

Notre Dame DEI Practices Draw National Criticism

Female, minority hiring now “equally important” to Catholicism

MICHAEL CANADY
Editor-in-Chief

Notre Dame’s DEI programming has attracted national attention in recent weeks, largely due to Provost John McGreevy’s January 17 faculty-wide email promoting female and minority status as now “equally important” to Catholicism in faculty hiring.

McGreevy’s email explained the update: “One important goal is to hire Catholic faculty and other faculty deeply committed to our mission to ensure continuity with our past and our future as the world’s leading global Catholic research university. A second overlapping and equally important goal is to increase the number of women and underrepresented minorities on our faculty so that we become the diverse and inclusive intellectual community our mission urges us to be.”

The email continues, “Later this month, the Provost’s Office will publish guidance to support academic units in their pursuit of these goals. ... The new guide, which takes effect July 1, will include strategies and best practices to build



Image from Notre Dame News

broad applicant pools, evaluate candidates equitably, and ensure that faculty candidates who visit Notre Dame can imagine themselves as thriving future members of our academic community.”

In the wake of McGreevy’s email and other DEI initiatives in recent years, articles have criticized the development in several national publications, including *First Things*, *National Catholic Register*, *The Federalist*, *The Daily Caller*, and others.

McGreevy’s email comes as no surprise, according to one report from the Claremont Institute Center for the American Way of Life. The report, “Mission Compromised? The Advance of DEI at Notre Dame,” by Professor Scott Yenor of Boise State University, provides an in-depth analysis of Notre Dame’s DEI programming and its conflict with the university’s Catholic mission.

In a comment to the *Rover*, Yenor highlighted the secular

approach of the university’s DEI initiatives, despite their Catholic-sounding veneer: “Notre Dame wraps up its DEI administration in the language of Catholic social teaching. In reality it is little different from the hiring preferences and promises of liberation present at other elite institutions. While it is impossible to know how much DEI has corrupted Notre Dame, the fact that Notre Dame held more than 150 distinct DEI events in 2024 shows how

much emphasis the leadership places on spreading the DEI message.”

The provost’s recent email reinvigorates a decades-long discussion of faculty hiring at Notre Dame. As stated in the Mission Statement, “The Catholic identity of the University depends upon, and is nurtured by, the continuing presence of a predominant number of Catholic intellectuals.” As Yenor notes, from the 1970s to the mid-2000s, Catholic faculty dropped from 80 percent down to around 50 percent, and now the administration no longer reveals the number.

McGreevy’s email is not the first time he has discussed Catholic hiring. In a 2023 roundtable discussion on the new Strategic Framework, McGreevy noted the importance of hiring Catholic faculty for the university’s “particular Catholic mission,” without worrying about specific percentages or quotas.

Notre Dame spends more than six million dollars each year on DEI personnel across the university, according to Yenor’s report. But aside from that,

continued on pg. 5

University Professor Discusses Ethics of IVF

Right to Life, SCOP host annual Humanae Vitae lecture series

JACK KRIEGER
Staff Writer

Notre Dame Right to Life (RtL) and Students for Child-Oriented Policy (SCOP) co-hosted a lecture delivered by Melissa Moschella, Professor of the Practice in philosophy, on the ethics of *In Vitro* Fertilization (IVF) and surrogacy on February 12.

The *Humanae Vitae* lecture series—named after Pope Paul VI’s 1968 encyclical—strives to cultivate the proper nature and role of sex in human life on campus through discussion and education. The series, begun in 2021, has previously addressed topics including dating, Natural Family Planning (NFP), marriage, and contraception.

Last spring, University President Father Robert Dowd, C.S.C. delivered the lecture, titled, “Recognizing Divine Purpose in Life’s Imperfections.”

IVF is an artificial process of “fertility treatment” that involves collecting eggs from a woman, fertilizing the eggs with donated sperm in a laboratory dish, and reinserting several human embryos back into the uterus. On average, between 10 to 15 eggs are harvested from a woman at a time, about 80 percent of which are successfully fertilized. Any eggs not implanted are discarded or frozen. According to Moschella, a moderate estimate is that there are currently five million frozen embryos in the U.S. alone.

RtL president Jackie Nguyen

told the *Rover*, “Each year, we host the *Humanae Vitae* lecture to highlight a pressing life issue, reminding club members that being pro-life extends beyond opposing abortion but to topics such as IVF, contraception, marriage, etc.”

“With new technologies and ideas constantly emerging, being pro-life requires vigilance in recognizing new threats to human dignity by revisiting *Humanae Vitae* to remain rooted in a consistent life ethic,” Nguyen concluded.

Moschella began her talk, “Many people use IVF, not even thinking about the ethical considerations, because they’re just told by their doctors, this is the right thing for you to do.”

continued on pg. 4

Basilica Weddings: A Step-by-Step Guide

Rector, coordinator speak on sacramental preparations

KATIEBELLE THOMPSON
Staff Writer

For those looking to get married in Notre Dame’s Basilica of the Sacred Heart, the process can seem daunting. But fear not, the *Rover* is here to shed some light through those beautiful, 19th-century stained-glass windows, and illuminate the path to the altar.

Since its consecration in 1888, the basilica has served as the favorite place for Notre Dame alumni to tie the knot. The basilica usually hosts several weddings each Saturday, except on the days when the Fighting Irish have a home football game.

First, to get married in the

basilica, it’s essential that at least one member of the engaged couple be a student, alumni, staff, or faculty at Notre Dame, or a member of Sacred Heart Parish. Reservations can be scheduled online and are available on Saturdays throughout the year and Fridays during the summer.

To understand the process, the *Rover* interviewed Fr. Brian Ching, C.S.C., rector of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. Despite popular theories that engaged couples have to wait two years due to high demand, Fr. Ching said that “there are always a variety of spots open within a year.” According to

continued on pg. 6

INSIDE

DEI and Notre Dame’s
Splintered Mission
Editorial – Page 2

Did SMC’s President Take
the Oath of Fidelity?
Religion – Page 5

Notre Dame Law
Graduates Expand
Clerkship Prestige
Politics – Page 8

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The Irish Rover is a 501(c)(3) organization.

THE FINE PRINT

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The *Rover* was established by Notre Dame students who desired a strong and organized conservative voice on campus with the primary purpose of keeping the University true to its founding mission as a Roman Catholic institution. The *Rover* seeks to facilitate part of what the University's mission statement desires in its community: "a forum where through free inquiry and open discussion the various lines of Catholic thought may intersect with all the forms of knowledge found in the arts, sciences, professions, and every other area of human scholarship and creativity." To provide this forum, the *Rover* offers a distinctive kind of coverage that includes campus news, religion, politics, culture, history, and humor.

Out of civility, the *Rover* will not critically mention names of students, professors, or administrators, unless the person is either a well-known member of the community, or he or she has openly sought publicity. Unsigned editorials represent the majority opinion of the *Rover's* Editorial Board, while content in individual columns represents the views of each respective author and should not be construed as representing the views of the entire staff. All comments and questions regarding the *Rover's* policies and editorial content, as well as Letters to the Editor, may be directed to the Editor-in-Chief, Michael Canady, at NDIrishRover@gmail.com or PO Box 46 Notre Dame IN 46556. These letters may be printed anonymously, upon request. Also, please visit our website www.irishrover.net, where you can peruse archives and subscribe to the paper.

“Christ is not valued at all unless he is valued above all.”
 – St. Augustine



Image by Matt Cashore

DEI and Notre Dame's Splintered Mission

LUCY SPENCE
 Managing Editor



As an educational institution, Notre Dame should be committed to two things: the truth and academic excellence. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), at best, is irrelevant to these two pursuits; at worst, it compromises the university's pursuit of truth and excellence.

DEI initiatives have recently gained national attention since the Trump administration's renewed crackdown on DEI in government and federally-funded programs, but at Notre Dame, DEI initiatives take on a special significance in light of the university's Catholic mission.

In a January email sent to all faculty, Notre Dame Provost John McGreevy laid out the university's hiring priorities for the semesters ahead:

“One important goal is to hire Catholic faculty and other faculty deeply committed to our mission to ensure continuity with our past and our future

as the world's leading global Catholic research university. A second overlapping and equally important goal is to increase the number of women and underrepresented minorities on our faculty so that we become the diverse and inclusive intellectual community our mission urges us to be.”

In stating these two hiring objectives, McGreevy lays out the two *most important* goals of the university in the education of its students. In other words, Notre Dame now has no higher concern than the racial and sexual makeup of its faculty.

As a Catholic university, Notre Dame's most important aim is to give its students an excellent education that is distinctively Catholic. It does this primarily through its faculty, who, if not Catholic themselves, understand and support the Catholic mission of the university. Any priority of the university that stands on equal footing with the faculty's Catholic alignment is necessarily an obstacle to the Catholic mission of Notre Dame, whether that goal be football, facility improvements, research—or DEI.

But even if you ignore the ideological implications of the Provost's statement, DEI's growing importance in the eyes of the university follows an unmistakable decline in the Catholic makeup of Notre Dame's faculty, making McGreevy's statement shocking.

The Provost's push for DEI could not have come at a more worrisome time. The percentage of Catholic faculty has decreased from 85 percent in the 1970s to barely 50 percent now. Even more worrying, the university recently hid access to the data, removing all possibility of accountability.

McGreevy is not concerned with a serious pursuit of Catholic excellence—making me wonder little that he tried in previous years to remove the theology course requirement for undergraduates.

Is the skin color of our professors equally important to their religious conviction? It is deeply worrying that McGreevy—the highest-ranking academic officer of the leading Catholic research university in the world—is willing to place an extrinsic quality on equal footing with the Catholic character of the faculty.

The university's Mission Statement says the following about diversity: “The intellectual interchange essential to a university requires, and is enriched by, the presence and voices of diverse scholars and students. The Catholic identity of the University depends upon, and is nurtured by, the continuing presence of a predominant number of Catholic intellectuals.”

