SEARCH PROSPECTUS:
President

St. Thomas Aquinas College
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**SEARCH PROSPECTUS: President**
The Board of Trustees of St. Thomas Aquinas College (STAC) invites inquiries, applications and nominations for the position of President. STAC is a coeducational, independent, nonprofit institution of higher education founded by the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, whose values and spirit continue to pervade the campus. Occupying a bucolic 60-acre campus in the historic Hudson Valley of New York, the College has the advantage of being located 15 miles outside of New York City and in close proximity to the major metropolitan area of northern New Jersey. The College serves both undergraduate and graduate students, offering a values-based education in the liberal arts and sciences, business, and education.

To help STAC find an innovative, dynamic, student-centered President, the following profile provides information about the College, a leadership agenda, desired qualifications for the next President, and information about the search process. The new President will take office on July 1, 2020.

### HISTORY

The Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, whose work began in New York City in 1876, founded St. Thomas Aquinas College for the education of its Sisters. Starting as a three-year teacher college with 30 students in 1952, STAC began accepting lay women in 1962 and became co-ed in 1970.

Throughout its history STAC has remained committed to the core principle of its namesake: to enlighten the mind through truth. Following the precepts of Thomas Aquinas, the College sees the nexus of teaching and learning to be the foundation of the quest to improve the human condition. Today, the College attracts and supports students of all faith traditions and seeks to foster a commitment to community and social justice through its academic and co-curricular programming.

### MISSION STATEMENT

St. Thomas Aquinas College is an independent liberal arts college that provides education at the undergraduate and graduate levels for students from all traditions. In continuing its Catholic heritage and the spirit of its founders, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, the College is committed to the principle of enlightening the mind through truth, as exemplified by Thomas Aquinas, and to the Classical Judaeo-Christian ideals which have contributed to the development of humanity. Accordingly, the College is dedicated to the development of each student consistent with the individual's resolve to work and ability to achieve.

The College, consistent with its commitments, requires each undergraduate to attain a broad foundation in the liberal arts and sciences. The College provides a range of undergraduate majors and graduate programs to assist students to prepare for careers or for further education through a deeper focus in a major field of study.

At St. Thomas Aquinas College, we’ve created a welcoming, caring and challenging environment for learning. Intensely student-centered academic activities and vigorous student-life programs are purposely combined to enhance the educational process and to foster intellectual, moral, social and spiritual growth.

Contained within this environment, St. Thomas Aquinas College assists each student in the effort to develop as an articulate and independent member of society who uses a reasoned approach to all issues, who strives to become a responsible citizen and leader in shaping the diverse world community, who lives in a manner exemplifying the principles of service, mutual respect, and individual responsibility, and who appreciates the value of learning as a life-long endeavor.
STAC TODAY

Total enrollment for Academic Year 2017-2018 included 1,778 FTE undergraduates (821 men, 957 women) and 137 FTE graduate students (45 men, 92 women); transfer students numbered 122 (72 men, 50 women). The institution attracts a diverse student body (59% Caucasian, 19% Latinx, 9% African-American, 3% Asian-American); one-quarter of the student population is Pell-eligible. Three-quarters of the students come from New York State.

STAC has a robust dual enrollment program with local high schools, enrolling nearly 900 students each semester. Students of all backgrounds are attracted to STAC, including recent high school graduates, returning adult students, working professionals, and veterans of the armed services. First-year to second-year retention in Fall 2017 was 74%, and the 6-year graduation rate of the 2009 cohort was 55%.

The College offers a wide range of academic majors, minors, and specializations at the undergraduate level, enabling students to earn degrees in Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Science in Education. STAC also offers degrees in Master of Business Administration, Master of Science in Education, Master of Science in Teaching, and Master of Public Administration in Criminal Justice, as well as Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees. With a faculty-to-student ratio of 1-to-17,
about 70% of the classes contain fewer than 20 students, and active and experiential learning is key to the faculty’s student-centered approach.

The most popular majors are biology, criminal justice, education, management, and psychology. Programs that demonstrate strong growth potential are sport management and exercise science, both of which are related thematically to athletics, an area of significant growth for the College. In terms of curricular offerings, STAC’s School of Education is the historical bedrock of the institution and has an outstanding reputation. A large percentage of teachers in Rockland County and the surrounding area have graduated from the School.

In addition to its own graduate programs, the College has created articulation agreements with other colleges and universities, enabling graduates to earn the following advanced or dual degrees:

- **New York University**
  A 3/2 or 4/1 agreement with their M.S.W. program, housed on the STAC campus

- **New York Medical College**
  A 7-year degree (4/3) with their Doctor of Physical Therapy program

- **Manhattan College**
  A 3/2 program in civil, electrical, or mechanical engineering, allowing students to earn a B.S. degree in Mathematics from STAC and a B.S.Eng. degree from Manhattan College.

