

# **More Evidence . . .**

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

- **Homosexual Faculty**
- **Homosexual Courses**
- **Homosexual Alumni Group (GALA)**
- **Gender Studies Program**
- **“Queer Scholars Welcomed”**

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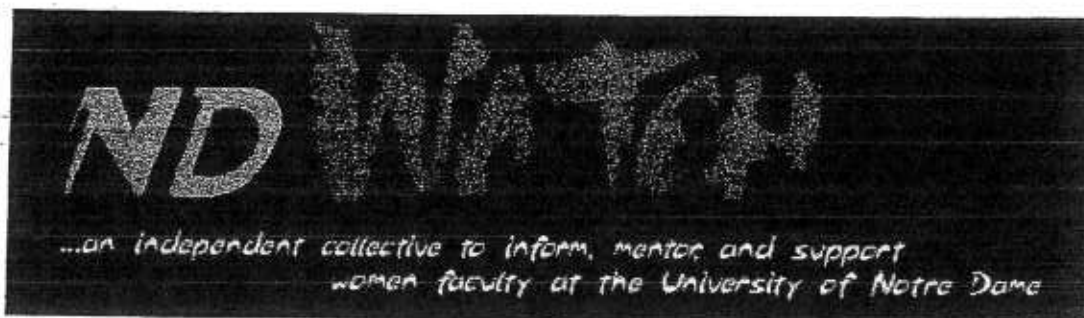
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**-- Gender Studies Program ‘a haven for GLBT students  
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**-- “Queer Scholars Welcomed “**



1. THE NUMBERS

2. AT POINT OF  
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3. DEPARTMENTAL  
COMMITTEES &  
SERVICE

**BEST PRACTICES FOR WOMEN:  
NEGOTIATING THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME**

Chapter Thirteen  
LIFE ON CAMPUS

a. The "Catholic Character" of Notre Dame

In 1986 when the US Catholic Bishops issued their

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about and respect all religious traditions if the subject comes up. In my Gender Roles class, I invite a Catholic professor to lecture when the topic is religion and gender. This way I can feel sure that my own beliefs concerning such hot-button issues as abortion, homosexuality and freedom of speech do not alienate my students.

I have little difficulty avoiding situations where Catholic doctrine structures the event and what is being said. I respect my Catholic colleagues and students' beliefs, even when they are contrary to mine, but I will gently, where necessary, explain when my beliefs differ, in faculty meetings or outside the classroom. I expect others to acknowledge my right to hold these beliefs and for the most part I think they do.

I feel strongly that the institution benefits from having other voices, since universities, according to the dictionary, are places where there is the free interchange of ideas. Based on my observations and experiences, therefore, I would urge any Protestant, when asked for one's opinion, not to hesitate to say that one is a Protestant, and that therefore one feels a certain way about a particular issue. One does not need to be argumentative, but as a "protestant", one has the privilege of stating one's beliefs and affiliations. It is, after all, the mix of ideas that leads to intellectual breakthroughs.

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**g. Gay faculty at Notre Dame**

(by an aging, tenured bi-sexual)

This is very hard chapter to write because there are so few out gay persons at Notre Dame — and there are good reasons for it. In academic 1996-97, after more than a year of meetings, protests, polite requests, recommendations, and fierce resolutions by every faculty and student governing group (including the Academic Council) on the Notre Dame campus, the plea to the administration to rewrite the University's official anti-discrimination clause to include "sexual preference" went unheeded. The university instead disseminated a non-legal document called "The Spirit of Inclusion", which begins:

"The University of Notre Dame strives for a spirit of inclusion among the members of this community for distinct reasons articulated in our Christian tradition. We prize the uniqueness of all persons as God's creatures. We welcome all people, regardless of color, gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social or economic class, and

nationality, for example, precisely because of Christ's calling to treat others as we desire to be treated. We value gay and lesbian members of this community as we value all members of this community. We condemn harassment of any kind, and University policies proscribe it. We consciously create an environment of mutual respect, hospitality and warmth in which none are strangers and all may flourish."

In an "An Open Letter to the Notre Dame Community", Edward A. Malloy, C.S.C., President of the University, explained: "After considerable reflection, we have decided not to add sexual orientation to our legal non-discrimination clause. To make the change requested would mean that our decisions in this area would be measured by civil courts that may interpret this change through the lens of the broader societal milieu in which we live. This, in turn, might jeopardize our ability to make decisions that we believe necessary to support Church teaching. We wish to continue to speak to this issue in the Catholic context that is normative for this community...We choose not to change our legal non-discrimination clause, but we call ourselves to act in accordance with what we regard as a higher standard - Christ's call to inclusiveness, coupled with the gospels' call to live chaste lives. In some senses both of these messages are counter-cultural. It is this dual call that is so deeply rooted in our religious tradition to which we commit ourselves." (See the complete text of the University's Non-discrimination statement, the Spirit of Inclusion and Malloy's "An Open Letter to the Notre Dame Community" in the appendix, "University Non-discrimination statement."

