

saint francis

A Magazine for Alumni and Friends of the University of Saint Francis



LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT



“Shout joyfully to
God, all the earth;
sing of his glorious
name; give him
glorious praise.”

Psalm 66:1-2 (NABRE)

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Nothing quite matches the fall semester at Saint Francis, as classes and extracurricular activities hit their stride and the campus begins to turn into a cornucopia of autumn colors. We are reaching that season when we wear our favorite Cougar sweatshirts and enjoy campfires, cocoa and collegiate camaraderie. We are all blessed to be here.

I hope you’ve heard that Saint Francis has a new mission statement, which was unveiled in August. The Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, our university sponsor, worked in collaboration with me and the Board of Trustees to create, share and embrace the new mission statement:

“The University of Saint Francis offers formation of the whole person by providing an encounter with the heart and mind of Jesus Christ so that God, who is Love, may be loved. Through our Catholic identity, Franciscan charism, and liberal arts tradition, we prepare students for personal and professional lives of virtue, service, and joy.”

We had not updated our mission statement since many current students were no more than infants and toddlers. We live in different times today, and it is vitally important to boldly share our mission. Saint Francis has always been rooted in its Catholic faith and Franciscan charism. This mission statement brings those to the forefront. The most important aspect is that this is a mission for everybody; it is about the good news and good things we want to do for every student and our larger community.

I love the idea of all of us operating with “virtue, service, and joy.” If we, as Christians, are not demonstrating the joy we find through Jesus Christ, we are doing things the wrong way.

Please enjoy this issue of Saint Francis magazine. In it, you’ll find remarkable examples of alumni living personal and professional lives that demonstrate our mission statement.

You will see these qualities in Joni Schmalzried in the supportive work of AWS Foundation, Megan Kelley in healthcare, Vanessa Jones in counseling, Jared Clodfelter in education and “Big Sherm” Flucas II in youth work. We also celebrate our historic Saint Francis ’24 baseball season, with hopes for even more wins next spring. And don’t miss the story of a young couple—Austin and Greta Smogor—who met on campus as student-athletes and found joy in marriage, family and careers.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Saint Francis and our mission. I hope to see you on campus this fall. There is no better place to be!

God bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lance Richey". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a horizontal line.

Dr. Lance Richey

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RESPECT CREATION

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Always persevering. After navigating some ups and downs in life, Sherman Flucas II (BS '20) is able to use his experience and wisdom to help others. He's making an impact on Indianapolis young people.

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Healthy connections. Long known for producing excellent healthcare professionals, Saint Francis strengthened that reputation by cultivating relationships in the community.

On the cover. Joni (Smart) Schmalzried (BS '84) reflects on how Saint Francis shaped her 40 years ago. Countless people with disabilities benefit from her dedication.

INAUGURAL ADDRESSES



Offering a succinct, inspiring reflection on his personal journey, Dr. Lance Richey warmly addressed an audience of family, friends and colleagues during his inauguration as the 11th president of the University of Saint Francis in a ceremony on June 7 at the North Campus Auditorium.

Dr. Richey, who first served at Saint Francis as a Theology professor 13 years ago, became interim president in May 2023 and was appointed president in March by the sponsoring Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration.

"I am beginning what I hope will be a wonderful and grace-filled adventure for us all as the University of Saint Francis asks itself once again what we are called to do as a Catholic, Franciscan university in a world that needs both those attributes more than ever," Dr. Richey said as part of his address to the faculty, staff, community members and other supporters in attendance.

Dr. Richey reflected on the many "seemingly improbable, but in retrospect, surely providential encounters and events that led me here," from being born in St. Francis Hospital in Greenville, South Carolina, to exploring and eventually embracing the Catholic faith through caring and helpful Franciscan Friars, to working with Franciscan Sisters at Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee.

"Two of those Sisters—Sister Coletta Dunn and Sister Margaret Klotz—became special mentors to me, showing me what it means to work tirelessly for students and what it means to study and then try to live out the life of St. Francis," he said. "Both of them challenged me, personally and intellectually, to look to St. Francis and through St. Francis—to him as a model of discipleship and humility, and through him to the Risen Lord whom he served and loved above all else."

After serving for nearly a year as interim president, Dr. Lance Richey officially became the University of Saint Francis' 11th president during a June inauguration.



“I have great respect for the University of Saint Francis and the impact being made to prepare citizens and students for meaningful careers. As mayor of the City of Fort Wayne, I pledge to work with Dr. Richey and find opportunities to collaborate and move the community forward.”

Sharon Tucker, Fort Wayne Mayor



Dr. Richey added, “At a time when the cynicism of academia and the burden of church scandals could have extinguished the flame of faith, these two Sisters rekindled it in me and made me a lover of the Franciscan tradition as a most beautiful way of living it out.”

Dr. Richey expressed how at home he felt from the first time he visited Saint Francis, including the vivid memory of first seeing the Stations of the Cross embedded in the Pope John Paul II Center in the middle of campus.

“When I got to the University of Saint Francis, I saw wonderful things: the Sisters as a visible presence of the faith on campus, keeping alive the evangelical work and Eucharistic spirituality of their foundress, Blessed Maria Theresia Bonzel; a talented and welcoming faculty and staff who were excited about working at, and dedicated to, the mission of the university; and a wonderful group of students who needed

what the university had to offer, not only intellectually, but spiritually,” Dr. Richey said.

Saint Francis Board of Trustees Chair Richard Poinatte conducted the installation ceremony, the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration provided a musical interlude and the Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-Sound Bend, gave the benediction.

Greetings of congratulations and encouragement were also shared by Poinatte, Bishop Rhoades, Provincial Superior Sr. Margaret Mary Mitchel of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, Fort Wayne Mayor Sharon Tucker, Independent Colleges of Indiana Vice President and COO Laura Bridges, Saint Francis Faculty Senate Chair Dr. Cliff Buttram, Saint Francis Director of Alumni Relations Tony Didier and Saint Francis Student Government Association President Quin’Shawn “Shawny” Gordon.

JONI (SMART) SCHMALZRIED (BS '84) WORKS HARD TO MAKE AN IMPACT AND IMPROVE THE LIVES OF PEOPLE—YOUNG AND OLD—LIVING WITH DISABILITIES. SHE CARRIES SAINT FRANCIS' INFLUENCE WITH HER EVERYWHERE

HEART IS

IMPORTANT



Forty years since her four years at Saint Francis, Joni (Smart) Schmalzried (BS '84) still feels the impact of the university's Catholic, Franciscan values resonating in her life. The people she encourages and inspires undoubtedly feel them, too.

"Without my education and the influence of people when I was at Saint Francis, I probably wouldn't be here doing this," Schmalzried said. "What they taught me—respecting and valuing all people and all you can do through that—has continued to impact my life for the last 40 years."

Schmalzried today serves as chief program officer for AWS Foundation, overseeing grant-making activities to advance the foundation's mission. It's a natural spot for her in a career spent working with and for people with disabilities. Schmalzried's impact as a teacher, administrator and advocate for people who are often underserved has been felt throughout Indiana.

"As a senior at Huntington North High School, I was a park director. A person from Village Training Center, which is now Pathfinders Services, called up and said, 'Can we bring a few adults with disabilities to your park for activities and sports?' I said, 'Sure,' and that was life-altering for me. Partway through the summer, I thought, 'This is what I want to do.'"

