April 9, 2013

Dr. Don Briel

Director, Center for Catholic Studies

Koch Chair in Catholic Studies

Via email

Dear Dr. Briel:

As co-directors of the Siena Symposium for Women, Families and Culture, we are very grateful for your willingness to consider the possibility of establishing Siena as an academic program within the Center for Catholic Studies. Members of the University community, as well as leaders in our local Catholic Community, are enthusiastic about the contribution we are making to an authentic understanding of the nature of women, and our potential, gifts, and ability to contribute towards the rebuilding of families and establishing the culture of life and the civilization of love.

As we discussed during our meeting earlier this semester, we are seeking to establish Siena as a more robust program of academic discourse, study, and research—as detailed in the attached proposal. This requires us to develop more regularized programing, which in turns requires significant fundraising activities and program administration. In order to succeed in these efforts, Siena needs to be a sponsored program by an established academic unit of the University. The Center for Catholic Studies is an ideal fit due to its profound commitment for Catholicism and interdisciplinary nature.

The programming demands that the Siena Symposium is facing requires us to seek administrative support for our programs, such as our annual workshops, colloquia, conferences, and the Siena Humanitarian Leadership Award ceremony. At a minimum, we need staff support in updating and expanding our website on a regular basis as well as event-specific support for planning, publicizing, and running events. Administrative support could be provided by student workers/research assistants, or as part of the duties of full-time staff within the sponsoring unit. In addition, we need a small operating budget for publicity posters, colloquia refreshments, fundraising receptions, and correspondence expenses. In addition, we need assistance in fundraising by inclusion as possible donor options for those interested in supporting SPSSOD, consideration for discretionary funding of specific projects, and financial oversight for funds generated through fundraising efforts, including but not limited to the establishment of index numbers for general contributions and grants.

Besides expanding its support for research through bringing leading scholars to campus and increasing the frequency of its conferences, the Siena Symposium also sees the need to expand its educational efforts by developing pedagogical units and even courses that emphasize the various aspects of Siena’s mission: complementarity, the vocation of women, the family, the promotion of a culture of life and the civilization of love. These courses, preferably integrated into both undergraduate and graduate curriculums, could ultimately culminate in academic concentrations focusing on “Catholic Thought, Sexual Identity, and Vocations.” All course offerings would be developed in conjunction with and subject to the approval by Catholic Studies as well as approval by the University.

In addition to our discussions with you, we have been invited to discuss the possibility of the St. Paul Seminary and School of Divinity serving as Siena’s academic home.

We are excited about the possibilities for Siena in the coming years, and look forward to discussing our proposal with you at your convenience.

With great gratitude for all past, present and future support,



R. Mary Hayden Lemmons, Ph.D.

Co-director of the Siena Symposium

Associate Professor of Philosophy

University of St. Thomas



Teresa S. Collett, J.D.

Co-director of the Siena Symposium

Professor of Law

University of St. Thomas

CC: Dr. Robert Kennedy, Chair, Department of Catholic Studies