McGreevy completely misunderstands the meaning of “diversity” in Notre Dame's mission statement. It does

not mean diversity of race or gender—it means intellectual diversity, an environment in which a university flourishes. McGreevy assumes that female and minority faculty will bring an inherent contribution of academic rigor to the university. Scholars who happen to be female or racial minorities bring academic rigor not because of their race or gender, but because of their personal excellence. In an academic context, diversity is only valuable insofar as it contributes to the pursuit of truth—the highest goal.

A mission divided against itself cannot stand. McGreevy has explicitly splintered the attention and priorities of the university, betraying the Catholic mission of Notre Dame.

Lucy Spence is a sophomore majoring in the Program of Liberal Studies and piano performance. She can be reached at lspace@nd.edu.



Forbes ranks Notre Dame “Best Large Employer”

New mural, students show appreciation for employees

CLARE DiFRANCO

Campus Editor

The University of Notre Dame was ranked first among “America’s Best Large Employers” by *Forbes* on February 12, 2025. Just two weeks prior, a new “Dignity of Work” mural depicting Notre Dame custodial staff and service employees was dedicated in Geddes Hall.

Annually, *Forbes* partners with market research statistics firm Statista to compile a report of America’s top midsize and large employers. After being featured on the *Forbes* “Best Large Employers” list six times, including being ranked twentieth best large employer in 2024, Notre Dame has climbed to the top of the list, above recurring top picks like Google, Trader Joe’s, and Costco, among others.

In response to the ranking, University President Father Robert Dowd, C.S.C. told *Notre Dame News*, “Our accomplished and dedicated employees are our most valuable asset, and it is because of their efforts that the University is receiving this wonderful recognition.”

Vice President for Notre Dame Resources Heather Christophersen echoed Fr. Dowd’s praise: “Being recognized as a *Forbes* top employer is a testament to the culture of care, belonging and excellence that defines our Notre Dame community.”

To preface the 2025 annual

rankings, *Forbes* states, “Research over the past decade has shown that employees have remained relatively steadfast when asked what they care about most in an employer: compensation, employee development and advancement opportunities, meaningful work, supportive colleagues, and workplace well-being and flexibility.”

Exactly two weeks before the release of the *Forbes* ranking, the university recognized its staff and custodial workers by dedicating and revealing the “Dignity of Work” mural in Geddes Hall on January 29. The new mural was produced by the Institute for Social Concerns (ISC) in collaboration with Notre Dame Building Services staff.

The mural spans across the wall along the main floor stairwell of Geddes. The work depicts 33 images of Notre Dame service employees in the mixed mediums of either photography or painting against a leaf-like patterned background painted in the colors of the ISC logo.

ISC Director Suzanne Shanahan told the *Rover*, “The ‘Dignity of Work’ mural depicts a small subset of the more than 250 Building Services workers serving more than 150 buildings across campus.” Shanahan continued, “Some depicted in the mural are current or recently retired workers and are drawn photos from University Archives.”

Shanahan explained, “The suggestion for the mural was made by Bridget Filipski who

leads a crew of 16 custodial staff. Building services are the often invisible staff that make the daily work of everyone else possible. As Bridget noted at the opening reception: ‘Everybody wants to be seen.’”

Building Services leader Bridget Filipski told the *Rover*, “The dedicated workers in [the] mural are people, past and present, who have been employed at Notre Dame. They were chosen at random by the artist to depict a ‘working in action’ feel in the Mural.”

Filipski related the mural to the recent ranking from *Forbes*, saying, “The mural highlights the importance of the workers by giving them value and recognition for the service they perform on a daily basis.” Filipski also attributed Notre Dame’s high ranking to its Catholic identity. She explained, “‘Valued’ is what one feels when supported by an employer that truly lives by the Catholic teachings, such as Notre Dame.”

Shanahan echoed this sentiment, telling the *Rover*, “I don’t know much about the *Forbes* ranking or how they are calculated. I can say that the Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers are core principles of Catholic Social Teaching. It makes sense that [a] Catholic University, in particular, would embrace such a tribute to workers. It also might explain why so many people across campus have been so thrilled about the mural.”

The ISC was not alone in its



Image from the Irish Rover

recent recognition of university faculty and staff. Students also expressed their praise of Notre Dame staff.

In reference to the “Dignity of Work” mural, sophomore Emmy Baldwin told the *Rover*, “I am glad to see Notre Dame recognize the hard work of our staff.” She continued, “While it may seem that their work goes unnoticed, students see the difference that our workers make. Margaret, who cleans the facilities in Lyons, works well before most of us are awake to ensure that the bathrooms and hallways are clean.”

Another student told the *Rover*, “We never take the time to think, ‘Who takes care of those who take care of us?’ or stop and thank them for what they do. Since coming to Notre Dame, I have been loved by every worker, custodian, and staff member.”

Employees of Campus Dining and custodial services expressed

appreciation for their positive work experiences at Notre Dame with the *Rover*, mentioning the mutual relationships between staff and students.

Michelle Wilcowski works at the South Dining Hall Grab and Go, and has been employed with Notre Dame for nearly two years. When the *Rover* asked about her favorite aspect of working with Campus Dining, Wilcowski answered, “The students.” She continued, “You end up getting a good relationship with them when you see them all the time. We’re kind of like a mom away from home.”

Clare DiFranco è una studentessa di contabilità e Italiano. Lei preferirebbe essere nel sole di Sicilia adesso, ma le nuvole di South Bend sono abbastanza. Le manda un email a cdifranc@nd.edu per una traduzione di questo messaggio.

Notre Dame Expands Geothermal Presence

University adds sustainable energy wells, plants

CALEB VAUGHAN

Campus Editor

In the last century, Notre Dame has pioneered campus energy: After building its first power plant in 1932, the university became the first institution of its kind to generate its own electricity when it transitioned to a coal-burning plant in the 1950s.

Motivated by *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis’ encyclical on caring for the environment, then-President Father John Jenkins, C.S.C. announced in 2015 that the university would cease burning coal by 2020 and cut carbon emissions in half by 2030. He said, “In recognition of Pope Francis’ encyclical ... Notre Dame is recommitting to make the world a greener place, beginning in our own backyard.”

Laudato Si’, which comments on humanity’s role in preserving God’s creation, calls Catholics to environmental action: “The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now.”

In response, Fr. Jenkins said the encyclical “presents us



Image from the University of Notre Dame

with a comprehensive moral vision about the environment, technology, the character of our communal lives, our responsibility to the poor and marginalized, the dangers of compulsive consumerism and the need for global solidarity. It is a challenging moral vision, but one for which, I believe, our world is hungry, and no university is better positioned to respond.”

The university delivered on this promise in 2019, when the power plant eliminated coal and transitioned to clean-burning

natural gas.

Geothermal energy has also played a significant role in Notre Dame’s energy transition. In this process, energy is harvested from below the surface of the Earth by drilling thin vertical pipes to a depth of about 300 feet, the level at which the temperature remains at a constant 50 degrees Fahrenheit year-round. This means that water can be heated during the winter and cooled during the summer by circulation through these pipes. According to the university, this small temperature change saves

significant sums of energy—and money—in heating and cooling buildings.

Universities across the country have adopted geothermal in a similar manner. The nation’s largest closed loop geothermal system is at another Indiana university: Ball State.

According to the Notre Dame Office of Public Affairs and Communications, “Compared to other renewable energy sources, geothermal applications have a positive return on investment as installation costs are quickly recouped through energy cost savings. The estimated capital cost of the systems currently being installed on Notre Dame’s campus is approximately \$40 million. The University expects to see a return on investment in about 15 years.”

The first geothermal field was installed on East Quad in 2017. The initiative has since expanded to include thousands of wells across campus: most recently more wells under East Quad and the Compton Lot, as well as an ongoing power plant attached to Joyce.

The new plant, set for completion in August 2025, will work with the geothermal heat pumps to distribute heating and cooling to buildings throughout campus.

Notre Dame’s energy initiatives also extend to on- and off-campus solar fields and hydroelectric power generated from a dam in the nearby St. Joseph River.

More information about the projects and a live view of the geothermal plant construction can be found on the Notre Dame facilities website.

Caleb Vaughan is a sophomore chemical engineer living in Morrissey Hall. He wonders how the constant 90 degree temps in his dorm contribute to the campus sustainability initiatives. He can be reached at cvaughan2@nd.edu.



IVF Talk

continued from front

She explained, “We’re just trying to think objectively about whether the use of these technologies is, in fact, a good approach that is fully respectful of the dignity of all the human beings involved.”

Moschella explained, “Bioethicists talk about the U.S. as the wild west of reproductive medicine, because pretty much anything goes. ... Ultimately [the clinics] can do whatever they want if they’re able to get clients.” Regarding surrogates specifically, “The Europeans come to the U.S. to get surrogates because in Europe it’s illegal because they worry about exploitation of women, but it’s legal here anyway.”

“There’s a huge class issue, including a first world, developing world issue with regard to surrogacy. In the U.S., surrogates tend to be working class women,” Moschella continued. “Those who hire the surrogates tend to be much more white collar, wealthy individuals. And so there’s a power imbalance there.”

Regarding repeat egg donors, she said, “Some of these young



Image from the Diocese of Phoenix

women, sadly, have also lost their own fertility as a result of side effects of these exotic procedures.” She explained, “This is a process that is not without risk for the women involved.”

“I think the core ethical problem with reproductive technologies, in general, including surrogacy, is that it tends to treat people like products,” said Moschella. She claimed this is particularly true for the women acting as donors or surrogates, as well as the human embryos, citing experts of natural law, like St. Thomas Aquinas, to support her point.

Moschella continued, “Then there’s the element of, you know, seeking to get what you ordered and only what you ordered. If I

order something from Amazon and it’s not what I wanted or it doesn’t fit, I return it, right? And you see this kind of attitude reflected in things like selective reduction or selective abortion. Selective reduction is a euphemism for selective abortion: When you have an unwanted multiple pregnancy or when the child is considered defective according to whatever standards the parents have.”