Schmalzried put aside her dreams of being a journalist and set out to find the best special education program in Indiana. Her research led her to Saint Francis.

"People gave me a lot of grief, saying I was too tenderhearted, too emotional for a career working with people with disabilities," Schmalzried said. "What Saint Francis taught me was this: Heart is important, moral integrity is important, belief and respect for all individuals is important. I was raised in the Catholic Church, so I fit religiously and philosophically. I credit my education at Saint Francis with who I am."

Upon graduation, Schmalzried taught elementary children at Sarah Litch Learning Development Center (Litch served as special education program director at Saint Francis), then at Sacred Heart Elementary before moving on to Huntington North. Eventually, she worked in Huntington County Community Schools administration.

Schmalzried returned to the classroom to teach high school students with various disabilities at Whitko High School—while also working as an adjunct at Saint Francis. Eventually, she spent "four great years" as a full-time professor at Saint Francis. Returning to her roots to teach the next generation of teachers was another life-changing experience. Always open to

new opportunities to impact people with disabilities, Schmalzried became Director of Special Education for the Wabash-Miami Area Program for Exceptional Children for eight years. She then worked as an assistant professor of education at Huntington University. She started the university's ABLE (Achieving Balance in Life through Education) Program, a college experience for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, in 2014 before becoming research associate/project coordinator with the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community. Along the way, Schmalzried earned a master's degree and doctorate through Ball State University.

WHEW. SCHMALZRIED'S ENERGY LEVEL AND DRIVE ARE HARD TO MATCH.

Having worked to obtain a grant funding the ABLE program from AWS Foundation while she was at Huntington, Schmalzried was intrigued when the chief program officer position opened.

"I interviewed with Patti (Hays, AWS Foundation CEO) and I was just so impressed with the foundation and the depth of what they do," Schmalzried said. "I think this was God-divined, giving me an opportunity to look at the big picture of disability, but bring my background in education.

"Coming here has broadened my understanding of community, of disability, of resources, of education, of employment. We look at all aspects of how being a person with a disability impacts your life from birth to death. This is a place where I can make an impact."

Schmalzried and her husband, Lee, will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary next year. They have a son Nate, two granddaughters and a grandson. She values all the experiences of her career, and still delights in encountering former students who are now thriving with careers and families of their own. Saint Francis holds a special place in her heart, and she recently reconnected with two college best friends. "It seemed like no time had passed," she said.

AND, OF COURSE, HER WORK KEEPS HER ENERGY HIGH.

AWS Foundation, an independent, nonprofit entity supporting the disability community, has awarded grants totaling more than \$48 million to more than 190 nonprofit organizations, including Saint Francis' Jesters program. Schmalzried worked with the Jesters as a student during the program's developmental years.

"Working with the foundation is phenomenal," Schmalzried said. "I leave every day feeling like we've made a difference."

A photograph of Sherman Flucas II, a Black man with a goatee, smiling and wearing a dark blue suit, light blue shirt, and patterned tie. He is standing in front of a mural that features a figure of Lady Justice holding scales and a sword, and a circular emblem with the text 'STATE OF INDIANA'.

THRIVING ON GOD'S grace

After going through some difficult times, Sherman Flucas II (BS '20) uses his experience and wisdom to help young people see the light. He implores Indianapolis youth to follow his lead and forge ahead.

Sherman Flucas II (BS '20) will testify to the value of hard work, tenacity, faith and perseverance. He'll confirm that life throws hard punches sometimes. And he'll step forward as a witness to the importance of never giving up.

"At one point, I was working at Gold's Gym and selling cologne on street corners to survive," Flucas said.

Flucas, known by his friends as "Big Sherm," played football at the University of Saint Francis from 2001 to 2004, recruited by assistant coach Dave Ivy to come to Fort Wayne from

Indianapolis. He enjoyed his time with the Cougars, benefiting from friendships with teammates and caring coaches. "But there were some situations where I stumbled, and I failed out of school and made decisions that didn't allow me to walk in God's promise," Flucas said.

Married to his first wife at the time, Flucas joined the military, spent time in Afghanistan, lost his mother to cancer and ended up reevaluating everything in his life. "It opened my eyes to appreciate the time you have with loved ones," he said. "I was in a dark place, with PTSD, ended up separating from my wife and losing a lot of things. But God's grace was still sufficient, and it carried me through those dark times. It's not about where you are, but where you want to go."

Flucas went through a divorce and grieved the deaths of other family members but forged ahead. With the help of a pastor



commitment to help. When I was able to just understand living sacrificially, that wisdom helped me to put things in perspective and helped me to nourish the right seed—making positive choices.”

His Reach for Youth position involves working with young people who have often taken a wrong turn or made a poor decision. He primarily works with people ages 12 to 18.

“My responsibility is to go into the townships and change the atmosphere and mindset of the young people,” Flucas said. “Young people can be galvanized to a popular mindset that is very destructive and counter-productive. We must help these young people take care of themselves and step forward in a positive direction.”

Flucas’ incentive to work with young people in his job—and outside work hours in the community—reflects his purpose.

“Being a person who gives back is who I’m meant to be.”



friend, Keith Jones, he found a sense of purpose and revitalized faith. Through mutual church friends, he met and married Cortnei. They have three young children in addition to Sherman’s oldest son. Spurred to continue to put his life in order, Flucas eventually revived his studies at Saint Francis and earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in 2020.

Flucas is intent on using his experiences and wisdom to help young people. He has worked as a life skills teacher, life coach, student support specialist and coach in Indianapolis middle schools and recently became the director of outreach programs at Indianapolis Reach for Youth, Inc. He also continues to own and operate Legacy Mindset, where he invests further in mentoring, coaching and inspiring young people.

“God calls us to do his assignment,” Flucas said. “Just as Jesus came and his story changed the world, we can make a

Flucas’ days on the Saint Francis campus influenced that mindset. When he returned to complete his degree, he drove regularly from Indianapolis to Fort Wayne for his classes.

“It was a great experience of faith seeing the Sisters walking around campus,” he said. “Saint Francis helped me to know, it’s not just about me. Saint Francis taught me the value of love and commitment, what it takes to be a good person, and helped me understand how God forgives and loves us.”

Flucas’ advice to others is to lean on God, find their purpose and make a difference.

“Don’t lose faith,” he said. “Don’t lose hope because of circumstances. Know that you are working for the greater good and God is in control. Never give up on yourself and don’t give up on the next generation of kids.”



“Even though we have different beliefs, you can see how we all can have a connectedness in this world.”

Megan Kelley (BS '14)



As she strives toward becoming an emergency medicine physician, Megan Kelley (BS '14) doesn't mind packing a little sleep deprivation into her schedule.

LOTS OF coffee

Megan Kelley (BS '14) fits as much action as possible into every single day. Her penchant for overloading her schedule began as an undergraduate at the University of Saint Francis, when she first started on her goal of becoming a doctor.

"I was working as a paramedic, and I'd arrive from the night shift and still be in uniform. I'd force myself to sit in the front row to stay awake—lots of coffee," she said. "Then, I'd sleep in the chairs in Achatz, back in the day when it wasn't a shiny building. But I do well under pressure and my best grades were my last semester, when I was literally working full-time nights and taking 19 credit hours."

