



From the President



PRESIDENT ISABELLE CHERNEY, Ph.D.

July 15, 2026

Dear Mount Mary Community,

As we come to the close of this fiscal year and I reflect on my fifth year serving as your president, I am filled with deep gratitude. These years have been defined by extraordinary people, meaningful work, and the privilege of serving our remarkable and resilient students, whose determination and dreams inspire me every day.

I write today to share some personal news. After much reflection, prayer, and heartfelt conversation, I have made the decision to retire as President of Mount Mary University on June 30, 2027, to spend more time with my family. This is not easy news to share, as this community and its mission mean so much to me.

Serving as president of this extraordinary university has been one of the greatest honors of my life. When I first stepped into this role, I was drawn deeply to Mount Mary's mission to educate, inspire, and empower students, especially women, for lives of leadership and service grounded in the enduring values of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. That mission has shaped my presidency and, in many ways, shaped me.

Together, we have navigated a time of both challenge and transformation in higher education. I am especially proud of the ways we have worked collaboratively, as faculty, staff, students, trustees, alumni, and partners, to strengthen Mount Mary for the future. I will always carry with me many of the pivotal moments and advances such as: the launch of the Institute for the Advancement of Women and Children; the new Core Curriculum and extraordinary retention with top rankings in Social Mobility in the Midwest (US News and World Report); the innovative STREAM programs including becoming the first in Wisconsin to offer reduced-credit, 3-year bachelor's degrees and offering forward-looking majors in business analytics, cybersecurity, digital marketing, computer science, web development, healthcare administration and artificial intelligence, an important step in ensuring our academic programs meet the evolving needs of students and the workforce. The 3+1 masters' programs in Social Work and MBA will provide affordable graduate degrees for some learners. Equally meaningful has been the growth of scholarship and grant-funded initiatives that have expanded access and opportunity for students who might not otherwise have imagined themselves at Mount Mary. I am proud of our more recent Wisconsin grants that will allow us to build a future nursing skills lab and classroom, as well as an Integrated Healthcare Education Center, and the recent Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development grant that supports our efforts in educating urban teachers to reduce the shortage of teachers in Milwaukee.



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I also reflect with gratitude on the collective work we have done to stabilize and steward the University's financial future with care and transparency. These efforts have not always been easy, but they have been essential and they have been guided by a shared commitment to mission and to one another. I am very grateful to our community and our dedicated alumni and friends for their gifts of time, treasure, and talent. We are one community shaping tomorrow's game-changers!

I will never forget the joy of celebrating hooding and commencement ceremonies with our graduates and their families, the creative energy of Scholars' Day and the Fashion shows, Summer Leadership Academy, Voices of Leadership and other student showcases, and the countless moments, both large and small, that remind us why this work matters so deeply. I have been continually inspired by our students' resilience and promise, and by the dedication, creativity, and care that our faculty and staff bring to this community each day.

We have also faced difficult decisions together, tight financial realities, leadership transitions, and the need to adapt in an ever-changing environment and uncertain times. Through it all, I have been grateful for the spirit of shared governance, transparency, and mission-centered decision-making that defines Mount Mary. It is this spirit that gives me great confidence in the University's future.

As I enter my final year, please know that I remain fully committed to the important work ahead. I will work closely with the Board of Trustees, Corporate Board, and campus leadership to ensure a thoughtful and smooth transition, and to sustain the strong momentum we have built together.

Mount Mary is truly a special place, one grounded in faith, committed to justice, and dedicated to the flourishing of each student. It has been a privilege to serve alongside you in this mission. You have welcomed me, the stranger from a foreign land with open hearts. You have made me feel at home and inspired me. I am deeply grateful for the relationships we have built, the work we have accomplished together, and the shared hope we hold for what comes next. No one creates life-changing opportunities for students, families, communities in our region like we do. This place will always hold a very special place in my heart – I am a Blue Angel for life!

There will be time in the months ahead to celebrate and reflect more personally. For now, please accept my sincere thanks for the community you have created and for the role each of you plays in advancing Mount Mary University.

With deep appreciation,

Isabelle D. Cherney, Ph.D.
President

