

## What the vaccine could mean for Saint Vincent

Samantha Hilyer, News Editor



The Saint Vincent community continues to administer and receive vaccines through a partnership with Mainline Pharmacy. (SOURCE: SVC FACEBOOK)

As the semester winds down, the Saint Vincent vaccine clinic continues to administer doses of the vaccine to students and other members of the Saint Vincent community. Around 350 students attended the first Pfizer clinic offered to students where they received their first dose. Dr. John Smetanka, vice president of Academic Affairs and academic dean, reported that an approximate additional 150 students have also been vaccinated at different locations or at different times. Smetanka said around 50% of the student population has received at least one dose of the vaccine.

But 50% is less than the amount of the Saint Vincent population that must be fully vaccinated in order for COVID-19 restrictions to be lifted safely.

"If we can get 80% of campus vaccinated, according to several studies, the chances of an outbreak amongst the Saint Vincent community will be low," Smetanka said.

But Smetanka also said that he thinks the vaccination situation is a "race against time."

"Viruses evolve rapidly," Smetanka said, "and the quicker that we can stop it from  
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## Planting seeds for future generations

Anthony Caporale, Staff Writer

On April 7, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee at Saint Vincent hosted its first of five information sessions. The one-hour session, addressing "Academic Excellence," discussed the first goal of the new 2021-2026 Strategic Plan. Students received an email from college president Fr. Paul Taylor, O.S.B., inviting anyone from the Saint Vincent Community to join the informational Zoom. Taylor also shared two documents outlining the key goals Saint Vincent wishes to address in the next five years.

Dr. John Smetanka, the vice president of Academic Affairs, explained the purpose of a strategic plan.

"A strategic plan is a document that establishes an institution's priorities and objectives for the growth and development over a period of time. A good plan also lays out the major steps to reach those goals (tactics), accountability for each of those tactics, and measurements that assess progress towards the plan's ultimate fulfillment," Smetanka said.

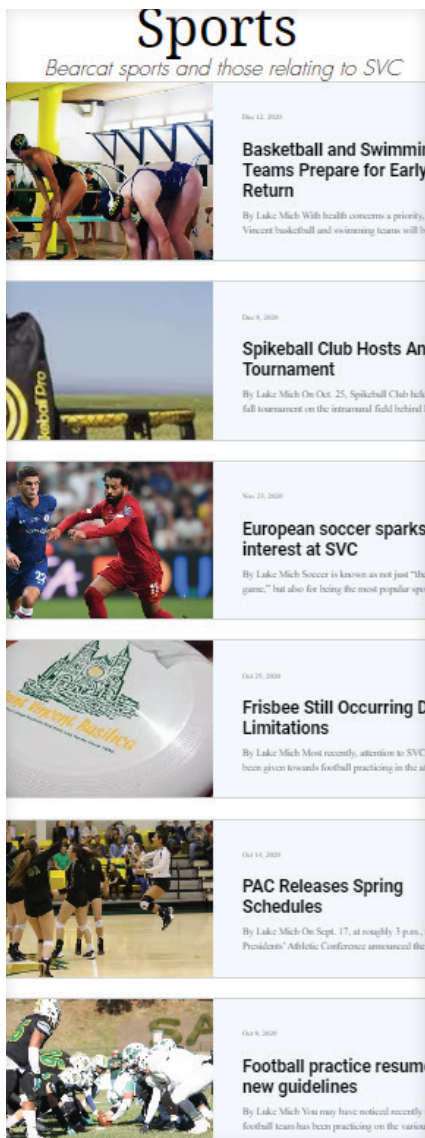
Saint Vincent has a current plan, but it is coming to an end. The 2016-2021 five-year plan saw some major accomplishments, according to Smetanka.

"The plan included the successful completion of an over \$110 million dollar fundraising campaign, the most  
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# NEWS

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## 50% have first dose

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spreading, will slow down the chances of the virus developing a variant that makes it even more contagious.”

While Smetanka is hopeful a majority of students will receive full vaccinations before the next semester, he reiterated that students’ decisions not to receive the vaccination must also be

about feeling the side effects of the second dose of the vaccine during finals week, accommodations, as with any illness, will be made. But Smetanka said that according to previous experiences of faculty and staff who have been fully vaccinated, he does not expect there to be too many students

**“If we can get 80% of campus vaccinated, according to several studies, the chances of an outbreak amongst the Saint Vincent community will be low.”**

**– Dr. John Smetanka**

respected.

“The choice to get the vaccine should be voluntary,” Smetanka said. “It has to be a choice from your heart and your mind.”

Smetanka reported that some students waited beyond the student clinic to receive the vaccine as they were concerned about receiving the second dose of the vaccine right before finals week on May 12. The following clinics, which were not student focused, offered the second dose on May 20, the last day of finals week.

For students who are concerned

who experience the flu-like side effects that can be caused by the vaccine.

However, some students who go home before they can receive the second dose on campus still have the ability to receive their second dose at home. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have recently updated their guidelines to accommodate students who receive their first dose on campus and are required to travel a long distance to home. Hometown providers are being advised to administer the second dose to those who received their first dose elsewhere.

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# Saint Vincent's plan for future years

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recent additions to campus facilities (James F. Will wing of the Dupre Pavilion), the new construction and renovations of the Latimer Library,” he said.

And because the 2016-2021 plan is ending, the committee is now preparing for the next five years. In the past weeks, Zoom sessions, like the one hosted on April 7, have been held to allow the entire community to voice their opinions.

“It is critical that all stakeholders have a voice in the development of the plan since it impacts the entire community,” Smetanka said.

These sessions are open to anyone who is interested; in fact, all are encouraged to attend.

“It is not too late to get involved, to read the draft of the plan, to watch the recordings of the information sessions, and to let your voice be heard as the Strategic Plan 2021-26 develops in the coming weeks,” Smetanka said.