- **Valley Hospital**
  Students spend their senior year at the Hospital to receive a B.S. in Medical Technology.

Beginning in the fall of 2019 through a new agreement with Le Moyne College, STAC students may receive priority admission in their M.S. program in Occupational Therapy or M.A. program in Arts Administration. The institution has articulation agreements with 11 community colleges, primarily within the SUNY and CUNY systems. The proximity to other colleges and universities offers other such articulation possibilities to an enterprising President and faculty.

In addition to the majors, minors, and other programs offered to undergraduates, STAC has a number of programs for select students. For example:

- An Honors Program offers many opportunities for enhanced academic growth, including a more challenging freshman writing sequence and more rigorous upper-level honors courses, typically about topics that are not traditionally covered in the other parts of the curriculum. In addition, participants can attend classes at Oxford University in the summer after their Junior year through an arrangement with the University of California, Berkeley.

- The Aquinas Leaders Work Scholarship Program provides students with 200 hours of work experiences, leadership opportunities, and mentorship from the faculty, administration, and staff.

- The Aquinas Success program, a specialized program for academically under-prepared students, offers a range of support services, consistent with the goal of the founding Dominican Sisters to provide access to education and its transformative value.

- A strong Higher Education Opportunity Program serves students from under-prepared and underfunded educational backgrounds.

- The Pathways Program is specially designed to support accepted students with learning disabilities. It offers professional mentorship and comprehensive academic support services beyond those legally mandated.

Furthermore, the College has two remote locations that allow STAC to extend the fulfillment of its mission. The program at West Point offers members of the Armed Services the ability to complete associate’s and bachelor’s degrees, and the newest location at the Sullivan Correctional Facility in Fallsburg, NY offers the men the opportunity to complete a B.S. in Social Sciences.
STUDENTS AND STUDENT LIFE

Approximately 55% of students live in college-owned, operated, or affiliated housing. Two residence hall complexes, offering everything from single-occupancy rooms to quads, are located on the campus, and a planned 72-bed residence hall will enable more on-campus residency and reduce overcrowding in existing halls.

STAC hosts 36 student clubs --- from those with an academic, ministry, or cultural orientation to those designed for entertainment and/or competition. Consistent with the College’s mission, community service is an important part of student life. In registered community service activities alone, more than 200 students devoted over 1,500 hours in the past year to organizations such as One to One teaching ESL and to various food drives and park clean-ups.

The College sponsors 20 NCAA Division II athletic teams (9 for men, 11 for women), involving more than 300 student athletes, and more than 150 students participate in Club Sports, including Sprint Football, E-Sports, Ice Hockey, Volleyball, Soccer, Baseball and Cheerleading/Dance. The Spartans and Lady Spartans have been quite competitive in recent years; during 2018-2019, the women’s triathlon team, men’s and women’s basketball, men’s track, men’s tennis, men’s and women’s cross country, and men’s golf all participated in NCAA postseason tournaments, earning the Athletic Department 2nd place in the East Coast Conference Commissioner’s Cup. Among the many other notable awards or honors STAC athletes, teams, or coaches earned this past year was the ECC ASR award for the highest academic success rate. Athletes, like other students at STAC, participate in numerous community service activities.

The College conducts a First Destination Survey the year after graduation. On the most recent survey, 77% of recent bachelor-level graduates reported full-time or part-time employment and approximately 16% of graduates were enrolled, or planned to enroll, in graduate school.

RECENT PUBLIC ACCOLADES & DISTINCTIONS

- Ranked by U.S. News and World Report in 2019 as a Top Tier Institution (#126 in Regional Universities - North)
- Colleges of Distinction (both the NY and Catholic editions; 2018-19; with special mention for both the School of Business and School of Education)
- Certified as a Fair Trade Institution (Oct. 2018)
- Ranked by Money magazine as one of the 700 Best Colleges (#188) (Sept. 2018)
- President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll (2015)

Students’ safety and security are important to STAC, and just as important is the office’s community-building and student-centered orientation. STAC’s Campus Safety Office is only one of two non-sworn departments nationwide with International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA) accreditation (and one of 30 overall counting both sworn and non-sworn departments).
FACULTY AND STAFF

STAC hires faculty and staff who put students and student learning first and work hard to provide a family environment on campus. Full-time faculty members number 52, 90% of whom hold doctoral degrees or the equivalent in their discipline. Half of the full-time faculty have been hired within the last 12 years. The College’s approximately 108 adjunct faculty enable the College to offer a fuller range of courses and often bring current professional and field experiences to their classrooms. Adjunct faculty typically are required to hold a master’s degree in the academic area in which they are teaching. The College employs 106 full-time administrative/professional and support staff. The part-time staff numbers 97, including 55 seasonally hired coaches.

ACCREDITATION

St. Thomas Aquinas College is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The School of Education is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and its School of Business is accredited by the International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE).