Little wonder that Kelley is heading toward a career in emergency medicine, encouraged by mentors and her husband Skyler Conatser, a flight paramedic who she met on the job and married in 2021. Emergency medicine is known for long hours, action and chaos, requiring quick thinking and decision-making. Perfect for Kelley. "I don't think I'd be happy with anything else," she said.

Kelley is in her final year at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM). She not only developed her work ethic at Saint Francis, but she also carries with her a strong desire for service, which led to something extra on her schedule last spring. "I wanted to do something with things that I'm passionate about, with medical outreach and medical missions work," she said.

Dr. Katherine Calloway, regional assistant dean at WVSOM, connected Kelley with her friend Dr. Carolyn Lafleur at Medical Diplomats International. Lafleur sought medical students to travel to India and interact with Tibetan communities from April 5 through April 21. Kelley jumped aboard. "The (group's) goal was No. 1, education; No. 2, do something while we're there; and No. 3, generally bring some smiles and some kindness," Kelley said.

Kelley is attuned to educating patients, her nonstop schedule reflects her desire to "do something" and her outgoing personality prompts smiles and kindness. She used her skills and empathy as the group talked with Tibetan women on the benefits of breast exams.

"There is a stigma there associated with women who have breast cancer," Kelley said. "We met with multiple local Tibetan communities, their nursing staffs, as well as community members, and talked to them about how to do breast exams and the importance of them. There are cultural differences and that was challenging, so we needed to present this in a way that was not offensive to their culture, by coming from a place of love, kindness and consideration."

The "do something" portion of the trip came as Lafleur and her team taught self-exams and then went the next step with women who had discovered potentially cancerous lumps. "Those women were taken to the local hospital and Dr. Lafleur footed the bill for mammograms and ultrasounds," Kelley said.

As for smiles and kindness, Kelley had a memorable encounter with the Dalai Lama.

"It was fascinating to meet the Dalai Lama, just in how connected each individual felt, even from the standpoint of not practicing that religion," Kelley said. "As a Christian, I still had reverence for them, and it was culturally interesting to see how people view the Dalai Lama. As a doctor, if I treat a Hindu or Muslim, I want to have a basic understanding of what that religion means for them."

She met the Dalai Lama as part of a group where each person spent a few seconds with him. "I smiled really big and he brings his hand up with his pointer finger—and I froze and was very confused and then start laughing—and he goes 'boop' and boops me on the nose. I start laughing and he starts chuckling."

Later, those who met the Dalai Lama talked about the experience. "I'm hearing some of them say, 'He was speaking to my soul,'" Kelley said. "My experience was, 'He booped me on the nose.' Everyone thought it was so funny, but one of the people there said, 'Isn't it fantastic that he knew it would be super special for him to boop you on the nose?'"

"Even though we have different beliefs, you can see how we all can have a connectedness in this world."



GAME CHANGER

Jake Nolt delivers valuable news to every University of Saint Francis student who enters the Animation or Game and Application Development program: You're signing up for lifelong learning.

Those majors—which Nolt directs—lead to fun and fulfilling careers. But they are also two of the most constantly evolving areas of expertise.

Technology innovations never take a semester off.

"I try to make that a point with the students—that you are always going to be researching and growing," Nolt said. "It's not an industry that's going to stay static."

The ever-changing animation and game and application development fields not only keep students engaged in learning, but they also keep professors hopping. Nolt is constantly studying developing technology and reworking

his courses. "Most of the tools I learned in college, I was not using six months after graduation," Nolt said. "There are a lot of similarities, but almost every single piece of software from my undergraduate days, I'm using something different now."

Nolt stays on top of things and uses his growing knowledge to make sure students enter their careers as prepared as possible.

"One thing that really drives me is teaching skills that are employable," Nolt said. "I see the ins and outs of other institutions and some programs are so broad, students don't get an opportunity to focus on a particular area. It's good to have a broad view of things, but at the same time, you can go so broad that you can't hone a particular skill to stand out."

Nolt grew up in Ney, Ohio (pop: 303) and took a huge leap out of his comfort zone to enroll in the Art Institute in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. "It was certainly different, going from a very rural area to living in downtown Pittsburgh for three years," he said.

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“I missed my cornfields and trees, but I met a lot of good people there.”

Upon graduation, Nolt worked as a 3D artist and spent several years doing trade shows and freelance work. Before earning his master’s degree from Bowling Green State University, he was encouraged by his wife Stacey to investigate sharing his knowledge in other ways. “She said, ‘You enjoy learning new things and teaching coworkers, you should consider teaching,’” Nolt said.

Nolt taught for a year at Bowling Green, then applied for a position at Saint Francis, where he is in his sixth year. He and Stacey have two young daughters.

While many aspects of Animation and Game and Application Development overlap in a general sense, the type of students who gravitate toward each major is often considerably different, Nolt said.

“Animation students have a massive love for characters and storytelling. They all have different shows they love and they’re a bit more creative. They have fewer boundaries,” Nolt said. “Game students are very creative, but they understand rule structures and limitations of real-time engagement.”

Nolt makes sure his students share their work with others. Animation students Callie Swangin, Genna Davis, Jennifer Haggis, Carmina Arribasplata and Eindra Maung, along with Music Technology student Calder Kagel, were part of the creation of “The Fox’s Wedding,” a short film that earned gold and silver in the Telly Awards.

“Our students are creating so much really cool stuff, and we are trying to make sure others see it,” Nolt said. “We want potential employers to see what they are doing and their capabilities. If the accolades come, that’s awesome. People around the world are seeing what a handful of students from a small university in northeast Indiana are doing.”



HITTING IT OUT OF THE PARK

The Saint Francis baseball team had its finest season in school history, reaching the NAIA tournament for the first time. With many players back, the Cougars have their sights set high for more.

The best baseball season in Saint Francis history ended too soon—the Cougars came up a few hits, a few pitches and a few breaks short of a trip to the NAIA World Series. As players from the University of the Columbias engaged in the traditional “dogpile” celebration after earning their World Series berth, Saint Francis players stood, watched and gained further motivation to strive for another tourney run in 2025.

“We were close, so close,” Saint Francis Coach Dustin Butcher said. “But I think we feel like we can do it again.”

The Cougars’ 2024 season was one for the record books, with the most wins (40) in school history and a first trip to the NAIA postseason. They even came back from losing Game 1 in the double-elimination tournament and reached the opening-round championship game.

Accomplishments? Plenty. Satisfaction? A little.

“Our season was gratifying, but it was also not enough,” junior pitcher Blaine McRae said. “It left us feeling like

we came up a little short with the loss to Columbias.”

“We’re ready to get back at it next year,” junior shortstop Jayden Lepper said.

The success of 2024 sets the stage for 2025. Butcher has assembled a team of players, many of whom grew up playing with and against each other in the Fort Wayne area, ready to take another step this coming spring.