As the discussion continues, the plan will likely see changes. The Board of Directors will be presented with the draft in June and the final approval will be voted upon in early September 2021.

Indeed, the first session saw spirited debate. Smetanka, who hosted the session, explained that Saint Vincent plans to “enhance the learning opportunities for all members of the community.” Academic programs must be evaluated for educational effectiveness, he said, while “developing, nurturing and promoting signature undergraduate and graduate programs, especially the core curriculum.”

Academic excellence in the context of the strategic plan, Smetanka asserted, is not so much about reaching a set standard of achievement as ensuring that each student fulfills his or her full potential.

“I would say that Saint Vincent strives

to ensure each student reaches his or her full potential, and that every student has the experiences at the College to be transformed into the person they want to become—a person dedicated and equipped to make a positive difference in the world around them,” he said.

Much of the session focused on “evaluation” and “assessment,” terms used in academia to refer to a standardized and data-driven system for measuring academic outcomes. Saint Vincent must maintain clear assessment procedures in order to retain its accreditation. In 2018, SVC received a warning from its accrediting agency over insufficient assessment procedures. In 2019, following new measures implemented by the College to meet the agency’s demands, Saint Vincent was successfully re-accredited.

Dr. Caryl Fish, professor of interdisciplinary science, emphasized the need for clear goals in the evaluation process.

“I think I agree with evaluating programs. But I do not see the aspiration there. Evaluating courses should be a tactic to get to where we want, which is to have the best programs,” Fish said.

Dr. Christopher McMahon, professor of theology, agreed on the need for a robust assessment process. He also suggested more coherent and focused funding for academic initiatives.

“I think one of the things that is important going forward is program assessment, it is something we have been lacking in . . . We are guilty of failing to fund initiatives sufficiently so that they contribute to the overall excellence of our institution. We got all these different ideas but putting money behind those ideas in a sustained way is something we need to work on,” McMahon said.

All Saint Vincent students have received an email with links to the complete recordings of every meeting.



# SPORTS

## Softball team concludes abbreviated season

Luke Mich, *Sports Editor*



Alexandra Dillner in an at-bat for a game against Grove City on April 6. The team split that doubleheader at home. (SOURCE: ATHLETICS.STVINCENT.EDU)

The Bearcat softball team ended its season recently, placing in the middle of the standings at the conclusion of the regular season. Players Riley Assalone and Celia Knappenberger discussed the abnormalities of the spring 2021 season.

"Normally we would have non-conference games to lengthen our schedule and give us a few extra games to get us ready for playoffs," Assalone, a senior psychology major, said. "We (had) no non-conference games this year."

Knappenberger, a junior integrated science, noted that because of having no out-of-conference games, the team played two doubleheaders against each

conference opponent, while in prior seasons they only played one doubleheader.

"One [doubleheader] was on the road and one was at home. The second time we played them it counted towards our [conference] record," Knappenberger added.

Another thing that changed: no pre-season games. While Assalone mentioned that the team played scrimmages last fall, they did not have the spring preseason games as is usual prior to each season.

"We normally go on our spring break to Florida to play eight preseason games. This season we did not get to,"

Assalone said.

Due to the two-week delayed start of the semester, the start of practices in the spring also started two weeks later than usual. Practices were constant during the spring, said Head Coach Nicole Karr.

"We practice five to six days per week depending on games. At practices we have had to wear masks the entire time but other than that it has been pretty much the same," Karr said.

To abide by COVID-19 guidelines, Karr said that 25% of the team was tested every two weeks.

Unfortunately, a couple of games got canceled and were unable to be made up due to COVID-19-related issues.

"We had a game canceled at the beginning of the season due to rain. Games that were canceled were not made up," Assalone explained.

The most impactful games that were canceled this past season came at the end of the regular season.

"Because of positive cases on the team, we didn't play the last two games," Knappenberger said.

"The last two doubleheaders and us being eligible for playoffs were canceled due to COVID," Karr said. "Because it was the last week of the season, there wasn't any time to make up the doubleheaders."

While the team's season ended prematurely, the squad still strung together some solid results, beating the number one team in the conference the day before the shelter-in-place took effect.

# Baseball postseason

Luke Mich, Sports Editor



TJ Dailey swings in the opening game of the season against Chatham. (SOURCE: ATHLETICS.STVINCENT.EDU)

When Saint Vincent enacted the shelter-in-place order back on Thursday, April 29, many sports seasons ended abruptly. While some teams saw their regular season cut short or had to forfeit upcoming playoff games that happened between then and when the order was lifted Wednesday, May 5, the baseball team was one of the few teams to continue place after the shelter-in-place. With no practices during that span, the team quickly had to get adjust to playing games again, as they resumed play Thursday, May 6.

“Our games versus Westminster were postponed when Saint Vincent went into lockdown. We played two games [against them] a week later,” TJ Dailey, a senior finance major who plays outfield, said.

The team split the two games against Westminster and then looked ahead to play the top team in the conference, Washington & Jefferson, for two doubleheaders over the upcoming week-

end starting May 8, the last regular season games. This was fairly common during the COVID-abbreviated season, Jordan Sabol, a sophomore business data analytics major who also plays outfield, explained.

“All of our games this season were played against conference opponents in a four-game series,” Sabol said.

While they played the first two games, the two games scheduled for Sunday, May 9 got postponed, then officially canceled, due to rain. With Saint Vincent tied for fourth after the news of the cancellation, the team went on to play Bethany, the team they were tied with, for the last playoff spot in the four-team postseason. Because of this, the Bearcat squad played Bethany in a win-or-go-home game at home for the last playoff spot. Before the game, Dailey and Sabol discussed what needed to happen to advance and win a spot into the tournament.

