



## **Statement in Support of CSB Mission and Inclusion** **February 2, 2017**

In recent weeks, many higher education organizations, colleges and universities have written in support of the importance of diverse communities and the imperative to welcome and support diverse student bodies. These statements have powerfully and often eloquently expressed their continuing commitment to open doors and meeting the needs of all students. I have found solace in the congruity between their sentiments and the mission of the College of Saint Benedict. Yet our values, our mission, and our history compel me to express our commitment in our own voice. To simply sign on to the words of others or to say nothing at all would not truly reflect who we are, what we believe, and what has defined our history.

The College of Saint Benedict's mission commits us to the education of *all* women who seek and desire an education in our community. We welcome and look forward to journeying with students from a variety of different backgrounds, ethnicities, and religious traditions. The diversity of our students and our efforts to be inclusive make our community thrive and support our commitment to global engagement. We prepare the women of the College of Saint Benedict to go out in to the world recognizing that it is their responsibility to make the world a better place and to improve the common good for all that they encounter.

In fact, we have a special and historic relationship with diversity and immigrant communities. When the Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict arrived in St. Joseph in 1863 (immigrants themselves), it was to educate the children of German immigrants. In *With Lamps Burning*, Sister M. Grace McDonald writes of the practical exclusion of these immigrants from existing public schools because of physical distance, language barriers, and differences in nationality (p. 54). From the beginning of our history in Central Minnesota, our mission called us to embrace inclusion and educate immigrants.

Our commitment to community resonates throughout all that we do at the College of Saint Benedict. We define and express community in an inclusive, Benedictine way that welcomes, recognizes and engages all. Chapter 53 of The Rule of Benedict provides clear guidance for us: "All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, who said: 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me' (Matthew 25:35)." This guidance extends to all those who seek our hospitality, regardless of their background.

As America considers its place in a changing world, we must remind ourselves of our commitment to global education and internationalization. Without voices and representation from around the globe, and without our students going out into the world to let their lights shine, we cannot fulfill our mission. We seek to create a world wherein individuals travel and exchange ideas across borders and perspectives for the common good.

Our values and mission define who we are, how we shape our learning experience, and how we express our place in the world. In times of change and uncertainty, it is important that we revisit and renew our commitment to serve as courageous leaders and passionate advocates for all.

Mary Dana Hinton, Ph.D.  
President, College of Saint Benedict