Several top players return, led first-team All-Crossroads and Gold Glove catcher Eli Riley, second-team designated hitter Sam Pesa and Gold Glove shortstop Lepper. Two big losses to graduation will be speedster Xavier Croxton and power hitter Nick Parsons, but several younger players are eager to step up. Pitching should be strong again with Perry Stow, Luke Siren and McRae. The Cougars will need to replace first-team All-Crossroads pitchers Deron Swanson, who transferred to Indiana University for his final season, and Graham Kelham, who transferred to Murray State.



The camaraderie of the team coalesced during the season, with practices often being competitive and reflecting the serious approach the players brought to the season.

“The brotherhood aspect of our team—being able to push each other every day, was a big part of our success,” Lepper said. “Nobody is going to let you slack off a day in practice. Every day you had to show up and want to be there and prove you’re the guy who should be playing.”

McRae concurred.

“We all know each other so well, we don’t have chemistry issues, we don’t have arguments, and that’s the case over the history of Coach Butcher’s program,” McRae said.

The Cougars won seven of their first eight games last season to set the stage for success. They kept that momentum with three five-game winning streaks and a phenomenal 12-game winning streak in April. They reached the Crossroads League tournament final with a win over rival Marian and lost a tight title game to Taylor. In the NAIA opening round,

they lost to Park in the opener, then beat Bellevue, Park and Loyola to reach the championship. In the win over Loyola, Parsons hit a grand-slam home run in the top of the seventh to go up 6-3. The Cougars won 6-4, with Kelham and McRae combining to hold Loyola to six hits.

“They hung a slider to a kid (Parsons) who hit 19 home runs,” Butcher said. “When we took the lead with that homer, it was incredible. Just electric.”

In another big hit in the title game, Saint Francis took a 6-3 lead on a Riley three-run homer in the fourth inning. The Cougars couldn’t hold on, however, losing to Cumberland 11-6.

“We had such a resilient group,” Butcher said. “We have a ton of players back and we’re going to start out playing the No. 1 and No. 2 teams in the country (Southeastern and Georgia Gwinnett). I told them that’s how we’re starting out and they were like, ‘Yeah, let’s go!’ That’s kind of neat. Whether we win or lose—and we’re going there to win—it won’t define us. We’ll just keep working to get better.”

Love, Laughter and Happily Ever After





**AUSTIN AND GRETA (WINKELJOHN) SMOGOR
MET AT SAINT FRANCIS, BONDED OVER
ATHLETICS AND FOUND A CONNECTION WHERE
SMALL DIFFERENCES DON'T INTERFERE WITH
THE BIG REWARDS OF LOVE AND FAMILY.**

First impressions count, so it's fortunate Greta (Winkeljohn) Smogor (BSN '19) had Bailey Sutton as a Saint Francis roommate when Greta's future husband Austin (BS '19) came to visit her room at Clare Hall.

"I had texted Bailey and said, 'Is it OK if he comes over?'" Greta said. "She said, 'Yes, I picked up a little.' That night, Austin made the comment that he could never date or marry someone messy. I thought I might be out. Bailey is a neat freak, like him. I am not."

So, more than two years into a marriage that now includes daughter Lydia, has Greta become more of a neat freak? "I pick up quite a bit," Austin said. "It's a good thing she's so much fun, a fantastic cook and a great mother."

The couple laughs easily about their differences because they know they have plenty in common. Austin, from Greenwood, Indiana, played offensive line on the Saint Francis football team and Greta, from Fort Wayne, played basketball. They bonded in part over the challenges of handling athletics with the rigors of their majors—Austin in risk management and insurance and Greta in nursing. "I think athletes attract each other, knowing how you have to balance schedules and things like that," Austin said. "We had two sides of the spectrum in academics—she was stellar, I was not so much. She helped keep me in line and I'm sure the coaches appreciated that."

They became friends as freshmen and started dating as sophomores. Eventually, Austin helped recruit Greta's brother, Peter Winkeljohn, to play football for the Cougars. Peter drew big laughs from teammates as a freshman at his first team meeting by saying, "I'm Peter Winkeljohn, I went to Bishop Dwenger, and, yes, 'Smogez' dates my sister." Another fun sports connection: Austin's good friend from high school, Alex Woods, also played offensive line for the Cougars and married a Saint Francis basketball player, Josie Murphy.

Austin and Greta point to the 2016 NAIA football national championship game in Daytona, Florida, as a favorite undergraduate memory. Greta and the women's basketball team drove nonstop after a 6 a.m. practice on Friday, cheered and celebrated on Saturday night/Sunday morning and drove straight back to Monday morning practice.

"That weekend in Daytona was so much fun, having her and her family there, and the whole basketball team," Austin said. "We had the time of our lives."

For his marriage proposal after they graduated, Austin arranged for a nostalgic walk on campus. He placed the ring in a gift bag near Brookside and arranged for Sutton to hide behind the statue of St. Francis with her camera. "I knew I had to tie Saint Francis into the proposal since that's where we met," Austin said.

"We were going to Boston later that fall and he had dropped hints, so I thought we were going to get engaged in Boston," Greta said. "It was a really nice proposal, and I was surprised."

They married on Jan. 22, 2022, and welcomed Lydia in May 2023. Greta is a nurse in the trauma intensive care unit at Lutheran Hospital. "I really like taking care of sick people, hopefully helping them get better and being there for their families," she said. Austin is a client executive with Hylant. "I work with business owners, and I enjoy meeting different-minded people," he said. "My big task is new business and new accounts."

The Smogors embrace parenthood and all the joys and challenges. "It's been amazing," Greta said. "Lydia's starting to be so funny." Austin agreed: "Parenting pushes you to your limits, but it's good. It's a blessing."

The couple closed on their home the day after Austin's proposal and can't say enough about their daughter, two dogs, rewarding marriage and fulfilling careers.

Austin smiled as he reflected. "We've got a white picket fence, too."

INVESTING IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

JARED CLODFELTER (BSE '10) FOUND HIS NICHE IN EDUCATION, HELPING STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFERENCES. HE RECENTLY BECAME THE DIRECTOR OF THE ROBERTS ACADEMY AT VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY.

As a high school student who loved reading and writing, Jared Clodfelter envisioned his future as an English teacher leading rousing discussions of “The Great Gatsby.” Then he went to the University of Saint Francis and had his mind—and ultimately his career—transformed.

“Before I came to Saint Francis, I had not even considered special education,” Clodfelter said. “Someone at Saint Francis had the foresight to require all education majors to double major in a content area and special education. You didn’t have a choice.”

The reasoning was sound, Clodfelter said. Schools are always in need of special education teachers, so being well-versed in those students’ needs would open more opportunities for Saint Francis graduates. Plus, no matter where a teacher lands, there will be students who have learning differences, such as dyslexia, and those teachers should know how to best help those students.

“Only the first four years of my career was I teaching English; the rest of it has been in special education,” Clodfelter said. “It is truly because of that requirement at Saint Francis and the experience I had in special education that I was confident to even apply at Currey Ingram Academy.”

Currey Ingram Academy, a college-preparatory school for students with learning differences in Nashville, Tennessee, became Clodfelter’s home for eight years. He rose within the academy and eventually became the Upper School Division Head. In June, Clodfelter left Currey Ingram for a new position as the academy director at the Roberts Academy and Dyslexia Center at Vanderbilt University.

“Roberts Academy has a neat story,” he said.