“Pitching and defense are essential, regardless of who we are playing. If

our pitchers command their pitches and our defense plays well behind them, we will be in a good spot to win,” Dailey said.

“It’s going to come down to how well we hit. Tom Bash is going to pitch us a gem, he’s been great all year. We’re going to need to score runs for him,” Sabol added.

The team went on to earn that last spot, winning 2-0 on Tuesday, May 11. Bash pitched eight shutout innings, striking out seven, and was awarded the win. Dailey got a double and scored from that hit for the team’s second run.

With a rematch against top-seed W&J to kick off the Bearcats’ postseason, the team will rely on a combination of great pitching, effective defense play, and a highly productive offense to have success. But Dailey and Sabol said more is needed to advance far into the postseason, which this year is a double-elimination tournament.

“Playing good fundamental baseball, having confidence in ourselves and having fun. If we do these things, we’ll be successful,” Dailey said.

“We need to play well in all facets of the game and believe we can play with anyone in our conference,” Sabol emphasized. “It’s going to take a full effort to do it, but we have the potential to make a deep run.”

The team plays its first game of the playoffs against W&J on Thursday, May 13. Regardless of that game’s result, their next playoff game takes place on Friday, May 14. If the team advances to the championship game, that game will be played on Saturday, May 15.

Results from games played after May 12 were not available at press time. The online version of this article will be updated to reflect them.

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# Team Standings

## Baseball

Team	W	L	Streak
W&J	34	1	W12
Grove City	28	8	W6
Franciscan	16	18	L1
Saint Vincent	15	17	L1
Bethany	16	21	L3
Thiel	14	20	W2
Westminster	13	19	W1
Waynesburg	12	20	L2
Geneva	11	24	L4
Chatham	10	23	L1

Schedule: End of Season

## Softball

Team	W	L	Streak
Westminster	30	2	W12
Geneva	33	5	W5
Bethany	19	15	L2
W&J	17	14	L2
Saint Vincent	12	15	L1
Grove City	14	18	W3
Chatham	13	19	L2
Waynesburg	12	24	L7
Franciscan	10	20	W2
Thiel	1	29	L9

Schedule: End of Season

## Men's Soccer

Team	W	L	Streak
Geneva	7	1	W1
Grove City	7	1	W5
W&J	6	1	L2
Westminster	4	3	W3
Saint Vincent	4	4	W1
Franciscan	3	4	L2
Bethany	3	4	W1
Waynesburg	3	4	L1
Chatham	1	7	W1
Thiel	0	9	L9

Schedule: End of Season

## Women's Soccer

Team	W	L	Streak
Grove City	8	0	W6
Chatham	6	1	W2
Westminster	5	1	T1
Franciscan	3	5	L1
Waynesburg	3	5	W1
W&J	2	2	W1
Saint Vincent	2	5	T1
Thiel	2	5	T1
Geneva	2	6	L3
Bethany	1	6	L3

Schedule: End of Season

## Men's Lacrosse

Team	W	L	Streak
Grove City	9	1	W8
Saint Vincent	9	3	W2
Westminster	8	4	L2
Chatham	6	4	W4
W&J	3	5	L2
Thiel	4	6	W1
Bethany	3	7	L1
Franciscan	0	11	L11

Schedule: End of Season

## Women's Lacrosse

Team	W	L	Streak
W&J	8	0	W8
Chatham	7	2	W2
Thiel	5	2	L1
Franciscan	4	3	W1
Saint Vincent	5	5	L2
Westminster	1	7	L3
Bethany	1	3	L1
Waynesburg	0	9	L9

Schedule: End of Season

## Men's Tennis

Team	W	L	Streak
Grove City	8	2	W8
Saint Vincent	6	2	W3
Westminster	5	4	L1
Franciscan	5	4	L1
Geneva	3	6	L1
W&J	1	6	L1
Waynesburg	0	7	L7

Schedule: End of Season

## Men's Track & Field

Schedule: @Gregory Invitational  
5/19-5/20

Results: 2nd at Bethany, 5th at  
Thiel, 4th at Grove City

## Women's Track & Field

Schedule: @Gregory Invitational  
5/19-5/20

Results: 8th at Bethany, 9th at  
Thiel, 10th at Grove City

# ARTS & CULTURE

## Dr. Snyder retiring

Sean Callahan, Arts & Culture Editor



Dr. Snyder teaches Language and Rhetoric, spring of 2018. (SOURCE: SVC FLICKR)

After over four decades of writing, researching and instructing college students, Dr. William Snyder, professor of English, is retiring from his career in teaching.

Snyder said this decision did not come to him overnight. In fact, retirement has been on his radar, in part due to many of his peers retiring in recent years. He has several reasons for retiring, but the most immediate has been the increasing reliance on screens to carry out his work and instruction.

"My eyes are not the best. With all the online teaching and grading, I get eye strain and headaches after about 45 minutes," Snyder said. "I struggled to keep up with all the submissions coming in just about every day. In short, I was fighting it—an alien, unhealthy feeling."

In his retirement, Snyder said he plans to continue to read and write and com-

plete a few projects, some of which go back several decades. But outside his English interests, he wants to hike, travel, and resume photography. Finally, he stressed commitments to visiting family and friends he hasn't seen for several years.

Snyder described his overall teaching experience at SVC as one that is filled with many high points. He felt very appreciated by the college through support of his research interests and course topics, including interdisciplinary studies focused on literature, visual art, and critical thinking through writing. He said he would miss the supportive environment and the inspiration he has received from students.

"There were maybe hundreds of times I would finish a conference or conversation with a student and think, 'how did this person get to be so awesome at such

a young age?'" Snyder said.

