

A large, faded background image of a woman in a life vest on a boat, smiling and pointing upwards. The image is partially obscured by the text and a large white circle.

# A Pledge to Prepare

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**College of Saint Benedict  
and Saint John's University**

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**Learning Goals for a Lifetime**





**Think  
Deeply**



**Embrace  
Difference**



**Engage  
Globally**



**Live  
Courageously**



**Serve  
Graciously**



# Learning Goals for a Lifetime

**This fall, the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University unveiled a new set of learning goals; though referring to the goals as "new" is a little misleading. **The goals — and their outcomes — have always been part of the experience for both Bennies and Johnnies.****

Barbara May, academic dean for CSB and SJU, says giving the goals a formal platform was important for several reasons. Besides establishing clear expectations and outcomes for the curricular and co-curricular experience at both colleges, the newly articulated goals help faculty, staff and students track toward them more intentionally. They help capture the liberal arts experience in a more holistic way.

Collectively, they are the pledge that the colleges make to prospective students. "If we are successful in doing this well, this could transform our student experience," says Brandyn Woodard, director of Intercultural & International Student Services. "But beyond that (and I know this sounds corny, but I believe it), this could also transform the people who work here."

CSB/SJU Vice President for Admission and Financial Aid Nate Dehne is excited about the way these new goals clarify the spirit, passion and energy of the young women who go out into the world with a Saint Ben's education. "These goals become the foundation of our message to prospective students and families," he says. "They'll help us articulate our real differences from the other college offerings those families face."

By bringing out her inner Bennie, the goals are designed to create habits and outcomes that promote lifelong learning and position each student for future success. Here's a look at the learning goals and how they'll define a student's experience.





Think Deeply

## Think critically, creatively and with complexity when addressing significant questions.

### WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE?

Our students will demonstrate critical thinking and manage cognitive complexity. These skills include the ability to approach problems in integrative ways from multiple perspectives, as well as to ethically acquire, evaluate and apply information and communicate in multiple formats.

### HOW WILL CSB/SJU MAKE THAT HAPPEN?

The CSB/SJU learning experience will provide students with opportunities for reflective learning, analytic inquiry, investigation, application, problem solving, creativity and communication.

To put it lightly, including deep thinking as a learning goal is a no-brainer. As a proud and committed advocate of the liberal arts, the College of Saint Benedict has been cultivating critical thought for over 100 years. But any college with a well-earned reputation for academic rigor will claim their students think deeply in the classroom. At CSB/SJU, students are challenged to develop these skills outside the classroom as well.

Matt Lindstrom sees that daily. As director of the Eugene J. McCarthy Center for Public Policy & Civic Engagement, Lindstrom works with students to create spaces for approaching “problems in integrative ways from multiple perspectives.” And in

an election year in which ideological lines seem etched in stone, that’s no easy task.

“As a venue for debate, diverse discussions and action, the McCarthy Center brings people together from all political and academic backgrounds to connect in common humanity for the common good,” Lindstrom says. “For example, this fall the McCarthy Center facilitated a voter registration drive, partnering with over a half-dozen student clubs. We held a student discussion to frame electoral choices for the mid-term elections – but then followed that up with an all-parties election-night viewing party to reinforce our identity as a holistic yet political diverse Benedictine community.”



You’ve got this!

Striving to think deeply is nothing new at Saint Ben’s. When we break it down, what parts of deep thinking do you see most in yourself? Which feel like developmental opportunities for lifelong learning?



### HABITS ACQUIRED BY THINKING DEEPLY

You look at issues and opinions beyond face value. You’re driven to uncover how and why they came about; what, if any, biases contributed to their creation; and how different perspectives change their essence.

You invite intellectual and philosophical debates to help you hone your thinking and communication skills.

Armed with intellect and imagination, you work at overcoming or outmaneuvering obstacles that seem unbeatable at first glance.