Without a non-discrimination clause, the University cannot be held to any legal standard concerning hiring and firing practices of gay and lesbian faculty. To date, there has been no reason to fear that the University will act to dismiss any faculty member for reasons relating to sexual orientation. There are respected lesbian faculty members who are relatively comfortable in the Notre Dame community. But in the past few years, as the University has begun to intensify its rhetoric about the Catholic character of Notre Dame, a paranoia is developing about what aspect of Catholic doctrine will prevail concerning homosexuality.

Those are the facts — fair warning.

Outright displays of homophobia hardly ever occur and yet, most gay persons here deem it wise to stay in the closet. The general reason for this is to avoid potential discrimination. Most gay persons at this university — both students and faculty - are not "out". Many are "selectively out" — out only to friends and maybe a few colleagues. One colleague wrote, "While those few of us here do not hide our lives with our partners and generally are accepted

as couples by colleagues, we do not announce or reveal our orientation to the community at large, nor do we always take our partners with us to social events sponsored by the University." It is impossible to know how many gay students or gay faculty there are on this campus.

Suffice it to say, we have no gay or lesbian community at ND. Therefore there are no "best practices" around the issue at Notre Dame to speak of. For the most part, those few who are out have been well treated and well-supported by their departments but there are so many who can't trust that they would be treated the same.

In the last few years there have been several cases of good T & R jobs being rejected by queer scholars, who don't want to risk moving their lives into a hostile environment... or bringing their scholarship to a university that has little interest in or respect for queer studies. (See **Appendix 15n**)

In 1995, the administration threw the ad-hoc student organization, GLNDSMC (Gay and Lesbians at Notre Dame and St. Marys) off campus. They had been caught "illegally" advertising their meetings in the official campus newspaper. A year of student and faculty protests followed, and then another year went by while the university "studied the matter". Then it created its own, official, gay student group, the Standing Committee on Gay and Lesbian Student Needs, which it supervises closely. In 2001, the application by a student gay and lesbian group to be officially recognized by the university was once again denied by Student Affairs. The reason given was that the Standing Committee on Gay and Lesbian Student Needs sufficiently meets the needs of the gay and lesbian students. The gay and lesbian students continue to assert, year after year, that it does not.

Notre Dame is not the most feminist-friendly or gay-friendly place. Often speakers are brought to campus who lecture about gay students who have been "saved". When Su Freidrich and her film, "Hide and Seek" came to campus (with a poster that announced her as a "lesbian filmmaker"), a right-wing student newspaper parodied the poster with a full page ad for a "neo-Nazi" filmmaker. The student-run Womens Rights Center was all but closed down two years ago for having a Planned Parenthood brochure in their library, which suggested to women with unwanted pregnancies that they consider an abortion, among six other options. In 1994 the university announced to the press that there were no instances of AIDS on campus. They were quite wrong. With support from Romance Languages and Gender Studies, Carlos Jerez-Ferran offered a course on gay and lesbian literature, called "Out-Spoken Readings in Literature." Carlos says, "I chose that title because I thought some students would be

afraid of taking the course if the word "homosexuality" appeared on their transcript. Later I designed evaluations of my own and asked how many would have taken the course if its content had been explicitly figured in the title. 60% said they wouldn't have taken it."

On the good side, many fabulous queer scholars have been welcomed here: Eve Sedgwick, Lilian Faderman, Yvonne Rainer, Judith Butler, George Chauncy, David Halperin, Katie King, Joan Scott, Andrew Sullivan, Judith Bennett, Wendy Brown, Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, Michael Camille, among them. The mother of Matthew Shepherd was on campus last semester talking about gay rights.

There is also an active gay alumni association, GALA, that is very supportive of gay students. Nobody bothers us (at least I've never heard of it) about what books we teach or what films we show in our courses, though there could easily be some self-censoring going on. The Gender Studies Program has always been a haven for GLBT students and faculty, and is eager to crosslist and support courses that deal with queer issues

One of these days, things are going to change on this campus. WATCH should be part of it but hasn't yet figured out how. If you've got any ideas, please get in touch.

➤ **Send comments**

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#### **h. Cultivating your image**

Image is important... cultivating an image as a competent and even-tempered team player, confident and optimistic. Avoid sharing self-doubts with colleagues, especially older males. This discourse is a common feature of women's conversations and serves to create intimacy and generate humor, thus relieving tension among women. But men do not understand. If you tell them, "I'm such a mess — I have no idea how I'll get my act together [for class, for a conference, etc.]", they are quite likely to believe you.

Do not be afraid to question service assignments, and to explain to your chair how much service you have taken on. It is unreasonable and against university policy for junior faculty to serve in onerous positions, such as DUS, DGS for large departments.

When you are on a committee, arrive for meetings prepared and with an upbeat attitude about the task at hand. Serving on committees can be a great way to meet colleagues and have some say on the intellectual life of your department and the college. You do not need to