

March 2014

# History of Saint Mary's College

Saint Mary's College of California

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### Recommended Citation

Saint Mary's College of California (2014) "History of Saint Mary's College," *Staff Handbook*: Vol. 2014 , Article 6.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.stmarys-ca.edu/staff-handbook/vol2014/iss1/6>

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## History of Saint Mary's College

In its second century of Christian education, Saint Mary's College of California is one of the oldest colleges in the West. Dedicated in San Francisco by Archbishop Joseph S. Alemany, O.P., in 1863, the Brothers of the Christian Schools assumed its operation in 1868 and have since then determined its character and growth. Under the laws of the State of California, the College was incorporated in 1872 and given a charter empowering it to confer degrees and to exercise all other privileges of a university. The campus was relocated in Oakland in 1889 and in Moraga in 1928. In 1969, a 4-1-4 calendar and curriculum was adopted for the undergraduate program, and in 1970 the College became co-educational.



**The Brothers of the Christian Schools**, founded by Saint John Baptist de La Salle in France in 1680, are lay religious who live in community and devote their lives to the Christian education of youth. Forming the largest teaching congregation of non-clerics in the Church, with some 4960 Brothers and 77,301 Lasallian colleagues teaching students in 80 countries, the Brothers bring to their teaching a 300 year tradition of religious dedication, educational philosophy, scholarly preparation, and an eagerness to share with youth the excitement of learning.

**The Students of the College** are a reflection of the history of the College, for Saint Mary's seeks to provide higher education opportunities for various social classes, but particularly for those whose educational needs are for various reasons not satisfied elsewhere and to which a proper

and adequate response can be made. Reflecting the Lasallian tradition of a Christian education oriented to the needs of students, the College at various times in its history has included a Law School, a School of Commerce, an engineering department, as well as programs focusing specifically on the humanities. During the history of the College, the expansion of both student population and academic programs has reflected the educational needs of students for which the College exists. Although, since 1970, the College has steadily extended its service to a broader and more diverse community of learners in terms of age, experience, interests and educational needs, it seeks to keep a firm eye on its central academic aim: the development of the capacity of responsible independent thought.

**The Faculty and Staff of the College** is composed of lay instructors, priests, Sisters, and Brothers. Members of the faculty are selected and promoted primarily for their dedication to and skill at teaching. The College aims at being a community of scholars, and while original research and publication are valued as contributions to intellectual vitality and self-renewal of faculty, they do not take precedence over active membership in the intellectual community of the College wherein dedication and commitment to good teaching is a hallmark. In general, the size of the College and the interests and dedication of its faculty make for extraordinarily close, informal and personal relationships with students. The evaluation of the faculty is made in terms of excellence in teaching, personal orientation to students, scholarly interests and pursuits and commitment to the aims and ideals of the College.