




Society of Saint Edmund

District #4 Environmental Commission
111 West Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452

September 9, 2019

	VERMONT
ACT 250 District Commission	# 4
Application #:	4C0320-29
Exhibit #:	025
Date Received:	9/10/19

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the Society of Saint Edmund, founders of Saint Michael's College, I wish to express our communal support for the decision to take down Founders Hall. It is not without considerable sadness, as many of us Edmundites have fond memories of times spent within its walls. Yet, we support the decision because salvaging the building would represent an unconscionable expense for the College, and require such dramatic alterations, that it would scarcely represent the building we once knew, bearing only its familiar name and some aspects of its profile. In fact, the building today is quite different from the building that was originally erected, having undergone a number of significant modifications inside and out throughout its long history.


While buildings like Founders Hall are important to the history of the College as they help link us to our past and help us better appreciate where we came from, retaining them must be carefully considered in light of the Mission they were erected to help fulfill. Founders Hall no longer serves the mission of the College. Moreover, based on the reports I have read from numerous studies, enacting a project to transform the building into something that could serve the mission of the College is not in any way a reasonable expense or fundraising endeavor. Pursuing such a course could even undermine the College's mission by increasing debt and drawing donor and College funds from other important initiatives.

The true Edmundite contribution to Saint Michael's has not been architectural but spiritual and intellectual. That legacy handed down from our forebears is more than ever alive and well, even as the College endeavors to address pressing financial and enrollment issues. I was delighted that a Power Point presentation to the Board of Trustees by a lay professor on a new major, Criminology, emphasized this heritage, grounding the new major in Catholic intellectual and moral values. The final slide was a full-screen picture of the Edmundite cross—our logo—emphasizing the importance to the faculty both of those values and of the particular Edmundite devotion to the social justice teachings of the Church. I could not have been more pleased, and it is to causes like this, rather than to building costs, that funding should be directed to preserve and promote our heritage.

We understand and appreciate the affection that our alumni have for Founders Hall. Yet, the heart of Saint Michael's College is not in its buildings, but in its people. It is in the faculty, staff, students, and alumni that together work to make our world a more compassionate and loving place for everyone.

We appreciate this opportunity to address the Commission.

Sincerely,



Very Reverend David G. Cray, SSE
Superior General