Snyder said a favorite memory of his, among many, is about an experience he had on Nov. 4 of 1988. He described how, two months prior to that day, he had instructed a course on The Sixties alongside a history professor named Roy Mills. They assigned a term project called "Twenty Years Ago Today," which was meant to analyze the year 1968. After two months of preparation, the project became a brilliant display across campus.

"We had speakers, authors, musicians, symposiums, displays, an art contest, movies and a dance that evening. Students dressed in paisley and tie-dye and hung banners across campus," Snyder recalled. "Local high school students were bussed in for the lessons and entertainment, and Pittsburgh TV and news crews came out to cover the events."

As he nears the end of his teaching career, Snyder says he hopes that all SVC students will embrace learning in all classes, rather than just those in their major.

"You are not at Saint Vincent merely to be trained to become an employee; you are here to become educated to be enabled and inspired to act as an agent of truth and goodness, as the college's motto states," Snyder said.

Furthermore, Snyder emphasized that students should be aware of their time and how fruitfully they spend it.

"Realize that one third of your days will be for work, and another third will be for sleep. The remaining hours are for self-determination. Learning art and music, psychology and theology, languages and wisdom will allow you to fill those hours with light."



# Senior Art Exhibition

Sean Callahan, Arts & Culture Editor



*The Pink House on Boyer Rd.*, Hannah Devine, 2021 (SOURCE: CALLAHAN)

When the SVC class of 2021 walks the stage on May 22, four senior studio art and art education students will be among them. Angelo Celani, Hannah Devine, Connie DiFrancesco, and Madison Starliper all received a spotlight from April 8 to May 14 at the Verostko Center for the Arts.

The exhibition displayed a variety of art from all four students, with different themes, styles, and art mediums. Paintings, drawings and pottery are only a few of the ways in which the students completed their work.

Celani, a studio art major, wrote in his artist statement that he largely prefers to use a variety of fine point markers and pens. He enjoys many subjects, but recently has been exploring the natural world and subjects that are often overlooked. Many of his pieces on display were

drawings, including a pink octopus and a 3D ram skull. He said much of his inspiration comes from today's world.

"I like pop culture and do a lot of fanart, so my inspiration develops a little more every time something new comes out, so long as I like it," Celani said.

Celani's art journey at SVC actually began with engineering. But he realized he didn't want math to dictate how he drew blueprints and schematics, leading him to change his major the following year.

Despite his wide range of interests, Celani thinks he knows what job he may pursue after SVC.

"Lately I've developed an interest in anatomy and wouldn't mind pursuing a medical illustration career somewhere down the line," he said.

DiFrancesco, also a studio art

major, centers her work around nature, human anatomy, and surreal subject matter like subconscious thoughts. She feels human anatomy has dominated her recent work, and she finds inspiration in her natural surroundings or faces she sees on social media. Much of DiFrancesco's work in the gallery was done on oil canvas.

DiFrancesco spent her first two years at SVC as an art education major, but switched to studio art—with a minor in psychology—when she realized education was not her comfort zone.

"My new major gave me more flexibility in terms of career and higher education possibilities," DiFrancesco said. "Having that base of education still proves to be handy so I wouldn't consider it a waste, just a step in the right direction!"

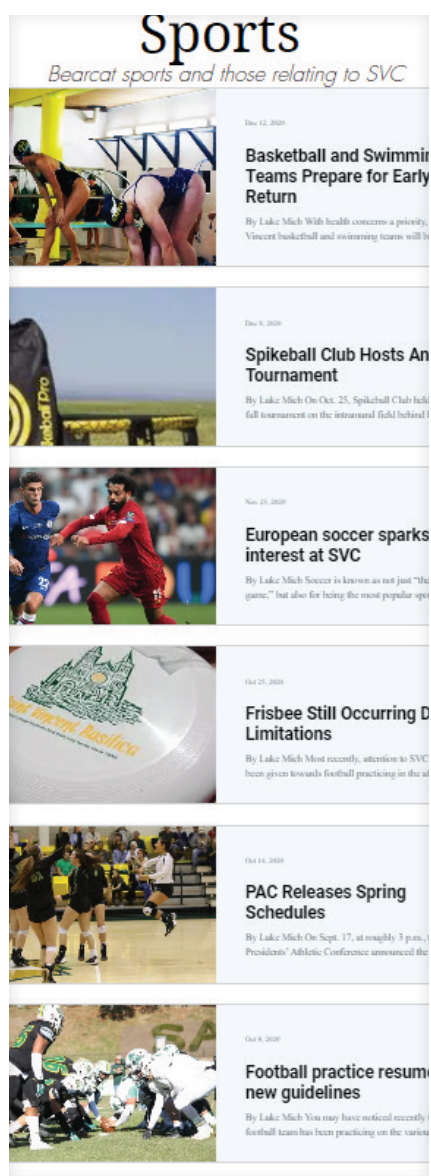
DiFrancesco currently has a marketing management job that she is confident will allow her to continue to pursue her creative and design skills outside SVC.

"Making art will always be something I will continue as a personal business, but I am excited to explore and advance my skills in this field," she said.

Devine, a studio art and graphic design major with a marketing minor, followed a similar path as DiFrancesco, since she also began her freshman year as an art education major. She specializes in watercolor and acrylic painting, and she used photographs of places she wanted to remember as her exhibit theme. According to Devine, much of her work was commission-based and not theme-related before the gallery.

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## Verostko Center holds senior art exhibit

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“Most work I made depicts places I have been to only because of my time at Saint Vincent. I would’ve never experienced those places had I not come to school here,” Devine said.

She finds much of her artwork is inspired by people around her, and the positive reactions of those who enjoy her work.

“Art is so much more than an object or a service,” Devine said. “It’s an expression of love and thought-

fulned by the fantasy books and movies she used as a form of escapism, especially in her early life, when she was in the middle of a split custody arrangement between divorced parents. She still considers high fantasy a consistent source of inspiration for her work.