Moschella concluded her lecture with a discussion about potential ethical alternatives to IVF practices. Natural Procreative Technology (NaPro) is a form of restorative reproduction technology that monitors the woman’s reproductive health and cooperates completely with

the reproductive system through medical and surgical treatments.

Moschella noted, “NaPro actually identifies the problem, heals the underlying problem when possible—and often it is possible—and the process actually improves the mother’s health, because the underlying problem is actually something that affects the mother’s health, whereas IVF puts the mother’s health at risk.”

Andrew Moffet, a freshman in Morrissey Manor, commented on the lecture: “The overall reaction that I had to IVF was that it economizes human life, and that totally strips away the dignity of each human, and therefore it is incompatible with the Catholic moral framework.”

He added, “I think more talks with a wider influence and reach are necessary for contentious issues—you know, very moral problems but very real problems, such as IVF.”

IVF has recently been in national headlines, too. Following the *Dobbs* decision that overturned *Roe v. Wade*, states have been debating both abortion and IVF access. On February 18, Trump signed an executive order to expand access to and reduce costs of IVF for

families. Trump has called for universal coverage of IVF.

The executive order reads, “To support American families, it is the policy of my Administration to ensure reliable access to IVF treatment, including by easing unnecessary statutory or regulatory burdens to make IVF treatment drastically more affordable.” By mid-May, policy proposals intended to increase access and aggressively reduce out-of-pocket costs will be submitted to President Trump.

On March 15, the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture and the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend will host a prenatal care conference in Geddes Hall. Registration is available on the diocese’s website until March 1.

Jack Krieger is a freshman from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania studying international economics and constitutional studies. He considered studying PLS instead, but he would like a job one day. He can be reached at jkrieger@nd.edu.

CARI Food Delivery Provides Alternative to Robots

Student entrepreneurs bring efficient, affordable service to campus

LUCY SPENCE

Managing Editor

In response to growing concerns over Grubhub robot delivery services, Notre Dame engineering students Patrick McFarland and Davide W. Thompson founded CARI, a food delivery company run by students, for students. Providing personal, cheap, and reliable service, CARI has grown rapidly in its first year of operation.

In 2019, the university began offering the Grubhub app as part of its Campus Dining program, an initiative that gave easy access to both on- and off-campus restaurants to members of the Notre Dame community. In the spring of 2023, food services grew to include the Grubhub Starship robots, which bring autonomous delivery to customers for an extra charge.

Since the arrival of these bots, students have shown mixed reactions. Concerned by high prices, inconsistencies in delivery, and a vanishing old school, pedestrian culture on campus, many have expressed frustration.

In an interview with the *Rover*, the founders shared their story and explained the mission of CARI.

“I had a bad experience with the Grubhub robot where it pulled away with my food,” said McFarland. “We both had tried to use DoorDash, but it would go to Main Circle every time, and kind of defeat the purpose of ordering food. And I was like, ‘Let’s bring the jobs back to students. We’re both engineers, we can make it happen.’”

The first semester, the team launched a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) of their app, taking orders from two dorm restaurants. They began offering their services on a free trial, delivering the food for the price of pickup. Originally, McFarland and Thompson took all the delivery orders themselves, but the company has since grown to include 15 drivers and six salesmen.

Active since September of 2024, CARI has partnered with 15 restaurants and processed over 900 delivery orders. According to the founders, they are the “only campus delivery service offering a hub for all things campus dining, including dorm restaurants, on-campus spots, off-campus favorites, and Eddy Street spots at cheaper prices.”

CARI’s business strategy of efficiency and reliability solves the problems many have experienced with the Grubhub robots. According to McFarland, over 60 percent of college students report frustrations with robots blocking pathways or delivering food on delayed schedules. CARI guarantees a delivery time of less than 15 minutes, much faster than the typical 30 to 60 minute wait of other delivery services.

CARI has no surge pricing, giving college students an affordable delivery service cheaper than both the robots and off campus services. It also provides universities with an alternative to spending millions on robot delivery.

McFarland explained, “To implement robots, a maintenance

system, a team, and a pretty dissatisfactory product is a problem, and all the other big brands like DoorDash, Grubhub, and UberEats don’t cater effectively to campus ecosystems. So we wanted to bring that service to campuses in an affordable way that benefits students in every way.”

But, as McFarland and Thompson pointed out, CARI is much more than a good business plan. Their method of delivery complements the culture of Notre Dame’s campus, promoting student jobs and personal interactions.

“By employing fellow students as delivery runners, CARI directly empowers students while strengthening campus communities. ... The trust of having a classmate or fellow student deliver your food can’t be undervalued.”

The university has voiced concern in recent years about the diminishing pedestrian culture on campus. In December of 2023, the Executive Office of the Vice President enforced a ban of all personal electric vehicles in an email to Notre Dame faculty and students, saying, “The proliferation of mechanized vehicles on campus is inconsistent with the pedestrian character of campus we have tried to preserve.” Many student criticisms of the Grubhub robots are founded on the same sentiment, citing the annoyance of navigating around the robots and the ugliness of the machines.

McFarland also commented on the aesthetic effect of the robots:

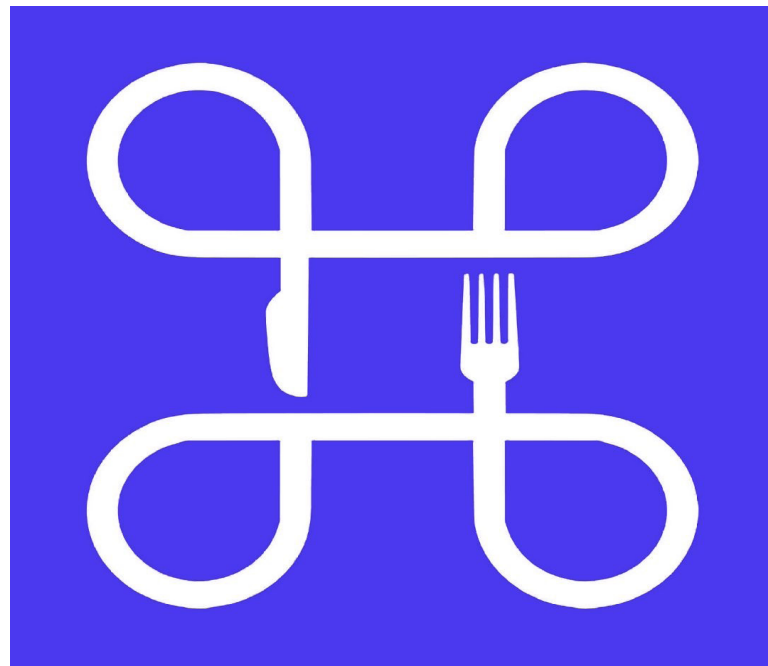


Image from CARI

“The pedestrian problem is definitely part of what we’re trying to solve. We have a beautiful, historic, traditional campus and it’s littered with these tacky robots everywhere that bump into people. And if you could just replace that job where students are getting paid, they’re getting exercise, and it is a somewhat greener solution—because your people are just biking, rather than a battery robot—it’s kind of a no-brainer.”

McFarland added, “Other schools we’ve talked to that are looking to implement our system are also seriously concerned about the pedestrian problem—that robots are pretty much the only other alternative. Students are bothered ... students who have disabilities are not taken care of.”

CARI is currently growing its

network of restaurant services in the Notre Dame community and is in the process of expanding to other college campuses. The CARI delivery app is available for free on the app store. Reach out to pmcfar2@nd.edu or dthomp24@nd.edu if you would like your restaurant or school implemented in CARI’s services.

Lucy Spence is a sophomore from northern Virginia majoring in the Program of Liberal Studies and piano performance. She’s planning on starting a food delivery business that employs the overly-corpulent campus squirrels. To invest, contact her at lspence@nd.edu.



DEI Practices

continued from front

Yenor draws more attention to the potential danger that DEI poses to the university's Catholic mission: "[T]he continual expansion of DEI may well corrupt Notre Dame's ability to transmit genuinely Catholic teaching from one generation to the next."

When asked what was the most significant finding of his report, Yenor noted, "The post-Floyd embrace of 'institutional transformation' is the most unsettling, problematic finding of the report. ND went on a hiring

binge after 2020, building new offices, tripling down on racial preferences in hiring, and putting on events. It seems like the ND administration was trying to rub the noses of the Catholic university in diversity ideology."

Yenor drew special attention to the close relationship between DEI and LGBTQ initiatives: "DEI concerns the division of the world into oppressed and oppressors. Sometimes the oppressors are seen as white supremacists. Other times they are thought of as homophobes. Notre Dame's Gender Relations Center seems to be based on

the typical oppressed-oppressor matrix, not seeing its LGBTQ initiative through the Christian lens of sin, but instead seeing them through the affirming lens of identity politics."

Campus Ministry's "racially segregated first-year retreats" program is another initiative that Yenor criticizes. These include "The Plunge: Black First-Year Retreat," "Latino First-Year Retreat," and "Asian First Year Retreat." Campus Ministry also offers LGBTQ retreats for "those seeking to integrate their spirituality with their LGBTQ Identity and their allies,"

according to the website.

Yenor writes, "Racially-segregated retreats are done in the name of true inclusion, as DEI officials understand the term. However, this effort to build a so-called inclusive campus that is meant to be in line with Catholic social teaching through Campus Ministry ends up subverting the principles of the universal church."

However, Yenor expressed hope in Notre Dame's mission-based ability to combat DEI: "Notre Dame is unique in the fact that it is well situated to reject this pernicious ideology because it

has a strong institutional identity, grounded in Catholicism, that runs directly counter to the DEI ideology."

The recent developments also come in the wake of Trump's executive order limiting DEI programming in institutions that receive federal funding.

