I wish to thank the committee for the opportunity to present information regarding Saint Mary’s University and private higher education in the state of Minnesota.

While we applauded Governor Pawlenty in examining this issue, there appears to be a lack of representation from private higher education. It is important the committee know the contribution of private higher education in Minnesota, I offer the following:

Private Colleges and Universities
The seventeen member schools of the Minnesota Private College:

Serve roughly 54,000 students with at least two thirds of those enrolling being Minnesota residents.

These private colleges and universities add nearly $1 billion annually to Minnesota’s economy through direct operating and capital expenditures.

Two-thirds of our graduates, regardless of their home state, stay in Minnesota, adding to the quality of the state’s workforce and tax base.

Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota
The Rochester Center of Saint Mary’s opened in 1985 and currently operates out of the Heinz Center of The Technical College. The relationship with the technical college has been positive and we look forward to future collaboration.

Less than an hour from Rochester, in Winona, we serve 1,300 traditional age students with undergraduate programming. These students come from throughout the Upper Midwest with 60% being residents of Minnesota.

The focus of operations in Rochester have been in the graduate and bachelor completion programs for the adult learner. Currently we offer the following:
Program Offerings
The Doctor of Education in Leadership
Licensure for Principals
An MBA
Masters degrees in Counseling and Psychological, Education, Health and Human Services, Management and Project Management
Bachelor completion programs include Business and Human Resource Management

Projected Fall 2005 Enrollment will be 300 students

Finances
The University will expend over $300,000 in the Rochester Community to operate our programs this fiscal year.

Relationship with a new four year university

Referencing my earlier comments regarding the lack of voice of private colleges and universities in this process, it is unclear what the relationship will be. I assume we will compete for students to be served by our varied programs.

If provided avenues for collaboration with existing entities or a new university we could provide innovative solutions to meet the educational needs of the greater Rochester community.

For example, in March of 2003 Saint Mary’s University, Dakota County Technical College and Inver Hills Community College launched the Higher Education Center in Apple Valley. This partnership is flourishing today! It has allowed the institutions to leverage resources, economize operations and serve a diverse array of learning needs in the southern metro area. Perhaps the same should be considered in Rochester.

In closing, I offer the following information for your consideration. In December of 2003 The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education published projected high school graduation rates from 2003-2013. It is expected the number of high school graduates in Minnesota will decrease by 10.3% and in the five state region of Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Iowa and Wisconsin it will decline by 11.7%

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the task force. I wish you well as you continue your work!