NEWS RELEASE

March 12, 2012

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University of Saint Mary Launches New Bachelor's Degree Program to Help Meet Growing Demand in Health Information Management

Learn More at www.stmary.edu/HIM

(Leavenworth, Kan.)—The University of Saint Mary is continuing the expansion of its health care education offerings with the launch of a new bachelor's degree program in the booming field of Health Information Management (HIM).

The first classes in the new degree program will begin in the Fall 2012 semester. Learn more about the program at www.stmary.edu/HIM.

USM's HIM program is under the direction of national expert Dr. Don Kellogg, RHIA, CPEHR. Dr. Kellogg is a past chair of CAHIIM, the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education, and a long-time educator in the field.

HIM professionals are the key conduit between front-line health care providers and administrators. They retrieve, store, and protect private medical records and work with electronic record data to improve health care delivery and implementation.

"They get the right information to the right people at the right time," Dr. Kellogg said. "The kind of student who should consider HIM is the student with an interest in management and health care, who is also kind of a techie. We don't work directly with patients. We're the interface between providers and the administration. Students also find the pay scale to be very lucrative."

Industry demand for HIM professionals is already strong and growing, particularly in light of federal initiatives to move health care away from paper records and toward electronic data. *U.S. News & World Report* has listed HIM as the No. 4 hottest major in the country and current estimates project that 50,000 new HIM jobs will be created by 2017.

"Health care is undergoing significant changes right now, changes at the hospital level and at the federal level—everything from reimbursements and Medicaid to changes in how health care is provided," Dr. Kellogg said. "We need someone who can understand those changes in the law and how it's provided, and make it all work."

The University of Saint Mary would be one of two Kansas City metro area institutions offering a bachelor's degree in HIM. USM also offers a Bachelor's degree in Healthcare Informatics, which focuses on the creation of data collection tools.

Adding the degree makes sense for Saint Mary and its students and blends well with the university's mission, said Dr. Bryan Le Beau, USM's vice president for academic affairs.

"Health care facilities are anxious to comply with the new federal initiatives as they see the obvious value in moving away from paper records," Dr. Le Beau said. "This change, though, means they will need to employ more people in HIM. At this point, there are too few people to meet those needs.

"Adding HIM fits USM's mission on two levels—our commitment to health care education and our tradition of serving the needs of society, which is rooted in the character of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth."

Students in USM's HIM program will benefit from a dynamic curriculum that features a strong grounding in all-important health care and privacy laws. They'll enjoy one-on-one attention from expert faculty, and will go out into professional settings for a senior mentorship projects.

Graduates from USM's HIM program would have the skills necessary to succeed in a variety of career opportunities in HIM, including medical records management, privacy/security officer, risk management, compliance officer, and clinical data analyst.

Applications are now being accepted. Classes start in August. Learn more about USM's HIM program at www.stmary.edu/HIM.

The University of Saint Mary is a Catholic co-educational applied liberal arts university founded and sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. The University of Saint Mary is located at 4100 South 4th Street, Leavenworth, Kan., with additional locations in Overland Park and Kansas City, Kan. Visit www.stmary.edu for more information.

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