

THE SUCCESSES OF THE LAST 17 YEARS

Highlights

FROM PRESIDENT DAVID R. ANDERSON'S PRESIDENCY

Regents Hall of Natural
and Mathematical
Sciences



Physical Enhancement of Campus

Under President Anderson's leadership, the physical infrastructure on campus has been dramatically transformed to serve a new generation of students. Investments have included:

► **Regents Hall of Natural and Mathematical Sciences:**

Since opening in the fall of 2008, the nearly 200,000-square-foot science complex has become an invaluable teaching tool for the nearly 40 percent of St. Olaf students who pursue a major or concentration in the natural sciences or mathematics.

► **Tomson Hall:** With the opening of Regents Hall, an extensive renovation in 2011 transformed the old 1960s-era Science Center into a modern facility that encourages connections between academic and administrative functions and promotes cross-disciplinary interactions.

► **Holland Hall:** A \$13 million renovation in 2017 made the interior of Holland Hall as beautiful as its exterior, which is modeled on the Mont Saint-Michel abbey in France. The building now combines classic architecture and adaptable classrooms filled with modern teaching technologies.

► **Ice Arena:** The \$8 million modern indoor ice arena, which opened in 2019, is connected to the Skoglund/Tostrud athletic complex. It features an NHL-size rink, 804 individual stadium chairs, seven men's and women's locker rooms, state-of-the-art video broadcasting capabilities, and media boxes.

► **Investments in Athletic Facilities:** Other investments in athletic facilities include the addition of synthetic turf on both the football and soccer fields, a golf program facility inside Skoglund Center, and an updated training and performance center inside Tom Porter Hall.

► **Steensland Hall:** After a substantial \$1.5 million renovation, the long-vacant Steensland Hall reopened in the fall of 2021 as a new space for the Hong Kierkegaard Library, home to the largest collection of works by and about the 19th-century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard outside of Denmark.

► **Ole Avenue Project:** In 2022 St. Olaf celebrated the completion of the Ole Avenue Project, a \$60 million investment in campus housing that features a new residence hall and townhouses along St. Olaf Avenue, as well as a new residence for the St. Olaf president located south of Regents Hall. The project has not only created a beautiful new gateway to St. Olaf on the eastern edge of campus, but it has also enabled the college to address a three-decades-long housing shortage and begin renovations to existing residence halls.



Tomson Hall



Holland Hall



Anderson in the St. Olaf Ice Arena



Steensland Hall



The Ole Avenue Project

Creation of Centers of Excellence | To provide weight, gravity, and permanence to key elements of the St. Olaf experience, President Anderson led efforts to establish centers of excellence on campus.

► The Piper Center for Vocation and Career:

Established in 2012, the Piper Center helps students explore careers, gain experience outside of the classroom, and pursue meaningful post-graduate work, service, and education.

► The Institute for Freedom and Community:

Established in 2014, the mission of the institute is to encourage free inquiry and meaningful debate, explore diverse perspectives, and foster constructive dialogue. The institute hosts public programs and supports academic offerings including the Public Affairs Conversation (PACON), a two-course public affairs series with an option for a funded internship.

► The Glenn and Myretta Taylor Center for Equity and Inclusion:

Established in 2018, the Taylor Center aims to foster an inclusive environment across the

intersections of race and identity that students bring to St. Olaf. Services include dedicated programs for students of color, international students, and LGBTQIA+ students, as well as campus-wide speakers and public events.

► The Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community:

Established in 2018, the Lutheran Center encourages the interreligious exploration of faith, values, and vocation in ways that enrich relationships within and beyond the St. Olaf community.

► The Smith Center for Global Engagement:

Launched in the fall of 2022, the Smith Center supports students in developing global and intercultural skills through study abroad and study away programs in the U.S. and around the world, as well as through Academic Civic Engagement (ACE) courses in local communities.



The Piper Center's 2017 New York Connections Program featured Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Gretchen Morgenson '76.

Successful Comprehensive Campaign

Over the course of the seven-year *For the Hill and Beyond* campaign, 25,485 donors gave an incredible \$252,242,402 to create transformative impact for current and future Oles. This was far beyond the \$200 million goal, and was the largest amount raised during a single campaign in St. Olaf's history. The campaign, which concluded in 2020, increased financial aid and access, added more high-impact learning opportunities like faculty-mentored research and the Conversation Programs, and supported academic innovation.

Growth of the Endowment

When Anderson took office in 2006, the college's endowment was valued at \$260 million. At the end of January 2023, the endowment was valued at \$702 million, a growth of more than 200 percent. During that time, more than \$200 million has come from new gifts, estate distributions, and matured planned gifts. More than \$100 million has come from year-end allocations and reinvestments. Investment returns have totaled more than \$400 million. In 2007 endowment support for college operations was \$6.5 million, or just over 6 percent of the operating budget. In 2022 endowment support for college operations was \$26.4 million, representing over 20 percent of the college's operating budget.

