

# **Evidence . . .**

**of the Homosexual Agenda  
at the University of Notre Dame.**

- **University of Notre Dame  
Standing Committee  
on Lesbian & Gay Students**
  
- **Gender Relations Center**
  - **Heather Rakoczy**

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## Sr. Gude will serve as chair of the University's Standing Committee on Lesbian and Gay Student Needs

By: Dennis Brown  
Date: October 28, 1998

Sister Mary Louise Gude, C.S.C., associate professional specialist in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures and assistant vice president of student affairs at the University of Notre Dame, will serve as chair of the University's Standing Committee on Lesbian and Gay Student Needs for the 1998-99 academic year, according to Professor Patricia O'Hara, vice president for student affairs.

Sister Gude will be joined on the committee by Sister Sue Bruno, O.S.F., rector of Pasquerilla West residence hall; undergraduate students Theresa Gibbons, Alyssa Hellrung and Mark Massoud; and Rev. Richard V. Warner, C.S.C., director of campus ministry and counselor to the president.

Beginning its third year, the committee was established by O'Hara in agreement with a recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee on Lesbian and Gay Student Needs, which made the recommendation in its February 1996 final report. The committee is intended to serve as a resource to O'Hara in identifying needs of gay and lesbian students, continuing the dialogue initiated by the ad hoc committee, and assisting in the implementation of campus-wide educational programming on gay and lesbian issues. During the 1997-98 academic year, the committee sponsored the creation of NETWORK: A Welcoming Place for Respectful Dialogue, an initiative designed to prepare members of the Notre Dame community who identify themselves as people willing to offer a confidential and respectful place for discussion of gay and lesbian issues. NETWORK participants display a small placard with the program's logo to signify that they are prepared to offer a welcoming place of conversation on issues related to sexual orientation.

Sister Bruno, Father Warner, Ms. Hellrung and Mr. Massoud are returning members of the standing committee. Sister Gude succeeds Sister Bruno, who chaired the committee last year.

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## Committee for gay and lesbian students reorganized

By: Dennis Brown  
Date: February 27, 2006

The Standing Committee on Gay and Lesbian Student Needs at the University of Notre Dame has been restructured, including the addition of a student co-chair and the adoption of a new name, according to Rev. Mark L. Poorman, C.S.C., vice president for student affairs.

The changes follow a series of discussions in recent months between Father Poorman and student members and administrators on the newly named Core Council for Gay and Lesbian Students.

"Since the creation of the standing committee in 1996 and the adoption of our 'Spirit of Inclusion' a year later, Notre Dame has sought to better address the needs of our gay, lesbian and bisexual students within the parameters of Catholic teaching," said Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., the University's president. "I am grateful for the dedicated work of the committee members the past 10 years, and, with the evolution of this new council, I am excited about this important step forward."

The Core Council will consist of eight student members, of whom a majority will be gay, lesbian or bisexual, and four administrators. The other co-chair will come from the Office of Student Affairs. Administrators from Campus Ministry, the Counseling Center and the Gender Relations Center will serve in the remaining three positions. The Core Council will continue to advise the vice president for student affairs and serve as a resource in identifying the needs of gay, lesbian and bisexual students.

"The standing committee has been an invaluable resource to me," Father Poorman said. "I want to express my deepest gratitude to the student members of the committee, as well as to its current chair, Sister Mary Louise Gude, C.S.C., who have worked so hard for so long on this issue. The idea for this new structure was generated by the students, and they have labored to bring it into being. The standing committee has evolved, just as the needs of this campus have evolved. I am confident that the core council will be even more effective in its new form, and better able to take on its many important projects."

The council will receive regularly reserved space in the LaFortune Student Center, in recognition of its increasingly large responsibilities with regard to educational programming. It also will work on an ad hoc basis with a new coalition of students drawn from Student Government and other groups. The expansion will allow the council to capitalize on the interest and support of various groups on campus, and will provide

additional students to assist with its various initiatives.

Senior Tiffany Thompson, who has been involved with the standing committee for the last four years, said: "I think the biggest strength of the new council and coalition is the fact that there are many motivated students – both gay and straight – on campus right now who want to get involved and who have fantastic ideas; the new structure will bring all these people together."

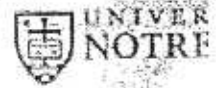
This fall marks the 10th anniversary of what has been the Standing Committee. Since 1996, the group has initiated and implemented educational programs on issues affecting gay, lesbian and bisexual students. It has offered annual assistance in training resident assistants during Hall Staff Orientation, directed Community sessions for first-year students, and presented the "Network" program. The group hosts monthly coffee hours, sponsors topical speakers, and organizes "Solidarity Sunday" and events to mark National Coming Out Day.

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## University establishes new Gender Relations Center for students

By: Julie Flory  
Date: March 5, 2004

The University of Notre Dame will open a Gender Relations Center this fall, offering programs on gender-related topics and facilitating campus dialogue about such issues.

Established in response to a student-led initiative, the new center will be located in the LaFortune Student Center. In addition to offering campus programs, the new center will coordinate and support student clubs and organizations concerned with gender issues, and provide training for staff members who work with students.

"The establishment of the Gender Relations Center under the auspices of Student Affairs represents an important step forward in terms of promoting a healthy campus climate for women and men at Notre Dame," said Rev. Mark L. Poorman, C.S.C., vice president for Student Affairs. "In large measure, this initiative grows out of student government's sustained interest over several years in the creation of such a center, and I commend the student leaders who have helped to bring about this positive development in student life.

"Within the context of the University's mission, the center will be a place where students can explore a wide range of issues related to gender — cultivating healthy friendships and dating relationships, understanding men's and women's health issues, preventing sexual violence, and finding work life balance beyond Notre Dame, to name a few."

The center will be directed by Heather Rakoczy, rector of Pangborn Hall, a women's residence hall at Notre Dame. When the Gender Relations Center opens in the fall of 2004, Rakoczy will devote 20 hours per week to the center while continuing to serve as rector.

A 1993 Notre Dame graduate, Rakoczy earned her master of divinity degree in 1997 from Vanderbilt University and previously served as program coordinator for PEACE, Inc. (Project to End Abuse through Counseling and Education) in Nashville, Tenn.

"I am delighted that Heather will serve as the founding director of the center," Father Poorman said. "Given her commitment to gender issues, her background in ministry, and her understanding of student life at Notre Dame, both as a graduate of the University and as rector of Pangborn Hall, she provides superb leadership for the new center."

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