“The Roberts family had several grandkids who had dyslexia and had the opportunity to go to a great dyslexia school in Atlanta. They wanted to provide more opportunities for kids like this and their needs. Now they have three schools—Florida Southern (Lakeland, Florida), Mercer (Macon, Georgia) and Vanderbilt—three different academies.”

The Roberts Academy and Dyslexia Center in Vanderbilt’s Peabody College of Education and Human Development will eventually combine teaching and research, which particularly excites Clodfelter.

“Roberts Academy will be more of a transitional school, where students come for two or maybe three years of intense intervention and then transition back to a more traditional school system,” Clodfelter said. “I am excited about the idea of blending research and practice. To bring those two worlds together and work alongside some of the best researchers and experts in special education, we can bring those ideas to practice and bridge those two worlds where there is often a bit of a gap.”

A native of Nashville, Clodfelter chose to attend Saint Francis and play wide receiver on the football team, primarily because of the influence of his uncle, Warren Maloney, who was then the Cougars’ defensive coordinator. As a senior, Clodfelter led the Cougars in receiving with 54 receptions for 898 yards and seven touchdowns. He also had a great rapport on and off the field with quarterback Shaine Tierney, who was his roommate.



After his final semester in Fort Wayne, Clodfelter took his first position as a teacher at his high school alma mater in Nashville.

Clodfelter married his high school sweetheart, Torie, an elementary school teacher, in 2011. The couple spent four years teaching in international schools in Costa Rica and Qatar before returning to Nashville. Jared went on to earn a master's degree from Carson Newman University and a doctorate in education at Vanderbilt.

The Clodfelters have two sons, Harrison and Wyatt. Torie, who taught for seven years at Currey Ingram, will begin teaching at the school where their sons will attend this fall.

The Clodfelters' desire to make a positive difference through education drives their careers.

"Working at a school like Currey Ingram and what we do at the Roberts Academy is so impactful," Jared said. "Teachers always have an impact, but the stakes are higher in an LD (learning differences) school. Kids and families often come to us in crisis because they've had unfortunate experiences in schools. What we can do to help them is very impactful. That's what has kept me in this world."

PATHWAYS TO HEALTHCARE

Answering the Call to Care

Partnerships and connections—combined with quality, caring faculty—are the keys to the University of Saint Francis’ strong reputation for ensuring students receive the best preparation for their healthcare careers.



Alex Koenemann (BSN '20), a registered nurse pursuing his Doctor of Nursing Practice degree, exuberantly testifies how Saint Francis initially put him on the track he travels today and can do the same for anyone looking for a great place to start.

“It’s a phenomenal program,” Koenemann said. “If you talk to different people who work in healthcare in Fort Wayne, you can’t go a couple minutes without hearing about Saint Francis. If someone wants to make healthcare a career, they should go for it at Saint Francis.”

The Saint Francis College of Health Sciences has a term its leaders like to use to describe the many routes from the classroom to healthcare careers. That term is “Pathways.”

Saint Francis offers pathways to success through its variety of degree offerings and its connection with institutions such as Lutheran Health, Parkview Health, Franciscan Health and other care facilities. The pathways have many routes, whether a student seeks to become a registered nurse, a nurse practitioner, a doctor or an allied health professional.

And the pathways are vital and vibrant.

“We work very closely with our partners, and they work closely with us, so our students have the exposure they need,” said Saint Francis Chief Nursing Officer and Division Director of Nursing Dr. Carolyn Yoder. “The more students have clinical experiences, the more likely they are to endeavor to work in an institution.”

Clinicals for health sciences students represent work-world experience and all the challenges that accompany their field.

“People say every clinical is like a job interview, and that’s pretty true,” said Koenemann, whose first clinical was at the former St. Joe Hospital in downtown Fort Wayne. “I met people as a 20-year-old in college that I still interact with on a professional level now.”

Nick Wusterbarth (BSN '19), another nurse working on his DNP at Saint Francis, also credits the university with setting him up for success.



Parkview Health holds a signing day twice a year at Saint Francis. Most of those students gained their Parkview connection through their clinical work while at Saint Francis.

“Since graduation, Saint Francis has helped me to consistently be an active learner,” Wusterbarth said. “I have learned about new nursing practices, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic during my travel nursing assignments around the country. I am profoundly grateful for the amazing professors I have encountered in my nursing education at Saint Francis.”

Yoder says the experiences of Koenemann and Wusterbarth are typical at Saint Francis. Not only are clinical connections critical, but Saint Francis healthcare students are guided toward the best opportunities for scholarships and funding to make their academic careers thrive.

“Parkview works with Questa in terms of providing scholarship dollars,” Yoder said. “Lutheran and Franciscan Health also offer various scholarship opportunities, tuition reimbursement and funding.”

The Parkview Health connection is especially apparent on social media twice a year when it holds “Signing Day” for pending graduates who accept positions at one of its facilities. Saint Francis’ groups are regularly quite robust, with 20 to 30 graduates signing on at Parkview. Most of those students gained their Parkview connection through their clinical work while at Saint Francis.

“Parkview also sponsors—or gifts—two clinical faculty at Saint Francis,” Yoder said. “Imagine how positive that is; here’s a nurse teaching and students have that great role model and

experience to see, and that individual knows our institution like the rest of our faculty. We also support our faculty to have a practice day.”

At the Saint Francis Crown Point site, students can participate in the Indiana Center for Nursing’s Nursing Education and Engagement in Diversity Statewide 2B (NEEDS2B) Program. “That’s really made a difference in enhancing the success of our diverse students by helping address their needs,” Yoder said.

Yoder also points to BSN seminars, where nurses discuss specific topics with students, as another example of the partnerships and connections at work.

Many Saint Francis graduates return as preceptors.

“I am appreciative to stay in contact with some of my professors, allowing me to teach clinical at Saint Francis,” Wusterbarth said. “Teaching has opened my eyes to finally pursuing higher nursing education, which is why I am back at Saint Francis to pursue my doctorate in nursing.”

The many connections and pathways that lead to success keep Saint Francis’ nursing and allied health programs thriving.

“Healthcare really is a team sport,” Yoder said. “Saint Francis is good at not only reducing barriers to enter the field but collaborating with others because of the values we bring. That’s who we are.”



“We work very closely with our partners, and they work closely with us, so our students have the exposure they need. The more students have clinical experiences, the more likely they are to endeavor to work in an institution.”

Dr. Carolyn Yoder

Saint Francis Chief Nursing Officer and Division Director of Nursing

a heart for **HELPING OTHERS**

AS A LONGTIME MENTAL HEALTH THERAPIST, VANESSA JONES DEALS WITH DIFFICULT ISSUES. SHE'S GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP PEOPLE IMPROVE THEIR LIVES AND CREATE BRIGHT FUTURES.

Vanessa Jones (BA '03, MS '09) will attest that mental health counseling requires a lot of heavy lifting. That weight comes not in the physical sense, but in the emotional scars and burdens that she helps people navigate day after day.

Jones' life work is not for the weak. Jones, co-owner with Jacqueline Vedder at Renewal Therapy Services, regularly assists clients as they seek to move forward from the daily struggles of life, trauma, substance misuse and sexual offenses. She has also counseled many victims of human trafficking. Her work is difficult and draining, but essential for her clients to move forward in their lives.