Provost McGreevy did not respond to the *Rover's* request for comment.

Michael Canady is a junior from Falls Church, Virginia. He can be reached at mcanady2@nd.edu.

WRITE FOR THE ROVER, EMAIL NDIRISHROVER@GMAIL.COM

Did SMC's President Take the Oath of Fidelity? *Conboy's lack of response raises community questions, concerns*

LYDIA POE

Religion Editor

Between Holy Cross College, Saint Mary's College, and the University of Notre Dame, the Catholic faith is wholeheartedly the cornerstone of each institution's mission. To ensure this, the 1989 directive published by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith requires every Catholic college and university president to swear allegiance to the teaching authority of the Church.

Usually, this takes the form of a public declaration during the president's inauguration.

Records indicate that Katie Conboy, current president of Saint Mary's College (SMC), did not publicly take the oath during her 2021 inauguration as SMC president. Furthermore, it remains unclear whether she has completed the canonically required Oath of Fidelity and Profession of Faith since, with some casting doubt on her compliance.

When asked the date of Conboy's oath, the bishop's office was not able to confirm that she had taken the Oath. Joe Garcia, chancellor and executive assistant to Bishop Kevin Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, mentioned that he has "already raised that question to the vicar general's office and he said that's not information that we would be able to release publicly."

The vicar general's office did not respond to the *Rover's* request to comment.

The *Rover* contacted Conboy with questions about the oath's significance and the date taken, but she declined to comment, stating, "Though I appreciate your interest in this matter, I do not plan to provide a comment."

Pope John Paul II, in accordance with the 1983 Code of Canon Law, required all those in a teaching capacity or office to be exercised in the

name of the Church "personally bound to make a profession of faith, according to the formula approved by the Apostolic See" at the commencement of their term (CCC 833).

According to the Vatican website, both the Oath of Fidelity and the Profession of Faith ensure that adherers "firmly accept and hold each and everything definitively proposed by the Church regarding teaching on faith and morals" and pledge that "with great care and fidelity I shall carry out the duties incumbent on me toward the Church, both universal and particular, in which, according to the provisions of the law, I have been called to exercise my service."

The most prominent part of the Oath states, "In fulfilling the charge entrusted to me in the name of the Church, I shall hold fast to the deposit of faith in its entirety; I shall faithfully hand it on and explain it, and I shall avoid any teachings contrary to it."

After the controversial policy reversal in December 2023 that revoked extending admission to people who are not female but "consistently live and identify as women," Conboy and Board of Trustees Chair Maureen Karantz Smith expressed regret for the division caused "in our campus community and among our extended alumnae family." Acknowledging the broken trust, Conboy and Smith made it clear that their "deepest hope is for everyone to return in January committed to rebuilding trust."

The Loretto Trust, formed after the November 2023 controversial admissions decision, expressed their concerns with the *Rover* about Conboy's lack of transparency.

In October 2024, they sent a certified letter to President Conboy, seeking clarification on whether she had taken or planned to take the Oath of Fidelity. The Trust stated that no



Image from Wikimedia Commons

response or acknowledgment has been received since.

Loretto Trust told the *Rover*, "In the absence of any clear communication or public acknowledgment regarding this matter, we are left to interpret her lack of response as an indication that she has chosen not to commit this important declaration. This silence raises significant concerns among the SMC community."

Susan Powers, who graduated from SMC in 1981, told the *Rover*, "[SMC] says that they are a Catholic institution, and that they're bound by Canon law and the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith. So even if I don't look at it from a faith perspective, this is a legal issue."

Shannon Ferguson, SMC parent and Loretto Trust treasurer, told the *Rover*, "Loretto Trust believes that the Profession of Faith and the Oath of Fidelity, which are canonically required of the president of Saint Mary's College, reflect a commitment to guide actions and decisions with dedication to the Catholic faith, consistent with SMC's mission and values."

She continued, "If President Conboy chooses not to take the Oath, it suggests an inability to uphold its directives. We also view the Board of Trustees and the governing bodies of the

Sisters of the Holy Cross as complicit in this decision."

In 2021, Bishop Rhoades celebrated the morning Mass the day of her inauguration in the Church of Our Lady of Loretto, but while he did not mention the Oath in his homily, he stated, "Dr. Conboy is committed to the Church's vision of Catholic higher education. President Conboy's Christian witness and her commitment to leadership as service are vital for the life and Catholic identity of Saint Mary's College."

Bp. Rhoades continued in the homily, "I am confident that she will lead and serve this college in its commitment to the service of the Church and of the human family and in its fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church."

At his recent September 2024 inauguration, the *National Catholic Register* reported that Father Robert Dowd, C.S.C. took the Oath of Fidelity privately before Bishop Rhoades, sparking speculation that a public recitation "would appear to link Notre Dame too closely to the Church to suit many in governance and influence at the university."

Marco Clark, president of Holy Cross College, elected to profess his Oath openly in 2023. Clark told the *Rover*,

"I believe that the [oath's] greatest value lies in its ability to cultivate unity, integrity, and accountability in those entrusted with the Church's teaching mission. It is not about external compliance but about fostering a deep-seated commitment to the Church's mission, ensuring that Catholic education remains a beacon of truth, faith, and reason in the world."

He continued, "As a Catholic college, we should look at all of our decisions through the lens of our Catholic faith and with a Catholic worldview. This can often be complex when considering the moral and cultural challenges of our time."

Lydia Poe, finance and management junior from Kansas City, spent eight months in Rome and Washington, D.C., collecting unusual stories—like why the U.S. Capitol has six marble bathtubs and how to leave a mark on the Circus Maximus (hint: electric chariot, no coordination). Curious? Email her at lpoe01@saintmarys.edu.



Basilica Marriages

continued from front

diocese policy, couples should plan for at least six months of marriage preparation before the wedding.

Fr. Ching insisted, “There is certainly no need to try to book a spot before you have a significant other, though several have tried.”

Engaged couples must personally select a presider and readings for their ceremony. According to Fr. Ching, “Any Catholic bishop, priest, or deacon in good standing with the Church may preside at a wedding.” Some couples choose a priest they are close with, such as a priest-in-residence, rector, family friend, or home pastor.

In terms of choosing music and readings, Fr. Ching said, “Couples [should] look at the options for readings carefully, and then, think about ... the sacrament they are about to enter, or how God has been at work in their relationship. [The music] should convey the beauty and dignity of the sacrament ... or the gift of God’s love present in the wedding celebration.”

One of the most important parts of the process is the Marriage Preparation course. In Marriage Prep, also known as Pre-Can, couples learn



Image from Wikimedia Commons

about the Church’s teachings on marriage—such as the nature, indissolubility, and purpose of the sacrament—and have facilitated conversations about finances and sharing the work of married life. One of the key goals is to foster “thoughtful, open, clear communication

... essential for every marriage,” according to Suzy Younger, Campus Ministry’s Marriage Preparation Program coordinator.

If a couple completes marriage prep outside of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, the program must be approved by

the diocese. According to Fr. Ching, “Marriage preparation is important because the sacrament is a big commitment. We want to ensure that a couple starts off on as strong a foundation as possible, and help a couple think through all of the realities of married life.”

Younger had this to say about Pre-Can on campus: “For many [engaged students], there is a beautiful meaning to preparing for marriage in the place where they met and fell in love. ... We are surrounded by incredible people on our campus who are committed to our students’ formation, both as individuals and as they prepare the foundation for their marriage.”

As for the specifics of the program, participating couples have five personalized meetings with Younger, two meetings with a mentor couple, and a variety of discussions on fertility awareness methods. The end goal of the program is to create “a strong foundation for the couple’s future marriage and family life based on a formation in psychology, philosophy, and theology.”

Eleanor Zahorick, who graduated from Saint Mary’s College in 2023, is planning to get married to Notre Dame alum Michael Bender this summer.

She advised students hoping to get married in the basilica: “Don’t get engaged prematurely just because you want to book your ideal day and time. Even if you don’t officially get engaged, booking it ‘just in case’ is an emotional commitment. Wait until the time is right.”

She emphasized, “Your engagement should be your free, joyful ‘yes’ to your vocation with another, not an obligation to a specific place and time. The basilica is beautiful, but what matters most is the sacrament. Prioritize preparing for marriage, and the wedding will fall into place as God intends.”

For all questions relating to initiating the process, please email basilica@nd.edu and expect to hear back within two business days. More information can be found on the basilica’s Wedding Process page.

Katiebelle Thompson

hopes to someday be married in the basilica (only in summer), or in her warmer home parish, St. John’s. Send her your recommendations for caterers, receptions, and fiancés at cthomp23@nd.edu.

Former dCEC Director Delivers ND Forum Lecture

O. Carter Snead discusses public bioethics, human flourishing

KATHRYN SCHNEIDER
Staff Writer

O. Carter Snead, leading world expert in bioethics and former director of the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture (dCEC), gave a lecture titled “What We Owe to Each Other: Embodiment, Flourishing, and Public Bioethics” on February 20.

The lecture, part of the 2024–25 Notre Dame Forum, also served as the inaugural Charles E. Rice Chair Lecture. As the first recipient of the position, Snead’s work stands as an important contribution to Notre Dame’s long-standing commitment to exploring bioethics through the integration of faith and reason.

Appointed to the newly endowed Charles E. Rice chair in 2023, Snead teaches in the Notre Dame Law School and is a Concurrent Professor of Political Science. He previously served as the Director of the dCEC from 2012 to 2024. Snead is the author of more than 70 publications, including his acclaimed book, *What It Means to be Human: The Case for the Body in Public Bioethics*, which earned a spot on the Wall Street Journal’s prestigious Ten Best Books of 2020 list.

Snead focused on a correct understanding of the embodied nature of each human being, saying, “Reflecting upon and exploring our nature as

embodied beings leads us to insights about what we owe each other.”

