



January 19, 2021

Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
310 City Hall  
15 Kellogg Blvd. West  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Councilmember Jalali,

I join President Sullivan in urging you to support the University of St. Thomas' appeal of the ruling of the Heritage Preservation Committee about Loras Hall.

As the founding dean of the new Morrison Family College of Health at the University of St. Thomas, I see the tremendous opportunity to build healthier communities in St. Paul and beyond through education. By launching a new college of health, St. Thomas is responding not only to the shortage of health providers and leaders required to promote healthy families and communities, but also to address the deep racial and economic disparities that exist which has been caused by a fragmented health care system. We are building a unique college where students will learn to provide whole-person care to address the physical, mental, social and spiritual needs of individuals, while actively working to advance systems change to eliminate health disparities. The STEAM complex will allow us to provide the best possible educational experience to our students and locates the health sciences in an accessible location for our students. We envision also using this STEAM to design new strategic partnerships and to engage our communities more so than before.

This complex will also ensure that we serve students in growing, high-demand fields such as nursing, engineering and the sciences; and diversify these fields as we intentionally welcome more students and faculty of diverse backgrounds into St. Paul.

**Two exciting priorities in this building that are also important to the City of St. Paul:**

1. **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**– A top priority is to continue to diversify our STEAM programs and provide an atmosphere where students from many backgrounds want to learn and be compelled to engage with our local community. Our current engineering program is among the top 10 engineering programs in the country for the number of women engineering faculty. We have made great strides in attracting students of color who want to join our engineering undergraduate and graduate programs, but we can do more. President Sullivan appointed an inclusive design committee to help create a welcoming space. We are working with an architect from the University of Minnesota who specializes in inclusive design, and we intentionally selected firms that have committed to subcontracting and working with women and minority owned businesses.

2. **Sustainability-** While Loras Hall is extremely inefficient in energy use, the STEAM building will be LEED-certified. As St. Thomas replaces an energy-inefficient Loras Hall adjacent parking lot with a LEED-certified building and green space, we will become a more sustainable campus. This is in line with our first-ever sustainability strategic plan to embed sustainability practices and education throughout campus and to become carbon neutral by 2035.

As a Board Member Emeritus of the Minnesota Historical Society, I understand the need to appreciate and understand our past. As the former President of the Wilder Foundation, I believe in legacies and the deep need to balance the past with making way for how St. Paul is changing and what it needs to stay relevant and impactful for our residents. As an educator who is committed to creating a college rooted in teaching and the discovery of new knowledge to make it useful for our students and the community, I strongly believe our actions right now can help make way for the future so that our shared vision for a strong St. Paul is possible.

St. Thomas is embracing the change and creative thinking that St. Paul needs to meet our future challenges. We need support from the City Council to be able to create opportunities for young people that positively impacts this City as a gateway to the world.

I appreciate your support for our students and their future.

Sincerely,



Maykao Y. Hang, D.P.A

Founding Dean, Morrison Family College of Health