"We believe that supporting the mental well-being of every individual contributes to a stronger, more unified community," Jones said. I am really committed to make sure anyone who wants to have quality mental health or substance misuse treatment can receive it."

Jones grew up in Fort Wayne and studied at the University of Saint Francis in large part due to her mother, Theresa Leto, who taught occupational therapy at Saint Francis. Vanessa admired her mother's compassion and empathy. She gained professional advice from Professor Emeritus of Psychology Dr. Rolf Daniel. "Dr. Daniel helped me figure out what I wanted to do with my education—I wanted to be a therapist," she said.

Jones earned her psychology degree in 2003 and her master's in mental health counseling in 2009. Within a year, Jones landed a position as a therapist at Headwaters Counseling. She had nearly 14 years of service and assumed the executive director/CEO role in January. Unfortunately, due to funding issues, Headwaters Counseling closed in July. After helping Headwaters clients transition to other facilities, including Alliance Health Centers, Jones joined with Vedder to open their private practice.

"It was at privilege to work at Headwaters Counseling, and I am honored to have been able to serve my community. I am

also thankful for the support of my friends and family as I start this next chapter," she said.

Jones and Vedder worked together at Headwaters and now provide mental health treatment, marriage and family therapy, substance misuse treatment and treatment for sexual offenders. Their practice is located at 3030 Lake Avenue in Fort Wayne and began operation in late July.

"I'm really excited that we were able to act so quickly to meet the needs of the community and to continue to provide quality continuity of care," she said. "My skills and Jacqueline's skills complement each other very well, and we're able to provide a wide variety of services."

There continues to be a shortage of therapists in the U.S., and Indiana ranks among the worst states for mental health providers per capita. In Indiana, graduates obtain an associate's license, and then spend two years in the field before taking the official licensing exam. "People who are fully licensed—some of them stay in nonprofits, but many go into private practice," Jones said.

Jones credits her time at Saint Francis with instilling skills and cultivating the compassion she provides to her clients.

"I still find myself quoting my psychology professors and I look back at all of those things that have stuck with me," she said. "I remember what a benefit the small class sizes were, and learning from professors in the field."

Jones, who is raising her two children with husband David, continues to advocate for mental health care and understands how helping a person today can have a ripple effect into tomorrow.

"Therapy starts with one thing but has broad implications on a client's life and society's life," Jones said. "If a person is less depressed, they can go to work more often. If they go to work more often, they can keep their job, which means they can keep their apartment, which leads to less homelessness, a better quality of life and a stronger community."



CAMPUS NEWS

Students help people in need during Dominican Republic trip

Saint Francis Professor Dr. Amy Obringer led a medical and veterinary trip to the Dominican Republic in May.

The team included Saint Francis students Katie Grable, Dahiyo Omar, Greg Hope and Ti'anah Stuff-Kelso from Fort Wayne, Telsa Rodenbeck from Churubusco, Carly Turner from Kendallville, Emma Dellinger from Harlan, Madyson Raderstorf from Logansport and Mackenzie Leeth from Convoy, Ohio.

The trip also included Decatur's Dr. Kate Heimann of Adams Memorial Hospital, Saint Francis alumna Olivia Obringer (BS '21), a veterinary student at Michigan State University, and Saint Francis alumnus Dr. Nate James (BS '12) of the Parkview Emergency Department.



Saint Francis forges partnership

Saint Francis announces a partnership with Northwest State Community College (NSCC) of Archbold, Ohio. NSCC students who complete associate degrees in Early Childhood Development or Applied Science-Paraprofessional Education will be accepted with junior-year status into the Bachelor of Arts in Educational Studies program in the Saint Francis Division of Teacher Education.



Sisters join Saint Francis campus

The university welcomes Sr. Anna Joseph Nelling, OSF, left photo, and Sr. Mary Augustine Warrell, OSF, right. Sr. Anna Joseph entered the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration in 2006 after graduating from Franciscan University and has a master's degree from Creighton University. Sr. Mary Augustine joined the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration in 2013 and has a bachelor's degree from Indiana University and master's degrees from Michigan State and Franciscan universities.



Saint Francis announces downtown collaboration

The University of Saint Francis, Chuck and Lisa Surack, and the Fort Wayne Philharmonic announced plans for the development of a vibrant arts district in downtown Fort Wayne.

The collaboration will include a multimillion-dollar renovation to the Robert Goldstine Performing Arts Center, 431 W. Berry Street, and the relocation of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic to 826 Ewing Street.

Saint Francis will increase its presence downtown through growth of its Music Technology program, which will remain at 431 W. Berry Street, and its Dance program.

"This collaboration is a winning scenario for everyone," Saint Francis President Dr. Lance Richey said.

Chuck and Lisa Surack will own the Robert Goldstine Performing Arts Center, along with the main parking lot and the former Mizpah Shrine building. The Fort Wayne Philharmonic will own the former Saint Francis Business Center.

Saint Francis hires new vice president

Dr. Robert “Rob” Phillips was named Vice President for Academic Affairs/Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Business after a national search. Dr. Phillips served as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Davis & Elkins College in Elkins, West Virginia, overseeing faculty and promoting their excellence in teaching, research and service.



Saint Francis announces internal promotions

Andrew Lehr, top photo, was promoted to Associate Vice President for Student Success and Dean of Student Academic Support. Already a dedicated advocate for our students, Lehr will continue his commitment to helping students succeed and supporting academic growth.

Dr. Alex Giltner, bottom photo, was named Dean of Students, in addition to his role as Associate Vice President for Catholic Culture. Dr. Giltner holds degrees in theology, church history and historical theology, and led a highly successful Welcome Weekend to kick off the 2024 fall semester.



Busse-Fabini Cougar Classic raises \$160,000 in scholarships

The Busse Fabini Cougar Classic golf outing included more than 60 teams this year and raised approximately \$160,000 in scholarship money.

“Saint Francis Athletics is blessed to have created an event that, thanks to the support of friends, alumni and local businesses, has thrived for 13 years,” Athletic Director Mike McCaffrey said. “We have raised well over \$1 million and have benefited hundreds of student-athletes. What started as a small party and one day of golf has become two days of selfless giving. The Busse-Fabini Cougar Classic legacy will carry on for many years thanks to the time, talents and treasure of so many people.”

IN MEMORIAM

Friends of Saint Francis

Lucia Kroh
 Carl “Eddie” Miller
 Armando Suarez
 Jim Vann
 Geoffrey “Jeb” Waldschmidt

1950s

Velma Albert '50

1960s

Sharon Ann Brommer '60
 Patricia Witham '60, '67
 Elizabeth Dew '61, '71
 Carolyn Chapple '66
 Florence Mauch '67
 Martha Klondaris '69

1970s

Charles Albert '70
 David Lewis Bell '70
 Patricia Cook '70, '91
 William Derbyshire '70
 Janel Ryan '70
 Sr. Helen Travis '70
 Wanda Bricker '72
 Samuel Steffes '74
 Elizabeth Ann Bickham '75, '80

1980s

Steve Riley '82
 Elizabeth Schultz '86

1990s

Kerry Blanchette '94



Trinity Hall Plaza Brick Campaign

Join us in the Trinity Hall Plaza Brick Campaign and show your love for the University of Saint Francis! This plaza will be an inviting gathering spot for students and alumni. Help us make Trinity Hall Plaza a reality.