You make a point to read between the lines in order to uncover additional context and meaning when problem solving or analyzing information.



### RESULTS OF THINKING DEEPLY

#### AS A STUDENT

Inside the classroom, thinking deeply enriches your learning experience by broadening your scope of knowledge and providing tools for sorting and processing complex information. Outside the classroom, it gives more meaning to your interests and enables you to approach problems in integrative ways from multiple perspectives.

#### AS AN ALUMNA

Thinking deeply enriches your personal and professional life by enabling you to more quickly acquire, evaluate and apply critical information in everyday situations. Friends, family and colleagues seek out and value your thoughtful input. Curiosity propels you to be a lifelong learner, which adds more dimension to your life.





## Embrace Difference

### Observe life from multiple perspectives.

#### WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE?

Our students will demonstrate identity awareness, including power and privilege, and practice inclusivity and cultural agility. These skills include an ability to learn from, respect and work with people whose identity and perspective are different from their own. Students will engage the world through the lens of gender, with an appreciation of human differences.

#### HOW WILL CSB/SJU MAKE THAT HAPPEN?

The CSB/SJU learning experience will provide students with opportunities to reflect on their own cultural identity, engage diverse points of view and learn to respect cultures/values different from their own.

In February of this year, CSB and SJU received a \$600,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support initiatives focused on inclusive pedagogy and community building. At the time, President Mary Dana Hinton – who continues to build toward what she calls an ecosystem of inclusion – noted that, “we remain steadfast in our mission to ensure that every student we serve, and every person who works here, is fully included in defining our community: to have a voice; to be treated with respect; to be valued; to be transformed as they transform us.”

So conditions and opportunities are being put in place across campus to broaden the spectrum of perspectives in the community.

But it's one thing to be exposed to diverse voices and perspectives. It's another thing altogether to hear those voices.

Athletic Director Glen Werner '93 sees the work that goes into (and the results that come out of) teambuilding on the Saint Ben's campus every day. “Every fall our campus is transformed by a whole new group of women – each coming from a different place and a different set of circumstances – merging together and learning to live away from home. I think student-athletes have a beautiful approach to this. From their first moments on campus, they're banded together, learning what is similar and what is different and how those combined traits make them stronger.”



### You've got this!

The spirit of embracing difference is nothing new at Saint Ben's. When we break it down, what parts of embracing difference do you see most in yourself? Which feel like developmental opportunities for lifelong learning?



#### HABITS ACQUIRED BY EMBRACING DIFFERENCE

You make a point to consider how a person's gender, ethnicity, cultural background, religious beliefs and sexual identity may affect their human experience, including the impacts of power and privilege.

You set out with the intent to learn from, respect and value people whose identity and perspectives are different from your own.

You practice inclusivity and work to ensure that every voice and perspective is heard.

You promote a live-and-let-live attitude, which gives others the benefit of the doubt and supports their right to their own point of view.



#### RESULTS OF EMBRACING DIFFERENCE

##### AS A STUDENT

Because you actively explore ways of interacting with people from cultures and lifestyles different from your own, you expand your views, interests and network. In the process, you uncover new things about yourself. Your expanded perspective provides a wellspring of knowledge that can be applied to every aspect of your student and personal life.

##### AS AN ALUMNA

Your inclusivity at work and in the community breaks down silos and creates healthier interactions, environments for shared knowledge and a richer human experience. Your ability to seek out commonalities in diverse groups is contagious and helps change the mindset of those who think in terms of “us” and “them.” Because you're not threatened by the unfamiliar, you have an easier time reaching beyond your comfort zone, which uncovers new opportunities for growth, success and innovation.



## Engage Globally

## Embark on a journey of discovery and take part in the world.

### WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE?

Our students will commit to global engagement, civic engagement and citizenship. These skills include an understanding of justice and the common good, awareness of social responsibility and knowledge of world systems and their points of intersection/divergence.