“Anything with spells, heroes and quests to save the world are big inspirations for me, as they often have stories that I grow attached to,” Starliper said.

**“Art is so much more than an object or a service. It’s an expression of love and thoughtfulness that is portrayed differently through everyone you meet, which makes it that much more special.”**  
**-Hannah Devine**

fulness that is portrayed differently through everyone you meet, which makes it that much more special.”

Once Devine graduates, she will work full-time at Finish Thompson Inc. as the Marketing and Communications Coordinator, while doing commission artwork in her free time.

Starliper, an art education major since her freshman year, considers her general artwork and the work displayed in the gallery a reflection of her childhood daydreams and nightmares. Her art is also in-

Starliper originally struggled between wanting to become a teacher or an artist, but in high school, she realized she could fulfill both desires by being an art teacher. She has accepted a full-time job in the Washington County Public Schools system in Maryland, where she plans to work after graduating from SVC.

“I will be splitting my time between Hickory Elementary and Fountain Rock Elementary, and I am extremely excited to get started,” Starliper said.

# OPINION

## A higher calling

Jonathan Meilaender, *Editor-in-Chief*

What's the point of college? It is a question we should all ask ourselves, periodically, in order to avoid losing sight of our purpose amid a sea of worries over short-term problems. I recently promised to explain my own view of a better core curriculum. But I would like to expand the topic a little, because the reason I have for favoring a certain kind of core is closely related to a vision of what colleges—and specifically liberal arts colleges—should stand for.

The purpose of a liberal arts college like Saint Vincent begins with the liberal arts. “Liberal,” as I have noted before, comes from the Latin “liber,” or “free,” and is used here to denote an education suitable to a free person. This notion first arose in ancient Greece, where “freedom” entailed participation in government. This education was the kind of education suitable for free citizens: usually a smaller class who ran the city-state (in Athens, for example). It did not include women or slaves; they were not “free” and consequently not expected to govern. It was therefore rather a narrowly available education.

Today, of course, freedom is spread far more broadly: all Americans are expected to participate in government to some degree, at least to vote and to discuss public issues intelligently. Therefore, everyone should receive the kind of education necessary to do so wisely. We don't even need to call it “liberal arts education”; we could call it “education for democracy,” or something like that. But it certainly involves those disciplines that make it

possible to form an educated opinion on political issues; or, to put it more precisely, that knowledge needed to find the truth.

Ignorance is the true enemy of freedom. Imagine that I must choose between candidate X and candidate Y. If I act on the basis of inaccurate or limited information, my choice is not really “free”; the limits of my knowledge constrain me to make a choice that I might not have selected with a fuller understanding of the situation. Partial ignorance is often the worst. Today, we do have a very widespread notion that everyone should participate in politics and that everyone has a duty to inform him or herself on the issues. But we do not give citizens the tools to form good judgments. So people find a slick graphic with clever words and use it to form the basis of their views, without a clue as to whether those words are true or false. Thus people become not merely prey to their own ignorance, but prey, also, to the words of demagogues, who play upon their ignorance until whatever skills of logical analysis a person possessed are utterly lost beneath a mountain of interlocking lies.

What constitutes an education for democracy? The basics of philosophy; the principles of political science; good writing and speaking skills (in order to engage with others); preferably another language (for the political community does not include America alone); an understanding of logic; and basic scientific literacy. This foundation frees a citizen from ignorance in democratic things; not enough to

build a career in politics, maybe, but enough to distinguish truth from falsehood.

Every citizen needs this foundation. It is essential. But who provides it? Ideally, I think, not liberal arts colleges. In a better America, students would receive this preparation in high school, freeing them from the need to attend college (today, too many people are forced to get a degree simply to find a decent job) or permitting them to engage in deeper studies if they do attend.

For the time being, though, many people will not receive this education in high school, which puts the burden on higher education. But it is mistaken to assume that all colleges bear this burden equally. Many students attend public universities or lower-ranked private colleges (many of which do call themselves liberal arts colleges) in order to pursue a non-liberal arts major. These colleges have a particular burden to ensure that their students receive a democratic education, because most of their students will not have another opportunity to acquire it.

In practice, Saint Vincent is in that category. But that category is a very awkward place to be right now for a college that hopes to survive in the long-term.

This is true for two reasons. First, even though SVC has a solid financial foundation and tolerably good enrollment considering the pandemic, the financial outlook for small liberal arts colleges is poor. Several have already closed due to Covid, and many others

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# The liberal arts and the future of Saint Vincent

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face serious financial issues. These colleges face such serious risk mostly because of their heavy reliance on tuition (or room and board) to generate funds. That means that enrollment determines financial stability. And a pandemic naturally reduces enrollment. But other factors have been doing the same for years.

For example, many are cutting liberal arts majors in favor of the sciences, mathematics, engineering, or even social sciences. Of course there is sometimes a fine line between “liberal arts” and “social sciences,” but core liberal arts disciplines like philosophy, English, politics, and languages are generally seeing cuts. This only makes the problem worse—it forces liberal arts colleges to compete directly with public universities, and keeps them from standing out among their private peers.

State-funded public universities with free or greatly reduced tuition already pose a challenge for private liberal arts colleges. Many students would rather save money than go to a private college. And, as noted, many people are forced to go to college simply to earn a degree in order to get a decent job, not because they have any serious interest in education or because they want to study the liberal arts. These people naturally lack an incentive to choose a more expensive, private, liberal arts college.

This problem becomes worse when public and private and even community colleges are practically indistinguishable. Small liberal arts colleges try to compete with public schools on the things that public schools do best: cheap prices, excellent facilities, and lots of good job-preparation majors. This, of course, makes it still harder

to see why anyone wouldn't pick the public school or the community college: if they're both the same, but one is cheaper, pick the cheaper one. It also overlooks the main reason why someone would choose a liberal arts college: a good education.