Learn more at go.sf.edu/bricks.



class notes

keeping connected with alumni and friends

1990s

01 Beatrice Royal (BSE '92) was the Saint Mother Theodore Guerin Administrator Award winner for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. **02 Tony Hudson (MA '99)** was promoted to chief executive officer at Blue Jacket, Inc. **Danielle (Vonderau) Kiefer (BA '99)** presented a solo art exhibition, "Wild and Free," at the Botanical Conservatory in Fort Wayne.

2000s

Megan (Donley) Bates (BA '04) became vice president, Women's Health Services, Imaging, at GE HealthCare. **03 Joey Didier (BA '06, MBA '13)** joined the Fort Wayne/Indianapolis team at Northwestern Mutual. **04 Cameron Smith (BLS '06)** launched the Parkview Sports Medicine Football Program as director and coach. **Kera (Prasuhn) Sutherland (BSW '07)** was promoted to regional director with Connections Case Management, LLC on April 1. **Mallory Grossman (BSN '08, MSN '14)** started a new position at Goshen Health. **Drew Linder (BS '08)** was promoted to general manager of Nucor-California Steel Industries. **Rachel Michaelis (BSE '08, MSE '12)** was selected as Woodlan High School Teacher of the Year. **Tara Pettigrew (BSN '08)** became assistant director of simulation at the University of Saint Francis. **Stephani Schultz (ASN '08)**, nursing professional development med/surg specialist for Parkview Health, was named the Nursing Educator of the Year by the Indiana Nurses Foundation (INF). **Kristin Guss-Ayeni (BSW '09, MBA '15)** opened her own restaurant called Kristin's Kitchen, LLC, in Smith's Grove, Kentucky.

2010s

John Osterman (BA '11) is the chief marketing officer at Hair on Fire Tech, in Rogers, Arizona. **05 Dr. Joshua Fairbanks (BS '12, BS '13, MS '17, MOL '22, MBA '23)** is chair, Department of Medical Science, at the University of Saint Francis. **06 Matt Thomas (BA '13)**, pictured left in photo, director at Upper Valley Film Co., won an Emmy at the 55th Central Great Lakes Chapter Emmy Awards for his direction of the Kate's Kart public service announcement video. **Casey (BS '14)** and **Joey Dynako (BS '14)** welcomed daughter Irene "Renie" Rose on April 16. **Michael Thompson (BS '15)** graduated from Manchester University School of Pharmacy and will be a resident pharmacist at IU Health. **Dr. Tricia Hoersten (BS '16, MHA '17)** completed her residency in Family Medicine at Wright State University School of Medicine. She works at Mercy Health-St. Rita's Medical Center in Lima, Ohio, is married and is raising two boys. **07 Jay Holliday (BA '16)** had a solo exhibition at Artlink called, "Embracing Solitude: Finding Energy in Stillness." **Dr. Carrie Miller (BS '16, MHA '17, MBA '18)** is a senior project manager on the Inpatient Tower Activation Team at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. **Samantha (Goddard) Phend (BA '16)** started a new position as graphic designer with Manchester University.

HAVE A CLASS NOTE?

To update information, go to sf.edu/alumni and select "Stay Connected" or email alumni@sf.edu or mail to the University of Saint Francis Alumni Office, 2701 Spring Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46808.



08 Drake DeMuyt (BA '17) earned a certification in Foundational C# with Microsoft. **09 Dr. Sean Kampe (BS '17)** graduated from the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine and will be a veterinarian for the United States Army. **Cameron Shackelford Jr. (BSW '17)** added a new position as coach at Courageous Healing, Inc. **Blake Blaker (BS '18)** is head football coach at Southern Wells High School. **10 Mollie (Shutt) Middleton (BA '18)** married James Middleton on June 8. **11 Megan Quigley (BA '18)** completed her master's degree in theology at the University of Notre Dame. **Dawn Baker (BA '19)** is a funeral home assistant at Divine Mercy Funeral Home. **12 Whitney (Schlie) Cox (BS '19) and Nick Cox (BA '19)** welcomed son Merrick on May 19. **Melody Ferrier (MA '19)** became a branch assistant at the Allen County Public Library.

2020s

Dr. Jona Fletcher (BS '20) graduated from the Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine. She is a veterinarian at Country Critters Veterinary Clinic in Monrovia, Indiana. **Sherman Flucas II (BS '20)** earned a certification in mental health first aid from National Council for Mental Wellbeing. **Jack Harris (BS '20)** graduated from Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine. He will be a veterinarian at New Haven Animal Hospital. **Meagan Roy (BS '20)** earned a doctorate degree in veterinary medicine from Ohio State University. **Courtney Stise (BS '21)** earned a master's degree in biology from Purdue Fort Wayne. **13 Alaina (Ganser) Hardy (BS '22)** started a position as an advanced emergency medical technician at East Central Fire and EMS. She married **Jacob Hardy (BS '23)** on May 3. **Gabrielle North (BS '22)** is an accounts payable specialist at Priority Life Care, LLC. **14 Derek Robb (BS '22, MHA '23)** is community engagement director at United Way. **Madaya Wheeler (BA '22)** is a local children's book illustrator and author of "Brave Little Bat" and "Who Are You, Little Turtle?" **Christina Benson (BS '23)** is operations concierge at Targeted Service PC. **15 Adilynn Girardot (BSW '23)** is community case manager at Westwood Behavioral Health Center, Inc.

