in! It's too early to say what is the likely size of the incoming class: we can't predict how every admit will decide, let alone how many of those who accept our offer will arrive here for classes next fall. Delays in other institutions' offers caused by problems with FASFA add extra uncertainty this year, as some students will want to wait to see all offers before deciding on where they want to study. Despite all of these caveats, what we are seeing at this moment is very good news: many students want to be Oles!

Registration for Fall

Registration for Fall 2024 went very smoothly. 98.6% of the class of 2027, 99.4% of the class of 2026 and 98.8% of the class of 2025 are enrolled full-time (with an average of 3.97, 3.96 and 3.91 credits, respectively). We still have students with holds, and the Registrar's Office and the Academic Support Center have been in touch with these students and anyone who have fewer than 3 credits. Do keep in mind that the weeks following registration are always times when some students need to adjust their course schedules. If you haven't already addressed all override requests for your Fall courses, please do so as quickly as possible.

In June, Academic Advising will be reaching out to incoming new students with programming about the curriculum and registration. Ten specially-appointed faculty summer registration advisors and trained advising staff in the Academic Success Center are available to work with incoming first-year students.

Advising

As we look forward to next year, we are getting close to meeting the goal of matching entering first-year students with a professor who teaches one of their fall courses. The ASC has reached out to department chairs with guidance to help ensure that there is a good balance of major and pre-major advising. We still encounter some difficulty in matching sufficient numbers of

advisees with faculty members in departments that have relatively few majors. We are working to make sure that the distribution of the advising load is fair. I encourage you to reach out to Shelly Dickinson to discuss how you can contribute.

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Most of the students who will be graduating this May had no high school graduation. They began at St. Olaf in the fall of 2020, spending the first few weeks largely confined to the residence halls. Some of the musical ensembles rehearsed outside until the weather drove them indoors. As that year unfolded, about half of students' courses were offered remotely and everyone studied from home over the J-term. Students wore masks; when their classes were in-person, they sat six feet apart. We've come a long way since then, but those early days are very much a part of their story. I am so grateful that the class of 2024 stuck with it all and so proud of them for reaching this point in their education. I am hopeful that this commencement can help students fully claim their college years. For all that you do each year, and especially for what so many of you did in support of students and colleagues during those dark days: thank you.

As we anticipate the conclusion of the academic year, I hope that you can enjoy the world in the ways that "fill your cup." Best wishes on achieving the goals you have for the summer!

Coming Up – Be sure to consult "This Week" for the full roster of events at the college.

May 2 & 6	Institute for Freedom and Community " Food Policy and Food Politics "
May 2	Teaching & Learning Showcase (3:00 - 5:00 pm)
May 3	Honors Day
May 15	Reading Day
May 16-21	Senior grades due 24 hours after the exam period
May 21	Mental Health First Aid, full-day training (Laura Turek can help you register)
May 23	" Question, Persuade, Refer ," 12:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m. (student mental health)
May 25	Commencement!
May 31	Non-senior grades due
June 3	Summer Session I begins
	Department & Program annual reports due
June 15	Individual Faculty annual reports due
July 9-12	"Happy Hour" positive psychology training (contact Laura Turek)
July 15	Summer Session II begins
June 19	Juneteenth observed
July 4	July 4 observed
Aug. 28	Academic Leadership
Aug. 29	Opening Day and Opening Faculty Meeting
Sept. 5	Fall Semester Classes begin
	Opening Convocation – Speaker Bill Sonnega (Theater)

Handy Links

[Academic calendars](#)
[2024/25 Interfaith Calendar](#)
[Excerpted minutes of the Deans Council](#)