

September 27, 2001

Evaluation Committee  
21<sup>st</sup> Century Fund  
c/o Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo  
712 Main Street  
Buffalo, New York 14202

Dear Evaluation Committee:

Villa Maria College supports the WNYPRI-BISSNET grant proposal to construct a Multi-Point Video Conferencing Center located at the University of Buffalo.

Located in Western New York, Villa Maria College is a two-year, independent, coeducational, private institution founded in 1961 by the Felician Sisters. The College offers associate degrees in fourteen liberal arts based career-directed programs: Business, Computer Management, Early Childhood Education, Education Studies, Graphic Design, Health Sciences, Hospitality Management, Interior Design, Jazz, Liberal Arts, Music, Music Business, Photography, and Physical Therapist Assistant. Day and evening programs in semester and modularized formats are available.

Villa Maria College student body is drawn primarily from metropolitan Buffalo. Many students are the first in their family to attend college. Demographics show a diverse population which includes Hispanic, African American and Asian minorities, as well as increase in the number of people over the age of 23 including single parents. The ratio of men to women is 1:3. Over 81% of the students receive financial aid from various federal, state and other sources.

#### **Mission Statement**

**Through career-directed programs integrated with liberal arts education and field experience, the College educates students for employment and transfer to other educational institutions. Villa Maria College fosters in its students**

- **Christian values**
- **Intellectual inquiry and critical thinking**
- **Interpersonal and communication skills**
- **Information literacy**
- **Technological skills**
- **Respect for diversity**
- **Commitment to serving others.**

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The WNYPRI-BISSNET grant proposal is important to the college. It would enable the college to incorporate distance learning into its curriculum. Distance learning capability will give students on campus the opportunity to take advantage of course offerings from other colleges, and will also make Villa Maria College courses available to students located outside of Western New York.

As a member of the WNY Partnership for Regional Internetworking our constituents would have access to state-of-the-art equipment and a sophisticated technology infrastructure, which we are unable to provide with our limited resources. The Multi-Point Video Conferencing Center will provide the college the mechanism to cost-share equipment, maintenance and operation costs that can be acquired by pooling the resources of all partners.

As a partner, Villa Maria College is able to provide classroom space, an auditorium and recital hall to WNYPRI for workshops. The College also has adequate parking facilities and is conveniently located near the NYS Thruway and Expressway.

We strongly request your support for this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Sister Marcella Marie Garus  
President