As documented by Annette Atkins in her book:

- U.S. Catholic bishops in Baltimore in 1884 ordered the founding of parochial schools
- Parishes didn’t have enough priests and couldn’t afford to pay lay teachers
- Sisters were called upon to teach in them. By 1920 Catholic sisters ran:
  - nearly 7,000 elementary schools
  - 1500 high schools
- At first, standards were low: teachers needed to have a high school diploma
- Gradually, states required more teacher preparation, e.g. two years beyond high school
- The sisters needed more education – college education

As documented by Annette Atkins in her book:

- American Catholic bishops generally opposed women’s higher education
- The Church prohibited sisters from attending non-Catholic colleges...
- ...but Catholic colleges enrolled only *males*
- The Sisters needed to be college-educated to found a college
- So some communities of women religious founded their own

The Bishop of St. Paul, John Ireland, favored college for women

His sister, Seraphine, led St. Paul’s Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

Like Benedict and Scholastica, they were close confidants and advisors to each other

He supported the St. Kate’s sisters in attending the University of Minnesota and the University of Chicago

Seraphine Ireland photo
http://stmedia.startribune.com/images/ows_141790760987232.jpg
Between 1905 and 1915, 14 Catholic women’s colleges were opened in the U.S., including, in Minnesota:

- St. Catherine (aka St. Kate’s), St. Paul, in 1905
- St. Teresa’s, Winona, in 1907
- St. Scholastica, Duluth, in 1912
- St. Ben’s, St. Joseph, in 1913

St. Kate’s [URL]
St. Teresa’s [URL]
St. Scholastica [URL]
St. Ben’s [URL]
Women couldn’t attend Catholic University during the school year, but...
• One of Archbishop Ireland’s St. Paul priests joined the faculty at Catholic University and founded a summer school “Sisters College” there in 1911
• St. Ben’s founding faculty could complete their master’s degrees there
• Similarly, sisters at St. Ben’s could complete their bachelor’s degrees in summer classes at St. Ben’s

Photo: https://www.cardcow.com/images/set534/card00507_fr.jpg
1885-86 Saint Benedict's Academy Catalogue
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchives/id/2614
1912 – the College is mentioned even before it starts!

30th, 1912 front cover:
http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/1888
30th, 1912, p.3 http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/1890
30th, 1912 front cover:
http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/1888
31st, 1913-1914  http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/2108
Thirty-first Annual Year-Book, 1913-1914, St. Benedict's College and Academy, St. Joseph, Minnesota
Emblem and title page:
http://reflection.mndigital.org/edm/ref/collection/stbm/id/2118
Collegiate dept., p. 14:
http://reflection.mndigital.org/edm/ref/collection/stbm/id/2112
AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE INSTITUTION

Education as a spiritual, mental, and physical development to the end that IN ALL THINGS GOD MAY BE GLORIFIED has for centuries been a cherished Benedictine tradition and ideal; therefore it is the first aim of the College of St. Benedict to provide for its students those branches of religious and secular training designed to effect most directly this three-fold objective.

The Institution provides a curriculum equal to that of any college of first rank, and it is empowered to confer degrees in all ordinary academic and cultural courses. Besides these, valuable training is offered in teacher training, social service, art, music, and household science.

Every effort is made to induce the highest grade of scholarship and service. That the pupil may through the arts and sciences gain a wider appreciation of God's great gifts is the ultimate aim of the instructions in the secular branches.

College Bulletin 1926-1927 cover:
http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/4906
Aims and Scope, p. 7 http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/4912
(same text as previous years)
“Every effort...” p. 8 http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/4913
(same text as previous years)
College of Saint Benedict
Its History

The College of Saint Benedict was begun early in the present century.

It was the culmination of a project which had its beginning a third of a century before, when in 1880 the Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict purchased farm and wood lands in the environs of the town of St. Joseph, Minnesota, seven miles north of the city of St. Cloud, and opened the Academy of Saint Benedict for the "select and higher education of young ladies."

A beautiful site in the country, free from the increasing interruptions and distractions of the metropolitan centers to the east, yet convenient of access to these cities, was chosen deliberately and with far-sighted wisdom. This site is the key to the unique aspect which Saint Benedict's today presents—completely of the new world in spirit, method, and equipment—hauntingly of the old world in atmosphere, physical aspect, and the golden, thirteen-centuries-old traditions of Benedictine education.

Occupied in 1880, the first Academy building for pupils and convent for the Sisters rose on the site and opened its doors in 1881.

In common with educational practice of that day in America, the old Academy offered the accepted version of practical higher education for women and graduated its pupils to make their substantial domestic and vocational contribution to the opening and upbuilding of the Northwest.

College Bulletin 1931-1932, p. 5-6
http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/5140
Aims

The first aim of the College of Saint Benedict is to make you think.

That is what liberal means; Saint Benedict’s is a liberal arts college.

You will study the best that has been known and thought in the world. You will integrate this mass of information. You will form generalizations. You will think.

A liberal education does not train you for a profession. But you will be enormously benefited for any profession you choose.

You must always live with yourself. A liberal education gives you the privilege of living with your best self.

Saint Benedict’s is dedicated to helping you develop your best self intellectually, physically, socially and spiritually.

Intellectual development is the highest human gift you can possess.