



ADRIAN DOMINICAN SISTERS

1257 East Siena Heights Drive
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Statement by General Council of Adrian Dominican Sisters on Closure of Siena Heights University

June 30, 2025, Adrian, Michigan – It breaks our hearts to join in the wise but painful decision of the University Board of Trustees to close our beloved Siena Heights University at the end of the 2026 academic year.

Founded by our Congregation more than a century ago as a college for women, this Catholic Dominican institution has expanded over the years to give people of all faith traditions, socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, nationalities, racial identities and genders a top notch, values-based education. We are so proud of all the students, faculty, staff, leaders and trustees who are now or have been a part of the Siena community since 1919 and have lived competent, purposeful, ethical lives – contributing their God-given gifts for the common good of our world and Earth home.

We extend deep gratitude to President Douglas Palmer, PhD, and the members of his Cabinet – as well as Board Chairman Harry “Dusty” Steele, and the University Trustees – for their faithful and dedicated efforts to find a pathway forward through the formidable financial and demographic challenges that Siena Heights University, like many other small private higher education institutions in our country, has been facing for a number of years. These leaders, faculty and staff envisioned and began to pursue some promising ideas for the future of Siena Heights University that aimed to provide students with educational opportunities that would meet both current and anticipated needs of rural communities like our own. We are grateful to the benefactors who shared the vision. Sadly, the challenges Siena faced finally proved insurmountable.

We are painfully aware of and lament the profound impact that this closure has on Siena Heights students, faculty, and staff. We also lament the significant cultural and economic loss for our region of the closing of our century-old educational institution and its impact on our cherished Lenawee County community.

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A high priority for us Adrian Dominican Sisters, as the religious sponsors of the institution, is that the University closes honorably – attending, especially, to the needs and concerns of all members of the Siena Heights community. It means providing students, faculty and staff with this yearlong notice of the closing and assurances that every effort will be made to support them in their transitions to other educational and employment opportunities. It also means providing a vibrant final academic year, especially for the Siena Class of 2026. The leaders of Siena Heights University intend to do just this, and we stand by them in prayerful support.

All Adrian Dominican Sisters – especially those who have dedicated years of their lives in loving service to the institution and the many proud graduates – join with us in extending our hands to offer with great love and gratitude our Dominican blessing on every member of the Siena Heights University community. We join with our Dominican Sister Catherine of Siena, patron saint of the University, in encouraging everyone at Siena Heights, as you step into the unknown future, to “be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire.”

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Members of the Adrian Dominican Sisters General Council are Sisters Elise D. García, OP, Prioress, and Bibiana Colasito, OP, Frances Nadolny, OP, Lorraine Réaume, OP, and Corinne Sanders, OP, General Councilors.

The Dominican Sisters of Adrian, a Congregation of about 365 vowed women religious and 180 Associates, traces its roots back to St. Dominic in the 13th century. The Sisters minister in 15 states, the Dominican Republic, Norway, and the Philippines. The Congregation’s Vision is to “seek truth, make peace, reverence life.”