Snead criticized the current focus of American law, which grounds the human identity and experience in expressive individualism and radical license. Since the purpose of law is the “protection and flourishing of persons,” Snead noted that the legal status of human identity is crucial to respecting the embodied nature of human beings. Rather than have unfettered freedoms, he argued that human beings need “networks of unconditional and uncalculated giving and graceful receiving.”

The focus of the dCEC on bioethics comes during a tumultuous time of controversy over various bioethical issues, especially following President Donald Trump’s executive order expanding access to *In Vitro* Fertilization (IVF) in the United States on February 18.

Snead highlighted the importance of Notre Dame’s role in investigating these controversial topics and recent dCEC concentration on bioethics, stating, “This is a very special community of learning where we do not shy away from the deepest and most difficult questions of human meaning and how to care rightly for one another.”

He continued, “Our Lady’s university—particularly at the de Nicola Center—is the



Image by the Irish Rover

perfect place to explore these issues together as friends, given the Church’s beautiful and compelling vision of human dignity, flourishing, and the common good.”

Snead’s research targets bioethics issues related to reproduction, including IVF, surrogacy, and abortion. In processes such as IVF and surrogacy, Snead argued that embryos and women are treated as commercial commodities. He criticized modern science’s goal of artificial fertility treatments to “help parents realize their dream of a disease-free legacy,” as articulated by American researcher Dr. Gerald Schatten of the University of Pittsburgh.

Bartosz Chramiec, sophomore

resident of Fisher Hall, told the *Rover*, “Research about how ethical frameworks impact our nation’s laws, like Professor Snead’s, is important for the de Nicola Center and Notre Dame because, if there’s any Catholic institution of higher education that can be a force for good and conform our nation’s laws to God’s laws, it’s Notre Dame.”

Snead’s lecture followed another dCEC-sponsored panel on bioethics on February 5. During this event, Paul Scherz, a dCEC Fellow and author of *The Ethics of Precision Medicine: The Problems of Prevention in Healthcare*, discussed the topic of his book in conversation with visiting dCEC scholars Christopher Kaczor, Mary

Hirschfeld, and Christopher Tollefsen.

The next event in the 2024–25 Notre Dame Forum series is titled “Catholic Perspectives on Israel-Palestine” on Wednesday, February 26.

Kathryn Schneider is a junior physics major with minors in math, Spanish, and theology. You can probably find her trying to add a bioethics minor to her already lengthy résumé. Contact her at kschnei6@nd.edu.



Notre Alumni in Congress Divided on DOGE

Students express mixed reactions on budget reform

ELLA YATES
Staff Writer

President Donald Trump promptly enacted change on the first day of his second term by signing over 20 executive orders. One such order outlined the measures for establishing “the Department of Government Efficiency to implement the President’s DOGE Agenda, by modernizing Federal technology and software to maximize governmental efficiency and productivity.”

The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), headed by Tesla and SpaceX founder Elon Musk, boasts already saving 55 billion dollars in government spending after about one month of work. Cuts thus far have primarily focused on USAID, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health and Human Services. The federal government spent 6.75 trillion dollars in the 2024 fiscal year and the national debt sits at 36.22 trillion dollars.

Despite full transparency in its actions with all records available on its official website, DOGE has faced fierce scrutiny and opposition for the massive cuts it has made to federal programs. However, Musk has also acknowledged that “[DOGE is] moving fast, so we will make mistakes, but we’ll also fix the mistakes very quickly.”

Among the supporters of DOGE’s recent efforts is Notre Dame alum Rep. Pat Fallon, Texas Republican. Fallon, in a hearing with the House Oversight Committee, staunchly defended the actions of DOGE saying it “doesn’t stand for oligarch ... billionaire ... unelected billionaire ... Project

2025, or ... Elon Musk.” To his anti-DOGE constituents, he asked, “Who in their right mind would oppose our federal government operating with more efficiency?”

Fallon clarified that although he thinks some federal workers do a “fabulous job” and some agencies provide “critical services for Americans,” not all of them do. He reiterated the necessity to “trim the excess ... eliminate waste, expose the abuse, and streamline efficiency” in the federal government’s spending and operation.

Concerning spending cuts in the Department of Education, Fallon cited math and reading proficiency levels for students from 1979 (when it was founded) to the current day as stagnant. Fallon said, “The spending per pupil on education was 9,615 dollars in 1979 and is now just under 20,000.” Despite spending “double the money ... it’s not reaching classroom performance.” Recommending policy instead of allocating billions for the department, Fallon said that “block grants would be a far better way rather than spending 79 billion dollars on a Department of Education at a federal level.”

Another Notre Dame alum, Rep. Brendan Boyle, Pennsylvania Democrat, the Ranking Member of the House Budget Committee, said DOGE’s actions were “very disturbing,” specifically citing the orders to many employees of USAID and the Consumer Protection Financial Bureau to “not report to work or cease what they are doing.” Boyle simply called the actions “autocratic.”

Boyle pointed to the fact that bills need to be passed through



Image from Wikimedia Commons

the legislative branch like how Democrats did in 2021 when they controlled both chambers of Congress and the White House similar to how Republicans do now. He criticized Trump for ignoring “the Constitution and [grabbing] power to put ... unelected people into agencies [where they are] getting into the back end computer system.” Boyle continued to emphasize privacy concerns as a matter being overlooked with the power DOGE wields.

Boyle clarified that “in theory, government efficiency is ... right up [his] alley, but in practice, that’s not at all what has happened. It is about a unilateral power grab.”

Notre Dame students felt similarly divided. One sophomore from Dillon Hall

said to the *Rover*, “As a Trump supporter, I’m a little shocked. It appears reckless. DOGE works towards a goal I agree with, but the methods are unreliable and can potentially cause long-term problems.” He followed up saying, “It’s poor execution of a good idea. We want to cut down on unnecessary spending but cutting medical funding isn’t the way to do it.”

Another sophomore from Dillon Hall expressed more support for DOGE’s activity saying, “Trump made big promises, unlike many other candidates. He is consistent, came out the door swinging, and did what he campaigned on. He isn’t backing down despite overwhelming opposition and he is putting America first rather than sending money abroad.”

Time will tell if Musk will make good on rectifying some mistaken cuts and if Trump will act on the idea of DOGE stimulus checks. In the meantime, Musk and DOGE look to continue their plan of massive spending cuts.

Ella Yates is a sophomore studying philosophy, political science, and theology from Western Springs, Illinois. She is currently in the process of creating the Apple Music playlist that she will listen to for at least half of 2025. Anyone with song recommendations should email her at eyates4@nd.edu.

IRR Lecture Discusses Rise and Fall of “Anti-Racism”

BU professor examines movement’s decline after Trump

DAVID MURPHY
Staff Writer

The Notre Dame Initiative on Race and Resilience (IRR) hosted Harvey Young, Dean of the College of Fine Arts at Boston University, for his talk, “How Anti-Racism Lost the Popular Vote: Race, Performance & the Idea of America,” held on February 19. The lecture discussed the rise and fall of the anti-racism movement in America and its implications for the future.

Young opened the discussion by expressing his belief that, at its core, race is a social construct: “There is not a scientifically significant biological basis for our racial categories. ... We have inherited a 19th-century concept, originally devised to give credence to the prejudices of people who were convinced that folks with different complexions and bearing different ancestral

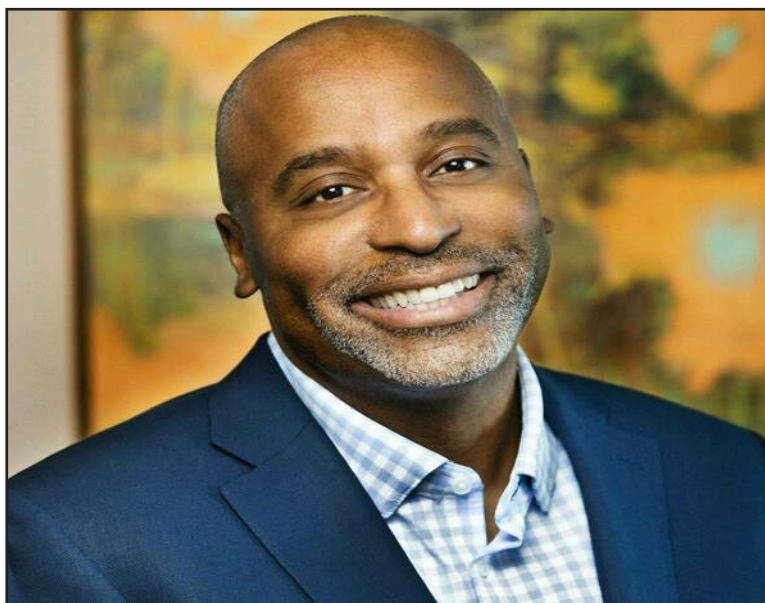


Image from Initiative on Race and Resilience

homes were not like [them].”

Young then analyzed the racial unrest and upheaval of the 2020 protests, sparked by the death of George Floyd. He noted how the event provoked widespread protests and a newfound “rise in activism,” that pressured societal

institutions to reform in a way that, “against [that] backdrop, [remaining] silent was to be complicit in a racist structure and system.” According to Young, this period created the conditions necessary for a renewed rise in the anti-racist

movement, noting its impact within his own academic field.

“Although situations varied for art schools across the country, it was almost impossible to lead an organization without making a statement assuring both the internal community of students, faculty, and staff, as well as the external audience of peers and community leaders, that you and your organization believed black lives matter and that you were committed to eradicating racism,” Young recalled.

However, Young noted that this movement did not come without its issues. In particular, Young highlighted an intolerance to disagreement and outside perspectives within this new anti-racist movement. According to Young, this appetite for dialogue was fueled by the belief among many activists that “the alternative position is racist, sexist, transphobic.” He also cited situations in which anti-

racist activists levied allegations of racism without conclusive evidence.