The key to success for a liberal arts college is to stand out—and not just from state schools, but from other private schools, too. I remember, when choosing a college, that I was bombarded by advertisements from schools that all basically looked the same. They all had decently pretty campuses, about 1500 students, a good “faculty to student” ratio, wonderful “community,” perhaps a vague connection to some faith tradition, and middling academic stats. I put “community” in quotation marks because Saint Vincent advertises it too much. It's a wonderful thing, but not a good selling point, because you can also find it at any other small liberal arts college. SVC has yet to find an identity that stands out. This is especially evident in some of the marketing I've seen. I don't know what the college is trying to sell, except community, which is vague. The current slogan seems to be “Together, we rise,” which tells me nothing. The Catholic identity helps differentiate SVC, but is not always clearly communicated.

One of the best ways to stand out is an uncompromising commitment to academic excellence. Think about the private universities that stand out, even the small ones—the ones that don't run any risk of falling prey to Covid. I mean places like Middlebury, Vassar, Skidmore, Bowdoin, Kenyon, Amherst, and so on. These places will survive because their reputations will continue to attract good students.

And of course those students provide a financial return in the long run: they are likely to obtain prestigious, high-paying jobs, which makes them more likely to donate or to attract donors. These colleges don't need to emphasize a liberal arts foundation in the same way as colleges that attract students who merely need a degree to get a job.

That brings us to the second half of the equation. The point of a liberal arts college is not to provide a foundation. Liberal arts colleges need to think about fulfilling their mission by providing, not a foundation in the liberal arts, but mastery—a real commitment to the liberal arts that permeates the institution. A foundation is a low goal, one that simply accepts the fact that institutions that should be providing it (like high schools and public universities) are not, and therefore assumes that we need to pick up the slack. We should offer the basics to students who want and need them, but our calling is higher.

That means, for one thing, a small core, which may sound counterintuitive. But imagine that you're a student who really cares about the liberal arts. In that case, you already have interests, you probably already have a foundation, and you care about selecting courses that will make you a better citizen. And if you don't have such a foundation? Well, you are perfectly free to take introductory courses. Much like Aristotle's famous quote, “That which is common to the greatest number has the least care bestowed upon it,” courses which are required and predetermined do not draw much interest. People take them because they have to, not because they want to.

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# The thing you need more than money

**Dr. Michael Robinson**, *Assistant Professor of Engineering Sciences*

There is a popular YouTube video titled “What if money was no object?” In it we see scenes of modern life, and in the background hear the voice of Alan Watts saying, “It’s so amazing—as a result of our kind of educational system, crowds of students say ‘Well, we’d like to be painters, we’d like to be poets, we’d like to be writers, but as everybody knows you can’t earn any money that way.’” His advice is to find something you love, give yourself completely to that thing, and trust that money will come. This video speaks to our desire for a greater return on our work than a paycheck. I completely agree that work must be more than a way to make money, and Watts is right to recommend bravery, but I believe his solution is ultimately mistaken.

My own work is to design and build autonomous systems, and teach others to do the same. For that reason, I can tell you that the workless future could be closer than you think. In the past, robots were limited to dull, repetitive tasks, like painting cars; now, automation and artificial intelligence (AI) could replace even highly skilled workers such as radiologists, meteorologists, pharmacists, and office workers of all kinds. The imminent reality of an event we took for a future possibility can lead to radical change, as it does in movies where a character learns they will soon die. The first thing they usually do is quit their job; it is no longer needed.

Here, then, is a thought experiment: What if we could automate all needed tasks, and money truly became no object? Setting aside the question of whether we should do this (which is important to answer as well), I suggest that this future is possible. Let us assume that everyone could do as they pleased, and the necessities of life would take care of themselves. Would people use their time to pursue passions and interests, as Watts suggests?

The future depicted in the film

“WALL-E” seems more likely to me. In it, we see people who have left all work to machines and have become utterly passive as a result. We see no inequality, and everything that anyone could desire can be had at the push of a button, but it is not a desirable future. “WALL-E” is no 1984-style death by tyranny, but it is a death by pleasure. For the time being, the robots are the only ones with the capacity for action. Yet that is the reason the film is compelling; even children would not believe that people could be deeply engaged with life without doing any work.

Opportunity does not equal engagement. This was clearly seen in the rise and fall of Massively Open Online Courses (MOOCs). About a decade ago, top-tier universities started to release free online courses. Articles were written claiming this would be the end of higher education; it was not. In fact, almost no one bothered to complete these courses. In the same way, I have not observed financial freedom lead to more engagement with meaningful personal projects.

I do not know whether Alan Watts or the creators of “WALL-E” and the MOOCs read much of Saint John Paul II, but his 1981 encyclical “*Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work)” explains why there can be no engagement without work. He distinguishes between two senses of work. The first is the objective sense of work as something that produces goods and services. This sense of work is obviously essential, but even animals work in this way. Truly human work must consider the subjective side of work. It is a person who works, and through work, that person changes interiorly and becomes in a sense more fully human. Automation almost certainly will change the objective side of work, but the greatest risk is that we will be content with having our needs met. We may lose sight of the fact that the real thing we were trying to produce all along is ourselves.