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The Board of Trustees currently consists of 32 members, including the President who is a voting member. Members are elected to 4-year terms and are eligible for re-election to a maximum of three full consecutive terms. Standing committees of the Board include: Executive Committee, Committee on Trustees, Academic Affairs, Audit, Campus Planning, Institutional Advancement, Investment & Finance, and Student Development.

The founding congregation remains involved and supportive of the College, and several of the Dominican Sisters currently sit on the Board of Trustees.

The President’s administrative cabinet includes five members in addition to the President: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Treasurer and Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Vice President for Enrollment Management, and Vice President and Dean for Student Development --- all of which aid in leading the College community.

INSTITUTIONAL FINANCES

The institution’s operating budget is $30 million, and the endowment is close to $47 million. The College has been fiscally conservative and has outstanding debt of only $2.4 million.
ADVANCEMENT

The College and its Board of Trustees are supportive of advancement efforts, as demonstrated through their commitment to an ambitious $29-million comprehensive campaign. Launched in 2016, the Best YOU Ever campaign has raised more than $5.6 million dollars to date which supports student scholarships, academic innovation, athletics and wellness, and student housing.

STAC takes pride in the achievements and contributions of its more than 13,000 alumni located across the United States and around the world. Each year a growing number of alumni give to the Annual Heritage Fund or volunteer in a variety of capacities. The 20-member Alumni Board promotes the general welfare of STAC, fosters relationships among constituencies, and encourages alumni participation in fundraising. Another invaluable group is the President’s Council, which is primarily an advisory board, making a wide variety of individual experiences, expertise, skills, and talents available to the President. The Council also hosts the Annual Golf Tournament.

LOCATION AND CAMPUS

Located in Orangetown, NY (population: approx. 49,000), St. Thomas Aquinas College is set on a bucolic, suburban 60-acre campus in Rockland County, NY (population: approx. 312,000), the southernmost county on the west side of the Hudson River. Rockland County is a suburb of New York City that borders the boroughs about 9 miles northwest of the city at their closest points and is accessible via the New York State Thruway.

The College is three miles from Bergen County, NJ and is close to the Palisades Center in West Nyack, the eighth-largest mall in the United States, as well as more than 3,000 acres of public parks. Additionally, the College is closely located to many local shopping centers and restaurants, as well as opportunities to experience local art and music in Nyack and Piermont.

STAC’s campus contains state-of-the art facilities — the Bloomberg Professional Laboratory, the Innovation Center equipped with 3D printers, the Kraus Fitness Center, HD Television Studio, Digital Imaging Labs, to name a few — that provide students with top-notch technology and hands-on experience to develop their minds, bodies, and spirits.
THE NEXT PRESIDENT

The next President of STAC will be a visionary and entrepreneurial leader who will be able to advance innovation while embracing the rich heritage and values of the institution, continuing the spirit of community and family that abounds on campus. STAC will look to the President for empowerment, collaboration, and exemplary leadership to take advantage of opportunities to strengthen the institution for long-term success. It is expected that the new President will foster and promote a strong sense of community both on campus and within the local area. Of great importance will be a demonstrable track record and strong examples of transformational leadership providing evidence of vision and strategy development, stakeholder alignment and mobilization, and sustainable results and impact. This will be necessary to ensure the College’s next leader is capable of transitioning STAC to its next phase of academic excellence and relevancy in a continuously and rapidly evolving market for higher education, graduates, and faculty.

KEY PRIORITIES

Provide Distinguished/Trusted Leadership:
STAC is a caring community of residential and commuter students, faculty, staff, and Dominican Sisters living and working together in an atmosphere of respect and common purpose. The faculty and staff will continue to look to the President for leadership, collaboration, and empowerment. The President must engage the entire community in reflecting, visioning, and planning for the future of the institution. S/he must embrace diversity in thought and action, and model a life of intellectual achievement, acceptance, and inclusion as lived by the institutional community. The President must engage the community in discussions of the academic mission and program, encourage the setting and achievement of high standards, and serve as an external interpreter and enthusiastic spokesperson for the College, its academic mission, and its programs. It is expected that the new President will continue to provide a style of leadership that recognizes the central importance of building a strong campus community.

Resource Development: The President must be a steward of the College’s finances and investment performance from both strategic and operational perspectives. With STAC’s stable financial picture, the next President can build on prior successes. S/he, in alignment with the advancement team and Board of Trustees, will prioritize needs and embrace fundraising with donors, foundations, corporations, and new audiences. A generous Board of Trustees, as well as Alumni Board and President’s Council, are willing and able to leverage their networks in the region and beyond to support these endeavors. The President has opportunities to grow the annual fund and create a strong pipeline of planned and outright gifts from the 13,000 alumni, many of whom have achieved financial success and are of an age to consider “giving back” to the institution that started them in their successful careers. Establishing strong relations in the extended community will also assist with marketing and forming relationships and partnerships with business, government and industry.