“There was a case in which an alum went on social media and identified a staff member as racist and demanded that this person resign,” Young explained. “Within three days, the petition had been signed by nearly 300 people, mostly current students and some recent alumni, and it was jarring to see how swiftly the calls could come to cancel someone on the basis of an allegation without evidence.”

Young went on to argue that these incidents contributed to a negative stigma surrounding the anti-racist movement as it continued to develop, identifying that “although rarely held, anti-racist activism [created] space for leftist activists to cancel aspects of conservative

continued on pg. 8



Notre Dame Law Graduates Expand Clerkship Prestige

Recent rankings highlight NDLS alumni success in federal courts

SAM MARCHAND

Politics Editor

The Washington Post published an article on November 28 titled “Notre Dame is a pipeline for Supreme Court clerks, magnet for justices.” Describing the university’s larger Catholic mission, the *Post* wrote, “The justices, meanwhile, are flocking to Notre Dame to teach, lecture and enjoy the elaborate Fighting Irish football festivities. Their growing ties in part reflect shared legal views between the conservative justices and the Catholic law school.”

U.S. News & World Report ranks Notre Dame Law School (NDLS) as 20th on their Best Law Schools list. However, when ranked on federal clerkships for its graduates, NDLS places 4th in the nation, with nearly 19 percent of graduates clerking on the federal bench.

Father Patrick Reidy, C.S.C., a professor of law, is currently clerking for Justice Brett Kavanaugh, one of several Law School faculty to clerk for the nation’s highest court.

The Washington Post described an increasingly conservative faculty body at the Law School. Quoting former law professor Mark McKenna, “Every time someone left, as a general rule, they were replaced by someone considerably more conservative.”

G. Marcus Cole, Dean of the Law School, defended the Catholic orientation of the law school from the notion that it fosters an overly conservative academic environment. Comparing Notre Dame to other institutions, Cole said NDLS “doesn’t openly discriminate against conservative scholars,” adding, “We are willing to hire people without regard to their approach to law and legal interpretation. We don’t have a litmus test.”

61 percent of the Law School’s students are Catholic, compared to 82 percent for the undergraduate student body. Dean Cole, according to FEC records, donated 250 dollars to Kamala Harris’ 2024 presidential campaign.

The *Post* cited Varun Cidambi, president of the American Constitution Society’s chapter on campus, a liberal group, as highlighting that law students at ND hold diverse views, with both liberal and conservative student groups being active.

Students are enthusiastic about Notre Dame Law School graduates’ success in securing prestigious clerkships. Quinlen Schachle, a freshman studying PLS who plans on applying to law school, is seriously considering Notre Dame. “It seems like a great program with a top-tier educational experience and unmatched opportunities,”



Image by ND Law School

Schachle said.

One second-year law student said, “Thanks to the failures of the traditionally elite law schools, conservative and Catholic professors who would have otherwise ended up at a Harvard or a Yale ended up at Notre Dame, and we get to reap the benefits. Not only do we get to learn from many of the brightest minds in the law, but we also get to be mentored and formed by them because they are first and foremost good people.”

A sophomore global affairs student in McGlinn Hall considered the Law School’s rising standing as “deeply impactful

for Catholic academia.” She added, “Justice Barrett adds a degree of connection with the legal establishment that provides more opportunity than ever for students.”

NDLS received more than 2,400 applications in the last application cycle, showing a slight decrease from 2023. In 2024, per the American Bar Association, NDLS had an acceptance rate of just over 23.2 percent, down from 24.4 percent last year. The class of 2027’s median LSAT score was 169, coming from 111 different undergraduate universities.

The *Notre Dame Law Review*,

founded in 1925, is currently taking submissions for its 100th volume.

Sam Marchand is a sophomore studying political science and finance from Beaumont, Texas. He squanders much of his spare time by reading the Current Events section of Wikipedia preparing arguments for ND Speech & Debate, of which he serves as president. He can be reached at smarcha3@nd.edu.



It behooves a watchdog to bark. Good, Rover.

IRR Lecture

continued from pg. 7

ideology.” According to Young, this, in part, prompted a “brutal counter current,” encapsulated in what he described as an “anti-woke” movement—a backlash against the anti-racist coalition that emerged following the demonstrations of 2020.

According to Young, “wokeism” emerged as a synonym for the “sensibility required for change-makers seeking to promote and enable inclusion and diversity,” and became associated with the growing anti-racism movement. He identified wokeism as an attempt to “unravel the fabric” of America’s “founding narratives,” displaying to Americans what he considered the true nature of America’s founding. To this end, Young cited several historical examples, such as Washington’s

refusal to free his slaves (until after his death) or the several coerced sexual relationships Jefferson had with his own enslaved workers.

As maintained by Young, wokeism’s erosion of these historical underpinnings created a “crisis of confidence” that resulted in the “resurgence of racialized nationalism.” Young explained how this backlash, in turn, targeted woke ideology, the anti-racist movement, and the teaching of critical race theory in public schools. Young stressed that Trump’s election displayed the power of this new nationalist, “anti-woke” coalition and merited fear over its consequences.

“[This nationalism] masks the intimidation threat under the banner of love and patriotism, or as others might describe it, because it presents

an unapologetically muscular nationalism,” he said. “And of course, the rise of ‘Make America Great Again’ 2.0 in 2016 and 2024 are reminders of the resiliency of this strain of nationalism and patriotism.”

Young considered this backlash as culpable for the fall of the anti-racist movement, believing its failure on the ballot last November transformed it into nothing more than a “historical chapter” within American history. While noting the possibility of a renewal, Young acknowledged that the language of anti-racism has gone now “underground within popular discourse” and that recent actions by the Trump administration surrounding DEI, as well as other Republican efforts, appear to have cemented its seemingly “time-bound” nature.

“[Anti-racism] is a contestation

of a nostalgic idea of the country and a memory steeped in exceptionalism,” Young concluded. “As such, anti-racism to skeptics emerged as a counterpoint to patriotism. It was not only unpatriotic but also un-American. Calls for diversity were retrained as challenges to American unity.”

After the lecture, Keough Hall freshman Jack Rankin spoke with the *Rover*, providing his perspective on Young’s lecture.

“I loved how he was able to condense a lot of the tension in American politics,” Rankin told the *Rover*. “He had this kind of critical eye towards not only the conservative opposition but the liberal movement of anti-racism that was pretty self-improving. You could tell it was a very constructive dialogue and that he acknowledged both sides fully.”

The next IRR-sponsored lecture will be “Anticolonialism(s) as antiracism(s)? Italian Radicals Facing ‘Race’ and the Colonial Question at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” on February 27.

David Murphy is a freshman studying economics and political science. When he is not crippled with schoolwork, he enjoys going on walks and working out in the gym. He can be reached by email at dmurph23@nd.edu.



Unveiling *Treasure Chest of Fun and Fact*

Historic comic book series promotes saints, Catholic education

RYLEN LASTRELLA
Staff Writers

Hidden in the 6th floor of the Hesburgh Library, deep within the University Archives, lies a hidden gem: *Treasure Chest of Fun and Fact*, a series of comic books featuring several noteworthy stories about saints, sports, and children.

The first issue of *Treasure Chest of Fun and Fact* was published on March 12, 1946 by George A. Pflaum. Although there was a wide array of characters and storylines, they all served the same purpose: to educate and to catechize. However, their popularity did decline, and in the late 1960s they had transitioned to monthly publications. They eventually were discontinued, and at the end of their run they had published roughly 500 issues—well within the top percentile of American comic books. Their last issue was dated July, 1972.

A typical series, *Talking It Over With Father John*, featured advice from a Catholic priest aimed at elementary students. Father John would encourage its student readers to engage in virtuous and pious habits like praying for their teachers or attending Holy Mass on a regular basis, even while on summer break. Subscriptions to the comics were only made available through the Catholic school systems. Despite this, the comics were still popular and even included many mainstream comic book artists such as Joe Sinnott who also worked on *Thor* and *Fantastic Four*, Reed Crandall who worked on *Blackhawk* and

T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents, and Bernard Bailey who worked on *The Spectre* and *Hourman*.

Chuck White and His Friends was another one of *Treasure Chest's* longest running storylines. This lighthearted series follows a young boy, Chuck White, throughout his life and includes many typical childhood activities such as playing with friends, engaging in sports, and attending school.

Another storyline, *Christ Courageous One*, depicts the martyrdom of Saint Tarcisus who was tragically beaten to death in 263 B.C. while attempting to bring the Holy Eucharist to the imprisoned. The comic portrays St. Tarcisus being stopped by a group of boys, attempting to steal the pyx that held the Most Blessed Sacrament. Clutching and protecting the pyx, the comic illustrates St. Tarcisus being backed against the wall and disappearing in the next panel. He appears again two panels later and is depicted as saying, “Never mind me ... take care of the Divine Mysteries.” One of the last panels of the story shows pilgrims at the tomb of St. Tarcisus in Rome, requesting his intercession.

Jacob Mills, a freshman in O'Neill Family Hall, who had the chance to see pictures of several issues from the actual comic books held within the University Archives told the *Rover* that he appreciated the “excellent images that could really help young Catholics meditate on the mysteries of the Rosary.”

In addition to religious stories, the comics also presented political commentary.

During the Cold War era, the comics reflected anti-communist sentiment with stories such as *This Godless Communism*. Unlike the lighthearted themes that were typically depicted, this series chose to tackle heavier topics such as depictions of death and degradation. There were several illustrations that showed executions, unfair treatment of farm workers, and forced labor.

This series' main goal was to publish the facts about the Communist way of thinking, and to show how its core beliefs were incompatible with Church teaching. In the final panels a Catholic priest is depicted telling his students, “God made us with a body and soul destined to be with Him forever after our death. This is denied completely by Communism. Communism is the work of the Devil that can be best illustrated by looking at what Communism has done to the people under its domination.” This storyline ends with the same Catholic priest now looking at the reader, urging them to pray their Rosary, as a means of fighting against Communism.