Returning to the solution suggested by Alan Watts—that everyone should find the thing they love and do that—this approach will almost certainly fail because it tends to isolate us as individuals. Genuine human work must bring us into a community where others expect things from us, and we humbly work to meet those expectations. This natural inclination is perhaps why offering free education to students through MOOCs failed—there were no expectations for the students to meet. The French Dominican A. G. Sertillanges said it best in his book “*The Intellectual Life*”: “Work always then with the idea of some utilization, as the Gospel speaks. Listen to the murmur of the human race all about you; pick out certain individuals of certain groups whose need you know, find out what may bring them out of their night and ennoble them; what in any measure may save them.” Do you want to thrive in the workless robot future? Do not put your hope in becoming a computer programmer; instead, become truly generous. That virtue will keep you at work, and work is something you need more than money.

I have been speaking somewhat facetiously—there is no real threat to human work, except that we may forget that humans had worked before they ever lacked anything. No job caring for others will ever be effectively automated. Perhaps artificial intelligence will diagnose all future diseases, perform all surgeries, and dispense all medicine. But no one will ever want to find out they have a terrible disease from a robot or be cared for by even the friendliest automaton. Despite past increases in productivity, there are essential vocations that go short-handed. Consider the consecrated and ordained life; I have heard that in the 1980s there were 180 priests in the Diocese of Greensburg; now, there are 80. All of these opportunities show that there is more human work to be done than ever before.

# The liberal arts and the future of Saint Vincent

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Rigid core curricula hurt good students. I'm almost tempted to recommend the approach used by Amherst College, because I know that it would have appealed to me: no credit distribution requirements whatsoever. I would have enjoyed dividing up my sixty-odd core credits without restriction. But some standards are needed: for example, no one should graduate without knowing a foreign language, and I do not expect every student to fulfill commitments like these without guidance. So flexible standards are essential. A good core model should make judicious use of "demonstrated competencies." You can write a solid essay? Good, show us, and you don't need to take language and rhetoric. You are fluent in a foreign language? Good, take a test, and you don't need to learn another one. Naturally, this does not work for every field of study, but it is frequently plausible. Another way to achieve the same result is to include credit requirements for different disciplines, but permit students to fulfill them with any class from that major (naturally this involves eliminating overly simple classes). It's less an imposed burden and more of a fail-safe. The point is to attract good students and to treat them like good students.

It also means a stronger emphasis on liberal arts departments. Focusing on trendy majors may drive up short-term enrollment, but it will hurt in the long run, because, as described above, it makes the college indistinguishable from every other small college. We want programs that stand out: maybe we have a focus on modern languages (and to do that we need at least Russian and Arabic in addition to all the ones we offer). Or we have a journal-

ism program that involves a semester-long internship with a Pittsburgh newspaper. Or a philosophy program that leads the nation in bioethics. Or a flagship Great Books program in some discipline. The precise choice doesn't matter; what matters is the effort to stand out. And it means more funding for those programs, as well as the faculty to teach them.

Incidentally, this is not a condemnation of athletics, or even spending money on athletics. Athletics can serve as a fantastic addition to a liberal arts education; they teach plenty of good traits. Many strong students enjoy participating in a sport (like most of *The Review's* staff). That said, small liberal arts colleges sometimes overestimate the degree to which shiny new athletics facilities are actually going to attract new students; this temptation is another sign of an effort to follow the crowd. Strong academic programs and facilities should come first.

Creating a college like this is not necessarily easy. It involves short-term risk in the form of higher costs and possible lower enrollment. It means establishing higher academic targets for your incoming freshman class, it means spending more on faculty, it means channeling funds to merit scholarships, and so on. It also requires an effort to emphasize academic excellence in promotional material (instead of, say, community). And it means the right kind of curriculum. All of these things do involve cost or short-term enrollment losses. But it is hard to see how else small colleges will survive, because the risk of doing nothing is even higher.

This approach may spur one obvious criticism: isn't it a bit elitist?

It does involve becoming more selective. But I dispute the notion that selectivity equals elitism. Elitism implies some kind of undue or unfair favoring. It isn't unfair to favor students who seem most interested in and best suited to a liberal arts education, especially if merit leads to scholarships (thus allowing students with fewer financial resources to compete more evenly—actually, SVC already does well here). Indeed, if it is elitist to maintain strong academic standards, then life itself is elitist—anything worth achieving only comes through hard work. And the goal here is not exclude anyone with interest and work ethic: instead, the goal is to attract precisely those people, and academic metrics are only one tool in doing so.

My goal here is to provide a theoretical principle, not to explain the details of what Saint Vincent ought to do. Naturally, I think that the college does not yet exhibit the fuller commitment to liberal arts I would prefer to see, but this whole article would be pointless if not for the fact that the college offers an academic community with a genuine love of education. I am confident that both faculty and administration want this college to be as strong as possible, and I am confident that they recognize Saint Vincent's unique mission as a Christian liberal arts college. That is why I want to see this college thrive in the future—and why I hope it will embrace its calling more fully. A liberal arts college is oriented toward truth in a special and public way. Our purpose is not to be "just like everyone else." We are not just about providing jobs; we are not just about filling up majors. We must educate for freedom.



# The Abandonment of Foreign Languages at Saint Vincent College

Tyler Overmier, *Student Contributor*

Recently, it was announced that Saint Vincent College would be constructing a new core curriculum for the incoming freshman class in the fall of 2021. This new core curriculum includes fewer required classes. The “liberal arts” that have long been valued by Saint Vincent College are now in jeopardy.

There are a plethora of problems associated with this new core that question the liberal arts aspect of the school. The most considerable problem related to the new core is the complete abandonment of the Modern and Classical Languages Department at Saint Vincent College. With this new core curriculum, Saint Vincent College undermined the importance of keeping the foreign language requirement. No longer will students be required to take a foreign language (whether it be Spanish, French, German, Italian, Latin, or even Chinese). Saint Vincent College has neglected to look at the statistics regarding the importance of foreign language amongst students in America.

