A School of Fish joins College of Saint Mary

Omaha, NE – During a 2011-2012 University Water Quality research project, College of Saint Mary (CSM) students proposed an idea to Dr. Christine Pharr, Vice President of Academic Affairs, to add a freshwater, Nebraska-native fish aquarium to the Science department. Now a year and a half later these science students’ vision has become a reality.

“This new addition to the Science department gives our students a hands-on tool to learn how a water ecosystem functions. It’s also a beautiful vehicle to discover the importance of animal life,” explained Dr. Christine Pharr.

On Wednesday, January 23, CSM students and faculty added four types of Nebraska fish to the new aquarium including channel catfish, bluegill, yellow perch and black crappie. A plecostomus (sucker fish) was also added to keep rocks and the aquarium surfaces clean. These fish will be fed a wide variety of frozen and live foods to ensure their dietary requirements are met including freshwater shrimp, bloodworms (mosquito larvae), krill, worms and insects.

This aquarium, which is 90 inches long, 40 inches deep and 36 inches tall, incorporates many elements focused on energy efficiency and environmental sustainability, including LED lighting. It can also be programmed to imitate nature’s natural elements such as a sunrise, sunset, moonlight and even a storm. The new eco-friendly aquarium holds 520 gallons of water and features two variable speed high-efficiency pumps that can be independently adjusted to 800, 1100 or 1400 gallons of water per hour.

“This visual outlet will be used to integrate scientific research and instruction in a variety of ways,” stated Dr. Jeff Keyte, Assistant Professor of Biology. “Students will use the aquarium as a natural laboratory for studying water quality, plant and animal interactions, oxygen concentrations, nitrogen and protein changes, the ability to support fish life and numerous other important aspects of aquatic environments.”

The Lang Family Aquarium will be dedicated on Friday, February 8 at 2 p.m. in the CSM Science Building (7000 Mercy Road, Omaha, NE). This event will honor all of those who made this beautiful aquarium possible through their generous donations including: Anna Ruth Lang; John Lang; Drs. Christine Lang-Pharr and Steven Pharr; E. Anne Hess; Elizabeth Hug; Kathy Nickel; In honor of Dr. Claire Oswald; Diane Proulx; Mary Schlueter; and members of CSM’s Class of 2012.

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.

###

Press Contact:
Brittney Long
Director of Public Relations and Communications
College of Saint Mary
402-399-2454 blong@csm.edu