A sophomore in Fisher Hall, Bartosz Karol Chramiec, stated, “As a history major, looking at these comics is like looking through a window into a different world, and such windows not only help us understand the past, but can also help us understand the present in a new light, especially in this case how to live out our Catholic faith.”

The University of Notre Dame Archives acquired most of its current collection of *Treasure Chest of Fun and Fact*



Image by Wikimedia Commons

by purchase; however, 21 issues were also donated by Jeanette Horn.

Luke Turner, a sophomore in Fisher Hall, told the *Rover* how he finds the comic books relevant even today: “The Church that does not create its own culture, will soon be subsumed by the culture that surrounds it.”

Treasure Chest of Fun and Fact can be accessed in the archives of the University of Notre Dame.

Rylen Lastrella is a Program of Liberal Studies major who loves California, but is still praying for its revival that turns more hearts to the Church and fewer people to ‘find themselves’ on a yoga mat. If you'd like to talk about the best state in the nation, he can be reached at rlastrel@nd.edu.

Married and Parenting Students Club Founded

Group fosters community to promote vocation to marriage

BRIDGETTE RODGERS
Executive Editor

In the fall of 2024, two students founded the Married and Parenting Students Club (MPSC). The group is “dedicated to supporting students who are balancing the demands of academics with marriage and/or parenting responsibilities,” according to club founder and president Carlos Macias, a senior studying neuroscience and behavior.

According to Macias, the club aims “to empower our members to succeed both in their academic pursuits and family roles, promoting personal growth, resilience, and a healthy work-life balance.” MPSC focuses on parenting resources as well, helping students to be “role models to inspire their children to prioritize higher education and to create bright futures for families.”



Image from the Basilica of the Sacred Heart Facebook

In an interview with the *Rover*, Macias explained his motivation for starting the club, describing how he and his wife,

Allison, came to Notre Dame “excited to make some friends.” Initially, as married students, they struggled: “It was really

hard to find a community of undergraduates and live that expected undergraduate Notre Dame experience,” Macias remarked.

From the beginning, Macias had been advised to go to the Family Resource Center (FRC), where he and his wife met a variety of other couples who expressed similar aspirations and frustrations to his own, saying, “We have the same experiences. We feel like we’re hiding away in this little corner, where nobody knows who we are or where we are, and we just want to make some friends and have a community.”

After a conversation with the FRC director, Peggy Hnatisko, Macias felt compelled to start the MPSC, saying, “The challenge to that was that the FRC was limited due to funding to only serving married and parenting and pregnant students and no single or engaged or dating individual could join any of the

events. ... We came up with the Married and Parenting Students Club as an opportunity to allow all individuals to participate and foster a family-friendly community that is geared towards the vocation of marriage and is supporting beautiful, healthy families in our communities here.”

MPSC hosted their first event, a club dinner, on February 21. Over 40 people were in attendance, exceeding the club's expectations. Macias said, “It was such a beautiful time to see how many people are in need of this community that fosters a gear towards love and healthy relationships.”

Jackie Nguyen, Right to Life president, stressed the importance of the event to the *Rover*, saying, “Right to Life fully supports the Married and Parenting Students Club. MPSC provides a space where

continued on pg. 10



Student Government presents “Know Your Cycle”

OBGYNs discuss natural approaches to fertility, cycle tracking

MADLINE PAGE
Staff Writer

Student Government hosted “Know Your Cycle,” a panel discussion on understanding the menstrual cycle and its impacts on women’s health, on February 13. The event emphasized the effectiveness of natural methods in women’s health and pregnancy planning, featuring discussion from Suzy Younger, Campus Ministry’s Marriage Prep Coordinator, and obstetrician-gynecologists and Notre Dame graduates Dr. Lindsey Connolly and Dr. Katie O’Leary.

“Know Your Cycle” was organized by Lena Dougherty, Student Government’s Title IX representative for the 2024–2025 academic year. As an advocate for women’s issues on campus, Dougherty told the *Rover* that natural methods of fertility awareness are “often dismissed due to misconceptions.” She further noted, “Menstrual health is a fundamental aspect of women’s well-being, yet it remains an often overlooked topic in mainstream discussions. ... Menstrual cycles should not be a taboo topic—understanding them is essential for overall health and can have life-changing, and even life-saving, implications.”

The presentation began with an overview of the menstrual cycle, explaining the biology of a woman’s fertility. Having established a fundamental understanding of these facts, the talk then progressed into discussing their application, describing how women can use a holistic knowledge of their bodies to identify optimal fertility windows and monitor

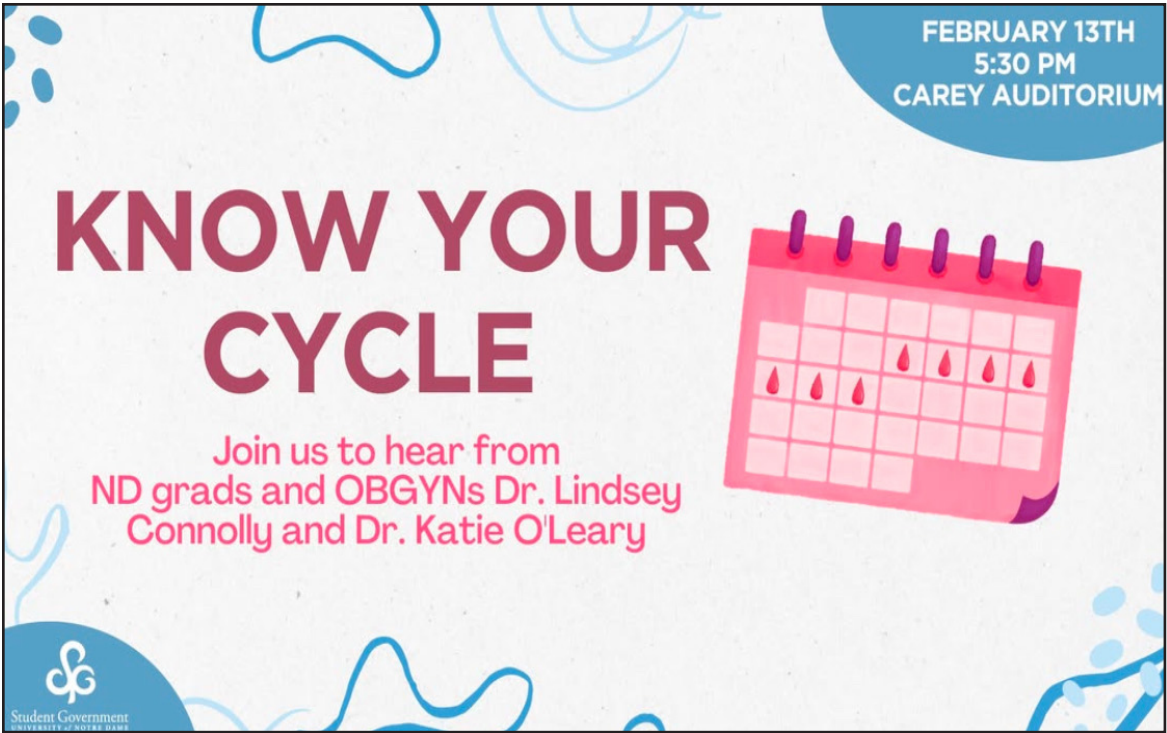


Image from the Notre Dame Student Government Instagram

their cyclic progression.

During the presentation, Younger cited her passion for educating young women about a comprehensive approach to fertility care, saying, “I wish somebody had told me this in college, I wish somebody had told me this in high school, I wish somebody had told me this in middle school. Nobody did. ... If we knew this stuff, don’t you think the unplanned pregnancy rate would drop? If we knew our bodies ... But we haven’t been told.”

Following Younger’s presentation, Connolly and O’Leary answered questions related to women’s menstrual health and fertility tracking. Connolly said that cycle charting is “96.8 percent effective for avoiding pregnancy,” compared to “92 percent for the pill and 82 percent for the condom.” She noted that cycle charting is one of the most important steps that women can take towards

maintaining their health, as it identifies abnormalities that could be related to underlying health issues or cancer.

Connolly and O’Leary also addressed the relationship between birth control pills and a natural understanding of a woman’s fertility, explaining that cycle charting while on the pill is ineffective.

Connolly explained that as a synthetic hormone, the pill tricks the woman’s body into thinking she is pregnant, preventing the release of hormones that trigger ovulation. Cycle charting is intended to track hormone fluctuations and ovulation, but without these processes occurring, there is nothing to track.

O’Leary further elucidated that use of birth control pills often masks underlying health and fertility issues, rather than addressing them. She promoted cycle charting as an alternative option, explaining

its importance in identifying causes of infertility: “Instead of overriding a whole runaway system with one pill or IVF, you’re actually repairing the system so that it functions normally. If a heart is broken, we don’t take out the heart. Why do we treat the gynecologic system this way?”

“Know Your Cycle” was well-received by the campus community, and attracted over 40 student participants, exceeding attendance expectations for the event.

Sarah Fairbank, a Notre Dame senior, told the *Rover*, “I’ve seen firsthand how doctor after doctor is unable to provide answers and instead immediately turn to birth control as the only option. ... I think it’s important to talk about menstrual health and fertility because it either directly or indirectly concerns every person—all women, all couples trying to conceive, couples trying not to conceive,

or even anyone who has any opinion on important societal issues such as abortion or lessening the medical disparity gap.”

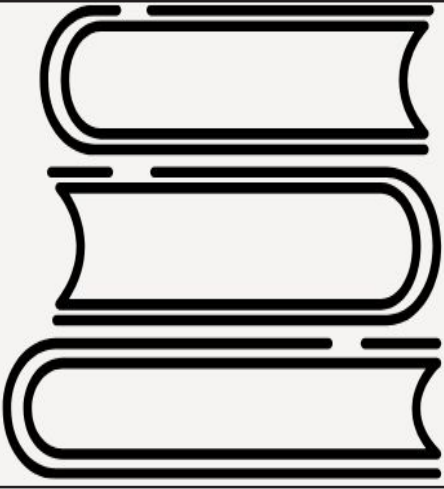
Maeve Miller, Student Government’s Vice President, agreed that the event was an invaluable opportunity for Notre Dame women, saying, “It was empowering to see how many women from across campus came to the event to engage with the resources [that] Student Government was able to bring to the student body in partnership with Campus Ministry.”

