NEWS RELEASE

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New Physician Assistant Program begins at College of Saint Mary

Omaha, NE – With employment of physician assistants (PAs) expected to grow by 39 percent from 2008 to 2018, much faster than the average of all occupations, College of Saint Mary is launching its five-year accelerated PA master’s degree this fall 2013. Students accepted into CSM’s new program will enter as freshman and complete the coursework required for a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Human Biology in four years. In their fourth year, students begin master’s level PA training and complete training in their fifth year, compared to the sixth year in other programs. They accomplish a variety of clinical rotations at various hospital and clinic sites.

The Nebraska Department of Labor explained, “Projected rapid job growth in the PA field reflects the expansion of healthcare industries and an emphasis on cost containment, which results in increasing use of PAs by healthcare establishments. Physicians and institutions are expected to employ more PAs to provide primary care and to assist with medical and surgical procedures because PAs are cost-effective and productive members of the healthcare team. Physician assistants can relieve physicians of routine duties and procedures. Healthcare providers will use more physician assistants as States continue to expand PAs’ scope of practice by allowing them to perform more procedures.”

The estimated number of Physician Assistants employed in Nebraska in 2008 was 782. It is projected that in 2018 there will be 1,085. This represents an annual average growth rate of 3.3 percent, faster than the 1.0 percent growth rate for all occupations in Nebraska.

Statistics from the Nebraska Department of Labor show that this career provides a lucrative living according to the most recent State Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey estimates that the mean hourly wage for PA’s in Nebraska, in third quarter 2011 was $41.60. The mean annual wage or salary was $86,529.

“A career as a PA can provide women with a very fulfilling and financially stable career option. The Physician Assistant (PA) program, like the other health professions programs at CSM, provides an opportunity for students to combine their life’s vocation with a career. We believe the PA program will be an outstanding addition to the options available for students interested in a health professions career,” stated Dr. Christine Pharr, Vice President of Academic Affairs.

The CSM Physician Assistant (PA) Program anticipates matriculating its first class in fall 2016 pending provisional accreditation. Provisional accreditation is an accreditation status for a new PA program that has not yet enrolled students, but at the time of its comprehensive accreditation review, has demonstrated its spring 2016 preparedness to initiate a program in accordance with the accreditation standards.
All statistics were taken from the Nebraska Department of Labor.

College of Saint Mary, founded in Omaha in 1923, is the region's only Catholic college for women. With approximately 1,000 students, CSM is dedicated to the education of women in an environment that calls forth potential and fosters leadership. For more information on CSM, visit CSM.edu.

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