### HOW WILL CSB/SJU MAKE THAT HAPPEN?

The CSB/SJU learning experience will provide students with opportunities to reflect on their place in the world, experience different cultures and practice social responsibility and leadership both locally and globally.

CSB and SJU have been consistent leaders for years in the number of students who “embark on a journey of discovery” and “commit to global engagement” by studying abroad. Lucy Dornbach '19, a gender studies major from Minneapolis, has done that. Saint Ben's students commit to civic engagement – often through internships. Lucy Dornbach has done that ... twice. But “it is what I have learned in the classroom that has solidified my commitment to the common good,” she says.

Lucy explains some of the places she's been in a CSB/SJU classroom: “In my Gender and Peace class, I was able to explore Liberia and its tumultuous history of civil war and peace building. My Sex and Gender in a Global Perspective class took me to Afghanistan, India and throughout the United States – all through literature and discussion. Right from the start, my First-Year Symposium class three years ago helped me find my voice and my passion for global empowerment of women through a speaking assignment on girls' development in Nepal. I've seen the world, but I didn't always have to leave campus to do so.”



## You've got this!

The journey toward global engagement is nothing new at Saint Ben's. When we break it down, what parts of engaging globally do you see most in yourself? Which feel like developmental opportunities for lifelong learning?



### HABITS ACQUIRED BY ENGAGING GLOBALLY

You enjoy widening your geographical and cultural lens by exploring new places across the street or around the world.

You look for opportunities, in all contexts, to get involved in programs and organizations that benefit the greater good.

You take your responsibilities as a global citizen seriously and know your decisions and behaviors impact others.

You look to expand your knowledge of world systems and their points of intersection and divergence.



### RESULTS OF ENGAGING GLOBALLY

#### AS A STUDENT

Knowing you're doing something meaningful gives you a sense of purpose, and even courage, in accomplishing projects you believe in. Stepping out of your comfort zone to explore new places builds confidence and energizes you to keep growing. Immersing yourself in other cultures gives you a deeper appreciation of the world around you.

#### AS AN ALUMNA

Friends, colleagues and community members value and respect your role in civic and global engagement and your intentional efforts to move important ideals forward. Your experiences in these initiatives lend themselves to continued personal and professional growth. Engaging in causes you believe in makes you feel fulfilled.





## Discover a meaningful life of purpose through service and leadership.

### WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE?

Our students will commit to personal reflection, personal development, service and leadership. Grounded in our Benedictine heritage, these skills include an understanding of spirituality as an important aspect of identity, a commitment to community and principled leadership, and the ability to live a purposeful professional and personal life.

### HOW WILL CSB/SJU MAKE THAT HAPPEN?

For Jen Kramer, associate professor of communication at CSB/SJU, when students in her Intercultural Communication class work on communication competency, it comes down to knowledge, motivation and skills. “The classroom and readings take care of the knowledge part,” she says. “But to improve, they need practice, so I supply the motivation with required service-learning assignments. That leads to skills from working with English language learners here in Central Minnesota.”

“It was sort of a ‘mandatory volunteer’ opportunity,” remembers former student Sarah Manning ’18, “but she definitely inspired a spirit of service.” During the class, Manning worked with Somali refugees in St. Cloud through Lutheran Social Services. “And Jen would push us with intentional questions about what we learned and what inspired us. She made us challenge our perceptions and our preconceptions and made us consciously examine how we grew over the semester.”

“It’s important for students to not see this as a ‘volunteer’ experience,” explains Kramer. “That’s because our students are learning from their partners at their service-learning site. So, for example, I push them on answering questions related to how having a ‘savior complex’ toward the people at their sites is really taking an ethnocentric perspective.”

The experience pays dividends beyond creating well-rounded, culturally agile citizens. It actually creates better students. Research indicates that community engagement increases the odds that students will succeed in college. According to “The Role of Service-Learning on the Retention of First-Year Students to Second Year” in the *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, engaged courses enhance students’ academic engagement, sense of belonging and motivation for learning – and can have a positive relationship with GPA, retention and graduation rates.