Dougherty noted, “The engagement during the discussion further reinforced how relevant and valuable this topic is to our campus community. ... Moving forward, I hope that Notre

Dame will continue fostering discussions that empower individuals with the knowledge to make informed choices about their bodies and well-being.”

Students interested in learning more about cycle charting, natural fertility treatment, or menstrual health should contact the St. Joseph Fertility Center, where Younger, Connolly, and O’Leary are staff members.

Madeline Page is a freshman studying biology. She has a collection of dead or dying plants that she continues to water in the vain hope that they will come back to life. To give her advice on how to be a better plant mom, email mpage4@nd.edu.



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MPSC *continued from pg. 9*

those who have chosen to pursue the vocation of parenthood and marriage can grow in community with one another and be supported by mutual experiences, while sharing their vocation with those who are discerning the vocation.”

Nguyen continued, “MPSC’s witness provides a beacon of hope to not only those who are discerning marriage themselves,

but also to students who may find themselves in a time of unintended pregnancy and parenthood. Their witness promotes the culture of life we hope to build at Notre Dame and it’s been a great joy to get to know these beautiful families.”

As it continues to grow, MPSC hopes to expand its programming. One of the club’s goals is to host an annual dance for its members. Although dances are a fairly frequent experience for Notre

Dame students, Macias noted, “Because I’ve never belonged to a dorm, I’ve never been to a dance. I’ve never been invited to one. And oftentimes when the university has dances you can only buy a ticket for yourself. And I often go, ‘Can I bring my wife? I don’t feel as comfortable going to the dance without my wife.’ And it’s always ‘No, sorry, you can’t.’” Macias hopes an annual dance will help to make married and parenting students feel included in the typical

undergraduate experience at Notre Dame.

Additionally, MPSC expects to host talks. “Going forward we’re going to be working with Campus Ministry here in this next month, partnering with Suzy Younger for her program called ‘Dating under the Dome,’” Macias said.

In light of the club’s development, Macias is optimistic about the future of MPSC: “I really just hope that families can continue to flourish

here at Notre Dame and we start to expand our idea of what it is to be the Notre Dame family.”

Students interested in joining MPSC can email the club at mpsc@nd.edu.

Bridgette Rodgers is a junior studying political science and theology. You can contact her at brodger4@nd.edu.



The JFK Files: Available at Your Local Library Soon

To hit streaming services in 2026

RALPH EMERSON SLINKWORTH
Staff Writer

On his third day in office, Donald Trump finally ordered the declassification of the assassination files on the Brothers K. No, not the Brothers Karamazov, I'm talking about another ill-fated duo: former president JFK and former attorney general RFK.

White House Press Secretary Caroline Leavitt said Trump wanted to declassify the files during his first term, but couldn't locate them before he had to leave office. Rumor has it that after a long search, aided by document-sniffing rottweilers, Elon discovered the files in a cabinet in USAID's Headquarters marked, "ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO SEE HERE." Leavitt said the files were nearly lost forever when, on a visit to the White House last week, Biden tried to smuggle them away in the back of his Corvette, believing they were old stock certificates for Burisma. Biden disputed Leavitt's claim, telling investigators he thought they were bedtime stories his nanny had misplaced. I don't have



Shikler's John Fitzgerald Kennedy, modified by the Irish Rover.

any insights as to what Joe's soporific literature of choice is, but it wouldn't surprise me to hear it's assassination records, considering the current morbid popularity of the true crime genre.

We regular Americans must wait until March 9 to get our true crime fix, which is the date

President Trump has set for the files' release. Some 320,000 documents on JFK's killing have already been released, while an estimated 4,000 more remain hidden. Even more exciting, the FBI reportedly found an additional 2,400 documents which will be included in the release. I won't speculate where

in the USAID's HQ these bonus files were uncovered, but the Executive Snack and Sesame Street Room is the current favorite on Polymarket.

Some question whether the files' release will bring us any closer to finding out who really killed JFK. After all, 50 years is plenty of time to Sharpie out inconvenient sentences, and I'm not sure even a DOGE task-force knows how to remove CIA-made white-out. The odds of stumbling upon the words "We did it, so sorry" buried on page 3 million are quite low. More likely, the public will receive thousands and thousands of pages of, well, not much. The problem with secret document troves is not that they are secret. Unlike Google Docs, they have no edit history. "The FBI made a change at 3:27 a.m." is not something we'll be seeing a whole lot of. If a curious U.S. Archives janitor took a few pages home for some midnight perusing in the '80s and never returned them, we'd be none the wiser.

Perhaps even more frustrating for some is that the official narrative of JFK's demise might well be the true one. Perhaps, it was Oswald and only Oswald who hatched the plot all those

years ago. Perhaps, there was no collusion with the mob, Russia, the CIA, Bigfoot or any other of the alleged colluders. Perhaps, Oswald was just a sharp-sighted nut who wasn't a fan of teamwork. If this is what the files tell us, there will of course still be deniers. Time and secrecy have eroded the rock of certainty down to pebble-size, and even if the documents point unerringly at Oswald, people will still clutch their alternate theories tightly. This is America after all, where we have the right to think and say what we want, however crazy. Ask Joe, that's what makes a good bedtime story.

Ralph Emerson Slinkworth is a freshman political science major. In his spare time, he enjoys reading in book warehouses (on any floor except the sixth). His part time job includes managing government contracts for a document shredding company. He cannot be reached.

Suspect Research Discovers New Minorities

Defends lefties' rights

JAMES WHITAKER
Humor Editor

As Notre Dame's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives have approached their projected goals with respect to demographics of gender, sexuality, race, and religion, DEI higher-ups have found a need to actively discover further minorities toward whom their efforts and funding might be directed. Their search for new minorities also led to a swarm of non-peer-reviewed studies to justify their new hiring prejudices.

The first minority discovered was that of left-handed people, who make up 10 percent of the national population. An initial study from Notre Dame's Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion found that only 10 percent of Notre Dame faculty and students are left-handed, leaving an intimidatingly uniform 89 percent of the Notre Dame community oppressively right-handed (1 percent reported ambidexterity). The center declared that this left-handed representation was insufficient, and have set their goal as 50-50 representation of right- and left-handed faculty by 2035. Experts say that, from a faculty-hiring perspective, this means that every single hiring committee in the next decade will need to consider lefties



Separation of Sheep and Goats, anonymous Byzantine mosaic, modified by the Irish Rover.

exclusively.

Some of the impetus for this renewed commitment has come from the long history of anti-left-handedness bias that has plagued Western civilization for millennia. After all, the lefties of the Roman Empire were abused with the cruel nickname *sinister*.

There has also been a recent movement to "improve our commitment to left-handed accommodation" on campus, with 15 million dollars dedicated toward various initiatives and centers. 10 million dollars has been dedicated to the renovation of the 9th floor of Duncan Student Center to make the

"Leftie Commons," featuring a study space with exclusively left-handed desks and a recreational room with only left-handed guitars. The other 5 million dollars are going towards leftie-specific programming, like Campus Ministry's upcoming left-handed weekend retreat.

Initiatives to increase representation of other underrepresented groups have been heating up as well. Startled by the shocking absence of other age-demographics among enrolled students, a new initiative has been made to help raise the percentage of enrolled minors and senior

citizens. Calling the initiative "Ageism? Nuh-uh, no way!" the administration plans to admit students of all ages into each incoming class. Each incoming class of 1,500 students will have an even number of spots allocated for each age, meaning every class will reliably have 15 seats for one-year-olds, 15 for 99-year-olds, etc.

It goes without saying that each of these groups will also have their own PwC-funded 10 million dollar Commons constructed, with special Masses and retreats for each age group.

When DEI politics were at the apex of their popularity, there

arose a grassroots club focused on Agreement, Partiality, and Exclusion (APE). However, in light of recent DEI activity, the members of APE disbanded, saying that their work was already accomplished.

Former APE president Schmico Nitz told the *Rover*, "Our ultimate goal in APE was to create a Notre Dame in which everybody was painfully aware of each other's race, religion, sexuality, and age. Thanks to DEI, the lines have never been more clearly drawn. Now students are able to associate with members of their own identity-group exclusively, with full agreement and partiality. That's, like, our whole thing!"

James Whitaker is a graduate student, which is to say, old. He is currently seeking a protégé to apprentice as his successor in the esteemed Humor editor position as he transitions to his emeritus status. Any interested students should reach out to him at jwhitak5@nd.edu.

EVENTS HAPPENING ON CAMPUS:

Friday, February 28:

“From Paris to America”

Notre Dame Symphony Orchestra with The Sylvan Trio
(Leighton Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.)

Tuesday, March 4:

“Catholic Social Doctrine: Taking Stock”

Dr. Russ Hittinger
(Debartolo 138, 4:00 p.m.)

Wednesday, March 19:

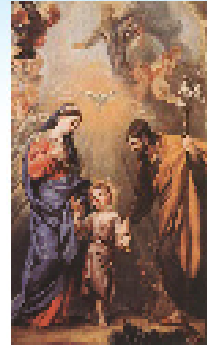
“Persuasive Pro-Life”

Trent Horn
(Location TBD, 7:00 p.m.)

Tuesday, March 25:

Panel: “‘That They May Have Life’: Celebrating 30 Years of
Evangelium Vitae”

Helen Alvaré, Richard Doerflinger, Sr. Virginia Joy, S.V.
(Smith Ballroom, Morris Inn, 4:00 p.m.)



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