

New Year, New Beginnings

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why did Starr King decide to sell its building?

Maintaining our current building was expensive; it costs \$100,000 to run each year *if* nothing needs to be fixed. In addition, it is not fully accessible, and the space no longer works for the number of staff and students we have. We'd hoped to lease the building, but there were no appropriate offers. Therefore, after much reflection, the Board of Trustees made the difficult decision to sell the property.

Q: When are we leaving our current campus?

We plan to leave during the summer of 2020, and to be on the Mills College campus in Oakland CA by August 2020, in time for our usual intensive classes to begin. We're still at work on the logistics, but we will let you know more once those details are finalized.

Just as important, we'll also have information in the coming months about how we will celebrate and honor our long-time home before we go.

Q: What is going to happen to our current building?

After our departure in the Summer of 2020, our former property will be transformed into new market-rate student housing. We know from personal experience that creating more student housing is very much needed here in Berkeley. We are heartened that our campus will be used to fill this vital community need.

Q: Why did Starr King decide to co-locate with Mills College?

There are several reasons that this kind of collaboration made sense for us. One crucial reason is that Mills' educational philosophy beautifully matches our own commitment to educating to counter oppressions. Mills is a nationally renowned, independent liberal arts college for women and gender non-binary students, with graduate programs for all genders. Founded as the Young Ladies' Seminary in 1852, Mills has been a leader in pioneering educational opportunities for women for more than century. Today, it is ranked one of the most diverse liberal

arts colleges in the nation. It was the first women's college to create a transgender admissions policy. And in 2017, Mills College qualified as a Hispanic-serving institution, with Hispanic/Latinx students representing more than 25 percent of the student body.

We also decided to co-locate at Mills because of the many collaborative opportunities we can develop there. Located on a beautiful, 135-acre campus in East Oakland, Mills is a perfect mix of state-of-the-art facilities and the natural world. Starr King is positioned to be one of several strategic partners with Mills College as it reimagines its future in the East Bay. What's more, we will be rooted in an Oakland community filled with opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to hone our skills in social justice and sacred social change. We are especially excited at the possibility of accessing traditional, on-campus student housing, reducing the financial burden for Starr King students who would otherwise have to find their own market-rate housing in a deeply competitive area.

In short, the decision to co-locate with Mills will help Starr King grow stronger and free us to more fully live into our mission. There are still terms that need to be negotiated and more details to come. Once we are able, we will share those details with you.

Q: Where will we be moving to on the Mills campus?

We don't yet have an answer to that. We expect to begin negotiations on specific space right after the New Year, and we'll be sure to share that information as soon as we have it. In the meantime, we encourage you to visit <https://www.mills.edu/#virtualtour> and take the virtual tour to get a sense of how beautiful the campus is!

Q: When will we know whether we can access student housing?

We hope to have that information very soon. We are particularly excited at the likelihood of accessing traditional student housing on campus, as this can meaningfully reduce the financial burden for students who would otherwise have to find their own housing in a deeply competitive market.

Q: How far does our partnership with Mills extend?

We have just begun to explore the many possibilities that such a partnership can produce. We've had preliminary conversations with the school's provost, as well as well as the deans of the graduate Schools of Education and Business, and they have been very encouraging! We look forward to having more to report soon.

Q: What does this move mean in terms of our relationship with the Graduate Theological Union (GTU)?

For the moment, our relationship with the GTU remains the same. At the same time, our Board of Trustees is considering a number of options in light of our upcoming move away from Holy Hill. Once again, as leadership comes to a decision on this issue, we will be sure to share those details with you.

Q: Is this the end of the New Beginnings process?

Simply put: *No*. Our New Beginnings process is designed help Starr King to grow stronger and more sustainable as we continue to prepare our students for the work of 21st century religious leadership. This latest set of decisions were just one part of a larger process. There are many more decisions to be made and more steps to take to reach our goals.

But as this process continues, we are committed to being transparent and accountable to our Starr King community. We will continue keeping you informed as we continue our work. And we are deeply appreciative of all the support and ideas we have received thus far.

Q: How can I stay informed about the New Beginnings process?

We will schedule another community Q&A in the new year so that you can ask questions, share concerns and learn more about what lies before us. Please check our [New Beginnings page](#) for the date and time of those meetings, as well as our usual updates as news develops.

You can also email us with your ideas and suggestions at future@sksm.edu. We read every email and have already received many engaging ideas from our community.