## You’ve got this!

Developing a servant’s heart is nothing new at Saint Ben’s. When we break it down, what parts of gracious service do you see most in yourself? Which feel like developmental opportunities for lifelong learning?



### HABITS ACQUIRED BY SERVING GRACIOUSLY

You seek out ways to practice the Benedictine values of hospitality, dignity of work, respect for persons and stewardship.

You take time for personal reflection and personal development, knowing that when you’re more grounded on the inside, you’re better equipped to serve others.

You understand that spirituality is an important aspect of your identity and work at developing a better understanding of what that means in your life.

You carve out time to give back to your community through volunteering and/or principled leadership.



### RESULTS OF SERVING GRACIOUSLY

#### AS A STUDENT

By making more purposeful decisions regarding service and leadership, you discover new areas of interest and fulfillment. Feeling part of something bigger than yourself compels you to move beyond your own self-interests. In doing so, you see the broader implications for your community and the world.

#### AS AN ALUMNA

Applying the Benedictine values to your personal and professional relationships gives your life deeper meaning and broadens your definition of success. Having a strong spiritual foundation provides guidance and comfort, especially in challenging times.



## Embody the skills and attributes of personal and professional success.

### WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE?

Our students will refine and articulate their educational, career and life goals. These skills include appropriate use of campus resources, resilience in the face of challenges and opportunities, and development of habits for personal success.

### HOW WILL CSB/SJU MAKE THAT HAPPEN?

The CSB/SJU learning experience will provide students with opportunities and resources to make informed academic, personal and professional choices for the future.

College should be where big dreams are formed. And a close-knit residential college community like CSB offers a training ground for some of life's big leaps. For many students from a variety of backgrounds, there's something inherently courageous in just starting college.

For some of them, "live courageously" starts even before that.

"Collegebound is a journey into the unknown," says Kyle Rauch, environmental education coordinator at Saint John's Outdoor University and advisor for the Collegebound program. Collegebound is a sought-after outdoor orientation program

that takes incoming first-year students to northern Minnesota for the week preceding orientation. While there, students either rock climb, canoe, backpack or camp and explore.

After canoeing this summer for the first time in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, Ruthie Schutz '22 looks back and reflects: "It took a lot of teamwork and resilience, but we all made it through safely. It ended up being fun and I'm really happy we did it because if we hadn't, we never would have known that we were capable of making it through."

"This is healthy risk taking," says Rauch, "and the friendships formed and confidence gained transfer back to campus where Collegebounders can apply them to their new college setting."

Every Bennie lives courageously. Some just start sooner rather than later.

# Live Courageously



## You've got this!

Stepping out with courage is nothing new at Saint Ben's. When we break it down, what parts of courageous living do you see most in yourself? Which feel like developmental opportunities for lifelong learning?



### HABITS ACQUIRED BY LIVING COURAGEOUSLY

You work at continuously refining and articulating your educational, life and career goals.

You make a point to step outside your comfort zone in order to test your limits and open the door to new learning opportunities.

You're aware of how your actions impact your personal success, so you consciously develop habits that improve your student/professional life.

You value and take advantage of campus/community resources that will promote your success.



### RESULTS OF LIVING COURAGEOUSLY

#### AS A STUDENT

Being intentional about your academic and personal habits positions you for better results in your coursework. Taking responsibility for your actions creates a healthy sense of cause and effect for future success. Testing the edges of your comfort zone expands your wheelhouse and builds confidence.

#### AS AN ALUMNA

Having a solid framework for tracking toward your goals enables you to stay focused and empowers you to keep moving forward. When you're met with setbacks or failures, you view them as opportunities for learning and are able to re-adjust your approach. Practicing courageous living fuels your passion as a lifelong learner.