Katie Melcher (AS '23) is a physical therapist assistant at Steppin' Up Physical Therapy. **Caleb Overly (AAS '23)** became a physical therapist assistant at Indiana Physical Therapy. **Kamrin Parker (AAS '23)** started a position with interventional radiography at Parkview Regional Medical Center. **Emma Smith (AS '23)** is a physical therapist assistant at Indiana Physical Therapy. **Tomas Abreu (BS '24)** will begin a master's degree in Portugal. **Bernardo Abreu (BS '24)** will begin a master's degree in Portugal. **16 Logan Adkins (BS '24)** became an inside sales representative at Steel Dynamics. **Sara Advany (BS '24)** will begin her master's degree in the nutrition and nutrigenomics program at Manchester University. **Abby Berkey (AAS '24)** is a physical therapist assistant at Steppin' Up Physical Therapy. **Nate Burns (BS '24)** is a human resources information system analyst at MedPro. **Ben Butler (BSN '24)** is a nurse at Ascension St. Vincent Hospital. **Emily Clauser (BS '24)** will begin the physician assistant studies program at High Point University. **Jess Davis (BSW '24)** became a case manager at Turnstone. **Jeffrey "JJ" DeLong (BSN '24)** is an emergency room nurse at Lutheran Health Network. **Jaya Ellis (BS '24)** is a mild special education resource teacher at Fairfield Elementary with Fort Wayne Community Schools. **Juan Gomez (BS '24)** became a management trainee at Enterprise. **Jordi Guerrero (BSW '24)** began a position as social services specialist at Parkview Health. **Seth Jachimiak (BS '24)** married Jocelyn Sandoval on June 1. **Chloe Kraus (AAS '24)** is a physical therapist assistant at Steppin' Up Physical Therapy. **Addison Krebs (BS '24)** became director of youth ministry and religious education at Sacred Heart Parish in Warsaw. **Bridget Marshall (BS '24)** joined Steel Dynamics with their internal audit team. **Evanette "Evie" Miller (BS '24)** is a physical therapist assistant at Steppin' Up Physical Therapy. **Abigail Mize (AAS '24)** is a physical therapist assistant at Heritage Pointe of Warren. **Garrott Ott-Large (BS '24)** became an inside sales representative at Steel Dynamics. **Anthony Palermo (BS '24)** joined a family-owned recycling and trucking business. **Carissa Peckhart (BS '24)** became a standing response intern at Virginia Beach Aquarium. **Samantha Richards (BS '24)** was accepted into IU School of Dentistry and married Spencer Pattee (BS '23) on May 25. **Corah Rupley (AAS '24)** is a physical therapist assistant at Steppin' Up Physical Therapy. **Chloe Shepperd (AAS '24)** is a physical therapist assistant at Colonial Oaks Retirement Community. **Tiffany Sinn (AAS '24)** is a physical therapist assistant at Indiana Physical Therapy. **17 Ti'anah Stuff-Kelso (BS '24)** was accepted into Purdue College of Veterinary Medicine. **Mallory Turnbow (BSN '24)** became an intensive care unit nurse at Riverside Methodist Hospital. **Kaitlynn Welker (BS '24)** is studying law at the University of Dayton School of Law. **Madison Werling (BS '24)** was accepted into IU School of Medicine. **Joshua Young (AAS '24)** is a physical therapist assistant at Steppin' Up Physical Therapy.

COUGAR SPORTS

RECAP

Baseball

While leading the baseball team to a record 40-win season and first NAIA tourney appearance, six players earned Crossroads League all-league honors. First-team honorees were sophomore Graham Kelham, junior Eli Riley and junior Deron Swanson. Second-team honorees were senior Xavier Croxton and junior Sam Pesa. Named to the Gold Glove team were junior Jayden Lepper and Riley. (See baseball feature on Page 16.)

Esports

The Cougars had two teams qualify for the 64-team CCA Fortnite Creative Series last fall, led by juniors Jacob Engle and Henry Meyers. The Rocket League team, led by junior Nick Anglin, qualified for the NECC playoffs and advanced to the semi-finals. The Super Smash Bros. team, led by sophomore Jagger Walraven, battled hard in the GLEC to finish 5-7 in the spring. The Overwatch 2 team, led by sophomore Preston Smith, competed for the first time in school history.

Golf | MEN

The Cougars tied for fifth in the Crossroads League Championships, led by 14th-place finishers sophomore Bailey Marquart and senior Wyatt Johnson. Sophomore Seth Roop, senior Levi Follett and senior Christopher Guhl rounded out the lineup for Saint Francis.

Golf | WOMEN

The Cougars finished seventh in the Crossroads League Championships, with junior Ava Warren recording the best score. The others on Saint Francis' conference-competing team were senior Bridget Marshall, senior Melissa Francis, sophomore Tory Straley and sophomore Abby Pequinot.

Softball

Three players earned All-Crossroads honors, led by first-team honoree Macie Dowd, a sophomore who set a single-season school record with 54 runs batted in. Senior infielder Dani Karr was named to the All-Crossroads second team and freshman pitcher Ellie Sauder earned honorable mention honors. Junior Ashley Childress, junior Brooklyn McCord, sophomore Madyson Minnich and senior Taylor Horsley were named NAIA Scholar-Athletes.

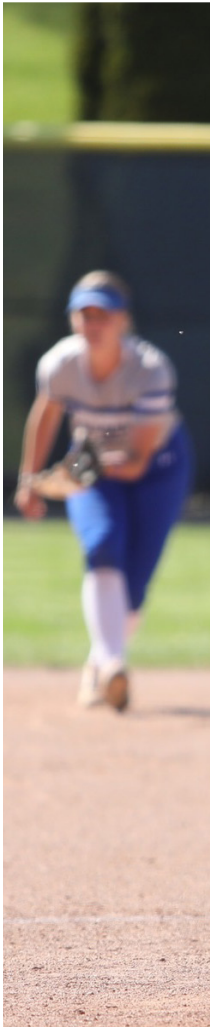


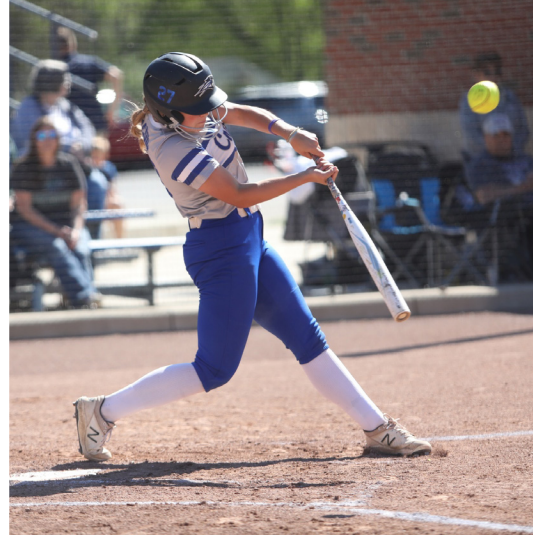
Track and Field | MEN

Senior pole vaulter Joe Painter cleared 4.85 meters to finish fifth in the NAIA national championships and earn All-American honors. Painter took third at the Crossroads League championships. Painter and freshman Alvin Keter (18th in nationals in the 5,000 meters) were named U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA) All-Academic Athletes.

Track and Field | WOMEN

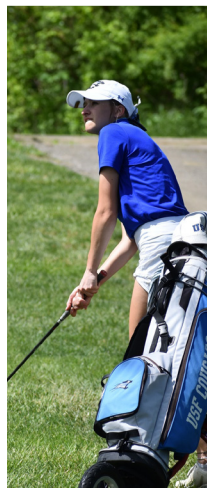
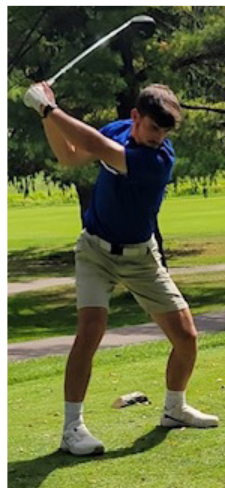
Senior distance runner Alex Ebetino finished seventh in the 3,000 meters to earn All-American honors at the NAIA national championships. The distance medley relay of Ebetino, junior Mariah Marley, freshman Kiara Bahena and freshman Victoria Clibon finished eighth to earn honors, too. Ebetino won the 5,000 meters at the Crossroads League championships and sophomore Hannah Boersema won the javelin. Bahena, Boersema, Clibon, Ebetino and Maley were USTFCCCA All-Academic Athletes.





Belville named men's and women's bowling coach

David Belville was named bowling coach for the new Saint Francis men's and women's program. Belville, who also coaches men's and women's golf, will lead the team as it begins play this fall. The men's team will play as part of the Crossroads League while a coed team will also begin play.





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