Facility Improvement: The campus grounds are well-landscaped, the brick campus buildings present well to visitors, and there is little deferred maintenance. In terms of campus improvements, the current strategic plan calls for the addition of a fieldhouse and a new 72-bed residence hall; resources are already in hand for the latter. The next President will be expected to identify funds for the new fieldhouse, continue ongoing upgrades to academic and student life spaces, and further STAC’s sustainability initiatives.
**Academic Planning:** The Board of Trustees and the faculty are eager to engage the new President in conversation about how best to prepare STAC students for life after graduation, and especially to equip them with technological and other skills that will ensure their success in entering the job market. With substantial, existing variety in curricular programming covering the liberal arts, education, and business, the College has an opportunity to rethink its offerings and decide where to focus attention to best attract and serve students applying to college in the future. The next President will be expected to lead these planning efforts, working with both the Board of Trustees and the faculty in determining future directions.

**Enrollment Planning:** Like all institutions of higher education and especially those in the college-rich Northeast, STAC has experienced increasing challenges in enrollment. The next President must be familiar with marketing and enrollment strategies and be ready to take advantage of the substantial strengths of the institution, as well as new or revised academic programs, to grow student populations. This will require working closely with the Board of Trustees to propose and advocate optimal achievable goals for undergraduate and graduate enrollment that is mission-relevant and complements the core curriculum. Program standards and assessment models must be reassessed to ensure the highest quality returns for students and the community. Distinctive programs should be marketed and promoted to both undergraduate and graduate students. The College’s articulation agreements with area community colleges, its strong transfer enrollment history, and its proximity to other higher education institutions and to major metropolitan areas provide a wealth of options for partnerships and for enrollment growth.

**People Development and Team Building:** Given its current and future challenges and opportunities, it is imperative the next President is committed to sourcing, developing and retaining superior talent across all College functions. A strong network of contacts and ability to attract and hire the level and quality of talent that assures STAC operates in a model of continuous improvement is necessary. Further, including, engaging, aligning, motivating, and mobilizing diverse constituencies across the College community for purposes of the common and consistent pursuit and achievement of the College’s goals and plans is essential.
The next President of St. Thomas Aquinas will have demonstrated effective leadership in a changing environment. Successful candidates will be expected to possess the following qualities:

- Strong appreciation of the distinctive values and mission of the College and its Catholic heritage, classical and Judeo-Christian ideals, and the spirit of its founders, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, all creating the College’s rich history of traditions. The next President may be of any faith and will be a person of integrity and compassion, with a commitment to service and social justice, encouraging these qualities in students;

- Ability and desire to sustain the College’s welcoming environment for students from diverse backgrounds, including all faith traditions and those of no faith;

- Strong financial acumen and an entrepreneurial mindset;

- Understanding of the higher educational environment today and the challenges for tuition-driven institutions of providing an affordable and high-quality education;

- Aptitude for asking others to support a distinctive institution financially and the necessary passion to be successful;

- Genuine interest in building and maintaining positive relationships with alumni and friends of the College;

- Collaborative leadership style that embraces transparency, builds relationships, and fosters community and civic discourse;

- Deep and demonstrated commitment to all types of diversity, inclusion, and social justice;

- Excellent communication skills to articulate the values and strengths of the College both internally and externally;

- Understanding how to lead faculty to strengthen and bring focus to liberal arts and professional programs;

- Experience building successful partnerships and networks to benefit the institution and its students;

- Ability to balance growing external demands of the presidency while finding pleasure in participating in the life of campus constituencies;

- Commitment to “putting students first”;

- Energy, stamina, enthusiasm and a sense of humor; and

- Ph.D. or other terminal degree preferred, but not required.
To apply, a candidate should submit: 1) a detailed letter of interest addressing the issues and desired attributes for St. Thomas Aquinas College as outlined in this profile, 2) a full resume/CV with relevant administrative responsibilities and accomplishments, and 3) a list of five professional references, including names, phone numbers, and email addresses, noting the candidate’s relationship for each reference. References will not be contacted until later in the search process and only with the candidate’s knowledge. Please send materials as an email attachment in Word to STACPresident@academicsearch.org.

By College policy and search committee affirmation, all information from and about candidates will be kept in strict confidence. For full consideration by the Search Committee, applications should be submitted by Wednesday, September 4, 2019. Additional information about the institution may be found at https://www.stac.edu.

Academic Search is partnering with St. Thomas Aquinas in the search for its next President:

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Non-discrimination Policy
It is the policy of St. Thomas Aquinas College that no person on the basis of race, color, religion, ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, or disability shall be discriminated against, excluded from participation or employment in, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which St. Thomas Aquinas College is responsible.
ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

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