Focus on Outcomes

At the height of the economic recession in 2008, Anderson and campus leaders recognized that students and families increasingly wanted to see a connection between their four years of study at St. Olaf and their lives after graduation. So they launched the Outcomes Initiative, which aims to clearly outline the return on investing in a St. Olaf education by measuring student success and making that information readily available online. The work earned national attention, with Anderson sharing the college's approach at conferences and speaking to media outlets like *The Wall Street*

“This is our college, and our mutual investment in the institution and in one another as Oles empowers us to do great things for our college. St. Olaf is bigger than all of us.”

DAVID R. ANDERSON '74 in his inauguration address on October 6, 2006

Journal and *U.S. News*. The initiative continues today with significant support from the Piper Center — and it shows that 98 percent of 2022 graduates are employed, in graduate school, or engaged in full-time service work.

Diverse Campus Community

Recognizing the importance of becoming a more diverse college, Anderson set goals for recruiting and retaining students, faculty, and staff of color. In 2012, 81 percent of St. Olaf students were white, 14 percent were students of color, and 5 percent were international students. In 2022, 67 percent of students were white, 22 percent were students of color, and international students made up 11 percent of the student body.

Support for Student and Faculty Success

In the last year, Anderson led the launch of an initiative that will invest more than \$2 million on programs focused on student success. To support this initiative, Anderson announced that St. Olaf will reduce the annual teaching load for most faculty from six to five courses, providing them with greater capacity for advising and mentoring students. This change will be supported through the newly established David R. Anderson '74 Fund for Teaching Excellence, a \$12 million endowment funded with donations in Anderson's honor.

Reflections

FROM COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS



“David has spoken in chapel 34 times during his presidency. On one occasion, Pastor Katie and I offered a two-part series on Jonah. One of us spoke from the perspective of Jonah and the other from the perspective of God. David asked if he could add to the series and speak from the perspective of the fish. It was great! It was funny, engaging, and deeply theological. He is also committed to attending chapel whenever he is on campus. Most days he is sitting on the right-hand side, around five pews from the front. Like most people, he has a ‘spot.’ It is fun for me to see him come in and sit with students. They say good morning, they small-talk, and they worship together. He has connected with many students this way and they have connected with him. Bobby Isbell '21 was a regular chapel attendee. I will never forget the day that he came to chapel so excited to tell David that he was accepted into Harvard University Law School. David shared in this excitement. The two knew each other from sitting together and now they were able to share in this important moment. Members of worshiping communities know that it’s the day-to-day interactions that often leave the deepest impact, and David is engaged in the day-to-day chapel life.” **MATT MAROHL** | *St. Olaf College Pastor*

“In David’s inaugural address as president, he said that St. Olaf would reflect the increasingly heterogeneous America of the 21st century. Indeed, through the teamwork of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and our Board of Regents, the St. Olaf College of 2023 is a much more diverse community in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and identity, socioeconomic status, and religious perspectives. It has been David’s steady leadership of this vision that has resulted in its realization.”

ANTON ARMSTRONG '78 | *Tosdal Professor of Music, Conductor of the St. Olaf Choir*

“One advantage of having a president who started his career as a faculty member is his awareness of the pressures and the joys of teaching, and how these unfold over the academic year. David has a full appreciation of the role that the faculty have in crafting and delivering the core college experience: a high-quality education.”

MARCI SORTOR | *Provost and Dean of the College*

“St. Olaf has thrived as it has evolved from a small regional college to embrace a national and global reputation. Outstanding leadership and vision have been present at St. Olaf over the decades. It is especially evident over the past 17 years under David Anderson’s presidency. The next administration will inherit a fine, well cared for physical campus, a strong financial position, a substantial endowment, and most importantly a student body of 3,000 proud Oles.”

O. JAY TOMSON '58 | Board of Regents Chair 2006–10

“I’ve so appreciated David’s integrity and moral compass. Anyone in a leadership position is faced with difficult situations and having to make decisions that we know are not going to be popular. He’s had to make some of those. He always keeps sight of what’s the ‘right’ thing to do, not what the ‘easy’ thing might be to do. He’s also been known to comment ‘Is this something that I could explain to my mother?’”

JAN HANSON | Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

“You learn a lot about leaders in a crisis. True character gets revealed. I was a year into my role as chair of the St. Olaf Board of Regents when the pandemic hit. There are two types of leaders: those who run to a fire, and those who run away from a fire. David runs to a fire. He quickly focused on how the college needed to respond to the pandemic and got his team aligned on it. He had to make decisions fast, but he also had to make sure everyone felt included and involved in the decision making. One of the reasons why St. Olaf fared so much better than so many other colleges was that leadership. I have so much admiration for him and how he leaned into things.”