Learning a second language allows students to broaden their horizons to learn and gain an appreciation for different cultures and languages. Without learning about the importance of other cultures around the world, are students truly becoming educated? Without learning a foreign language, are students really equipped for the real world? With the age of acceptance in the workforce, why do educational institutions like Saint Vincent not see a need for students to learn a language other than their native tongue? Is Saint Vincent content with the idea that students should not be culturally educat-

ed? Saint Vincent College takes pride in how it prepares students for the future—but are students prepared for the future if they cannot connect with anybody except English speakers? Is Saint Vincent College OK with the fact that Americans are behind the world in terms of bilingualism?

The United States of America is far behind almost every country in terms of foreign language studies. In most countries, the educational system requires students to be bilingual (or even trilingual) so that they will succeed in their future career and social endeavors. Other countries around the world look down on the United States for Americans solely being able to speak English. It is quite uncommon for students in America to know a language other than English. This has become an enormous problem. The American educational establishment does not require students to be bilingual, which leads them into a world that they will not be able to connect with others who cannot speak English. In a country that is known for its cross-cultural background, why can Americans only speak one language? If Saint Vincent College was passionate about exposing students to different cultures and ideas, why would they put little emphasis on foreign language in the new core?

I have become fluent in Spanish at Saint Vincent College through the foreign language department. After taking both of my Spanish core classes, I gained a love for studying new languages and chose to add a Spanish minor. Also, having to take two foreign language classes as part of my core curriculum

allowed for a different perspective than my business classes could offer. Upon becoming fluent in Spanish, I can now connect with immigrants and families in my hometown of Crofton, Maryland. Within the year that I have gained fluency, I have been able to translate and interpret for Spanish-speaking citizens in my neighborhood and community. I attained the knowledge and understood the importance of being bilingual in a country that hosts so many different languages. After all, the United States is a melting pot for all different cultures and languages. So, I must ask again, is Saint Vincent College preparing students for their futures with the new core?

America is known to be a country that represents opportunity and acceptance. How are Americans being accepting of immigrants and other cultures if the educational system shows little importance for foreign language studies? How will students succeed in their career paths if they cannot communicate with people outside their language?

If Saint Vincent College still asserts that it is a liberal arts college, then the administration must revisit the decision to terminate the foreign language requirements in the core curriculum. With the lack of the foreign language requirements in the new core at Saint Vincent College, students will not be exposed to a diverse understanding of cultures other than their own. The importance of foreign language in educational institutions is colossal, and the fact that Saint Vincent College seems to be downplaying its importance is very worrying.

# Not the channel we need, the channel we deserve

Christopher Jewel, Student Contributor

Were you aware that Saint Vincent is home to its very own internet superstars? Well, look no further than Milkshake Night Productions. Oh, you've never heard of them? They might have been undercover as your classmates. Milkshake Night Productions is a comedy sketch channel made up of five guys just trying to make your days better. Founded by Brandon Hallick, Bradley Hallick, and Kendall Janosko, they began their journey to stardom as just three best friends who all happen to share a birthday. They then began to make food vlogs which you can find on the channel under the Munch Bunch playlist. These videos were fun for them, so they expanded onto something much better and less funny, comedy sketches, where they drafted two young hotshots onto the team. When Benjamin Edwards and Christopher Jewel joined the team, Milkshake Night Productions was formed. Together they've written and filmed some of the most family-friendly, funniest, action-packed, under 10-minute videos ever seen.

Some of their more popular videos are "Working Late," "The Jack O'Lantern," and "The New Roommate." Some of the things you might see in these sketches are, working after hours, carved pumpkins, and perhaps the meeting of roommates. If you don't enjoy these instant classics, sorry pal, but you just don't know what funny is. Although not truly established, many fans believe that these sketches all occur in one connected cinematic universe. You can find countless universe theories amongst the Milkshake theorist. But the strongest argument for supporting this idea is that Brandon starts any sketch doing work and that Brad is always the best actor in every video.

The guys at Milkshake Night productions have listened to the fans, and they've learned that "Quarantine Olympics" is the worst video. The fans are correct. You should most definitely stay away from that video. However, Brandon Hallick has gone on record saying, "A lot of people ask us why we keep Quarantine Olympics on the channel. And the answer is because it keeps us humble. Especially since our stardom is really taking

off, I think it's important for us to stay humble."

The fans don't know this about Milkshake Night Production, but they put a ton of time into their scripts. Their process for taking a joke to the screen can be broken into five phases; idea, writer's room, writing, filming, and editing. First, a joke or comical scenario can appear in one of the Milkshake Night Production's team members' heads. Next, the guys will meet to pitch ideas and inevitably veto Ben's idea (they're funny but only cause they're not good). Once they've reached an agreement on what sketch to make, they begin the writing phase. This phase can be a lot of fun and is full of banter, arguments, and battles to the death, all for a one-liner. Once a script is complete that the five of them can agree on, they will film the video throughout the week. That is if they feel like it. Filming can take anywhere from two to almost twenty-four hours. For a shorter video, such as "The Divine Debate," it took about four hours of filming, but the Oscar-nominated "Working Late," took close to twenty hours of just filming. After the crew finish filming, Brandon will edit together all the clips into the masterpieces that can be seen at Milkshake Night Productions on YouTube. And that's how a YouTube video is made.

That sounds super simple; however, the boys often struggle to juggle new videos with school, sports, and jobs. That's probably why we never post new videos, seriously guys like never. Take me, Chris Jewel, as an example. I'm an English major who is also on the swim team. I bet you can imagine just how tough it is for me to practice when there is a mob of fans asking for autographs.

So, does Milkshake Night Productions sound like a worthy investment of your time? Let me tell you, it is! I don't just say that because I'm an irreplaceable part of the team but I say it as a true fan. So quit reading and start watching.

*Chris Jewel is a team member of "Milkshake Night Productions," a student-run YouTube comedy channel.*

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