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**From Benedictine University**

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## Proposal would bring Benedictine academic programs to Mesa, Ariz.

**Lisle, Illinois** – Benedictine University, recognized as one of the top universities in the country, could soon bring its faith-based, values-centered liberal arts programs to Mesa, Arizona.

Benedictine University and the City of Mesa announced today a proposal for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that would pave the way for Benedictine to establish a branch campus in downtown Mesa. Benedictine currently offers 50 traditional undergraduate majors and a select group of these would be brought to Mesa beginning in fall 2013.

The Mesa City Council is scheduled to vote on the MOU on Monday, January 9. The approval of the MOU will pave the way for the City and University to create a development agreement that will outline operational plans on how to move forward.

The initiative is part of Mesa's Higher Education Recruitment Initiative, an economic development effort by Mesa officials to attract new institutions of higher learning to the city, and in turn attracting more students to the downtown area, increasing the vibrancy of their urban core and increasing the number of highly-skilled workers with college degrees.

The partnership helps Benedictine – which currently has agreements with dozens of public, private, governmental and non-governmental institutions both in the United States and abroad – to reach out to a wider audience.

“This is an excellent opportunity for Benedictine University to further enhance our reputation as a leading provider of outstanding academic programs, and to achieve our mission of graduating students who are good citizens and good stewards of society,” said William J. Carroll, Ph.D., president of Benedictine University.

Mesa, located about 20 miles east of Phoenix, is the third-largest city in Arizona with a population of nearly 440,000. It is larger than more recognizable cities such as Atlanta and Minneapolis. More than 37 percent of the city's population is under the age of 25, and the number of students between the ages of 18 and 24 is projected to grow by 9 percent.

Founded 125 years ago, Benedictine University was named by *Forbes* magazine among the top 20 percent of America's colleges for 2011. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* ranked Benedictine University as the seventh-fastest growing campus in the country among private master's universities between 2004-2009.

Benedictine is known for outstanding programs in science, business, health, education and the liberal arts. Each student is promised a rich environment for serious study that will enable them to cultivate an awareness of today's world and prepare them for a lifetime of service, leadership and social contribution.

Benedictine must obtain approval from its accrediting body – the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools – and apply for and receive a license from the Arizona State Board for Private Postsecondary Education to operate in Arizona. In addition, Benedictine will dialogue with Diocese of Phoenix officials regarding creating a branch campus in Mesa.

Benedictine will lease office space in the downtown Mesa area. Eventually, university officials expect to add residential facilities. Long-range plans include the addition of a full-range of academic programs and extracurricular offerings including athletics. Benedictine plans to hire instructors, support and administrative staff directly from the Mesa community.

Tuition will be competitive with other institutions in the Arizona marketplace, and scholarships and financial aid packages will be offered.

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