JAY LUND '81 | Board of Regents Chair 2018–Present

St. Olaf College
Commencement,
May 2021





Director of Student Activities Brandon Cash '16 takes a photo of Anderson and former Student Government Association President Andy Nelson '23 as they cheer on the St. Olaf football team.

“In my time here, David has been a wonderful advocate for Ole Athletics. We’ve been able to do a number of facilities projects, highlighted by the on-campus ice arena, that David fully supported and that truly made a difference in the lives of our students. He believes very strongly that our student athletes should have a great experience and that we should support that as best we can.”

RYAN BOWLES | *St. Olaf Athletic Director*

“As a member of the search committee that chose David, I recall there were several outstanding candidates — but none matched David’s affinity for St. Olaf. Most of the candidates were driven to be a college president. David’s ambition was more focused — namely, to be St. Olaf’s president.”

JOHN BENSON P'93, P'96

“When David was hired in 2006, we were at a standstill on some enrollment issues and fundraising. David knew admissions and financial aid — its opportunities, challenges, and implications — from his years as provost at Denison University. And we knew Denison in particular because of our mutual membership in the Colleges That Change Lives consortium. David was keen to learn how we ‘did’ our admissions and aid program and was also eager to see St. Olaf separate from some of our more local competition. He wanted to see St. Olaf compete more effectively and aspirationally for students, and he led the conversation on adjusting our admissions process to accomplish that. The result is we now recruit and enroll a more national, international, and diverse student body. We are stronger because of his leadership on this work.”

MICHAEL KYLE '85 | *Vice President for Enrollment and College Relations*

“When I think about what I have appreciated most about David’s leadership, three things come to mind. The first is his ability to drive change while staying committed to St. Olaf’s values. The second is his capacity to learn. I’ve worked on a number of different boards with a number of different leaders, and David, in my mind, was special because of his willingness to keep learning. And the third is his tenacity. Even when we ran into headwinds, he would persist and find a way to get things done. David cares tremendously about St. Olaf, and it’s hard to overstate how important that is.”

B. KRISTINE OLSON JOHNSON '73
Board of Regents Chair 2013-16

“One of the most impactful accomplishments for us was David’s working relationship with Carleton President Steve Poskanzer. David and Steve developed an extraordinary working relationship and friendship over many years that resulted in multiple benefits for each college. Through their efforts, efficiencies and cross-collaboration were realized in several key areas including ‘back-office’ systems, libraries, security, food service, and more.”

SANDY AND SALLY OLSON BRACKEN '71

“At the end of my son’s sophomore year at St. Olaf, he got into the Chapel Choir. Our family immediately made reservations to go to Christmas Fest. Our youngest daughter was not at all interested, but she walked out transformed, wanting to sing in a choir, and wanting to go to St. Olaf. I had gotten involved with the St. Olaf Alumni and Parent Relations Office, which at the time was located across the hall from the Office of the President. I kept thinking I wanted to pop in and tell President Anderson just how wonderful Christmas Fest was. But I didn’t presume. Later, I emailed him to tell him, and I mentioned that one just didn’t presume to drop in on the president of a college. He emailed back and encouraged me to ‘presume.’ So the next trip, I presumed, emailed, and asked if he had time for a cup of tea with a parent. We’ve met for tea many times since over the last 15 years. What I have learned is that presidents of colleges are just folks like me. I appreciate that much of the job of a president is to raise money for the college, and I appreciate even more that David took time to chat with an ordinary parent who does not have a ton of money to donate.”

ROBIN WOOLUMS P'10, P'13, P'17

“David is an exceptionally mature leader who exhibits a calm and confidence-inspiring demeanor. He is aware of his strengths and weaknesses. He is a wonderful and inspirational communicator. He approaches problems objectively, seeks input, makes decisions, and moves on. He accepts responsibility and holds himself to high standards. Over his tenure, he became very good at listening to others and accepting feedback. Above all, he always has the best interests of the college uppermost in mind.”

LARRY STRANGHOENER '76 | St. Olaf Board of Regents Chair 2016-18



Anderson serves a meal in Stav Hall with Carleton President Steve Poskanzer in 2010.



Anderson with Ole the Lion at the annual Major Declaration Celebration, a festive gathering for St. Olaf sophomores.



Anderson tries his hand at juggling with St. Olaf students in 2012.

Anderson is married to Priscilla Paton, a writer and scholar whose most recent work is a series of mystery novels set in the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul area. They had a little free library modeled after Steensland Hall installed outside the President’s House — a fitting move by two literary scholars.

