Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the University of Notre Dame: Student Feedback & Recommendations
Undergraduate & Graduate Student Steering Committee on DEI

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Feedback on the Board of Trustees Report
- Lack of action items or forthcoming diversity initiatives
- Lacking acknowledgement of Notre Dame's impact on the South Bend community
- Diversity conversations exclude other components within diversity criteria
- Lacking analysis of diversity in positions of power/administration
- Vice President of Institutional Equity and Diversity

Campus-wide Recommendations
- Microaggression Training
- Acknowledge violent/extractive history
- Engagement with the South Bend community
- Protecting faculty and staff
- Increased student involvement on diversity committees
- Transparency

Student Recommendations
- Increasing UCC Diversity
- More funding for diverse student clubs
- Expand Moreau and the pre-orientation coursework
- Readdress the requirement to live on campus for three years
- Robust support system and peer mentorship network at all levels of the university
- Involving underrepresented students in all major university decisions

First Generation/Low Income (FGLI) Recommendations
- Removing financial barriers to FGLI students, organizations, and clubs
- Increasing funding, mentor, and summer opportunities for FGLI students

LGBTQ+ Issue Recommendations
- Increasing financial aid and resources for queer students
- Student-administration committee incorporating LGBTQ+ issues in DEI initiatives

Disability Advocacy Recommendations
- Disability awareness training
- Renovating buildings and ensuring new construction projects are accessible
- Recognition of people with disabilities as a marginalized group on campus
- Students with disabilities should gain access to mentorship programs

Race and Ethnicity Recommendations
- Diverse representation (students, faculty, staff, and administration)
- Increased professional development opportunities in mentorship and networking
- Acknowledging land rights & recognizing the groups with said rights around campus
- Designated spaces on campus accomodating the needs of Black students/organizations
- Supporting Native/Indigenous communities on campus and in South Bend year-round

Purpose
In June 2021, the University of Notre Dame Board of Trustees released its [Task Force Report on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) (DEI). This report discussed the current climate on DEI issues on campus and identified areas where the university could improve and strengthen its DEI initiatives, offering recommendations rather than explicit calls to action. There are many excellent recommendations in this report addressing a range of DEI issues and expanding on the growing conversation at Notre Dame around these issues.

After this report was released, the Accomplice Project and Student Government began having conversations with students, faculty, and staff at Notre Dame about their thoughts on the report and the current climate surrounding DEI on campus. While the people that we talked with were elated that there were institutional conversations taking place on DEI issues, many also felt that their voices and experiences were not fully represented in the Board of Trustees' report. Many people also expressed concern about the lack of transparency surrounding what the next steps for the implementation of these recommendations would look like and when they would take place.

In response to these concerns, the Accomplice Project and Student Government hosted a conversation with representatives from a variety of organizations[1] on campus, representing students from historically excluded groups, asking them to share their experiences, feedback on the report, and recommendations for how the university should be approaching DEI initiatives going forward. This report, created in tandem with representatives from a variety of student organizations,[2] is a summary of that rich conversation and is a push for university administration to meaningfully involve underrepresented students, faculty, and staff in the planning and implementation of DEI initiatives going forward. We commend the university for the steps it has taken thus far and we are excited to work with administration on these deeply important issues as we strive to foster true inclusion on campus and ensure that the University of Notre Dame is a home for all students, faculty, and staff.

Section I. DEI Definitions
In order to effectively discuss and address issues around diversity, equity, and inclusion, it's important to clearly define these concepts. Below, we provide a set of working definitions for diversity, equity, and inclusion that closely align with our views as a group. These definitions were inspired by DEI glossaries at other academic institutions, including [Harvard](#), [Georgetown](#), and the [University of Michigan](#). We hope that these definitions will ensure common understandings of these terms throughout the report, and can also provide a helpful foundation for university leaders to establish central goals around their DEI initiatives moving forward.

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[1] 1stG ND, Access-ABLE, Africa Graduate Club, Black Graduate Student Association, Black@ND, Black Student Association, Diversity Council ND, Frontline, Student Government, The Accomplice Project, Graduate Students Against Racial Injustice at Notre Dame, LGBT Law Forum, Native American Students Association of Notre Dame, Prism ND, Wabruda, Shades of Ebony; Faculty members from the Departments of American Studies, Institute for Educational Initiatives, Sociology, and International Peace Studies.

[2] We want to make clear that while this report was inspired from our conversations with a variety of student organizations and faculty, not every proposal listed below is endorsed by each of the organizations at our initial meeting.

Diversity: Understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our individual differences; these differences include, but are not limited to: age, class, ethnicity, gender, health, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, religion, physical size, education level, personality traits, and the instersections therein.[3]

Equity: Fair treatment for all while striving to identify and eliminate inequities and barriers.[4]

Inclusion: Active, deliberate, and ongoing engagement with diversity, including intentional policies and practices that ensure our campus is a place where differences are welcomed, different perspectives are respectfully heard, and every individual feels a sense of belonging and justice.[5]

Despite the importance of these terms, to our knowledge, the University of Notre Dame does not offer specific definitions for them. The University of Notre Dame does, however, comment on the 'spirit of inclusion' that they work to foster, stating, "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."[6] We implore the University of Notre Dame to go a step beyond and establish its own glossary of DEI terms alongside diverse students, faculty, and staff, similar to those created by our aspirational peers at [Harvard](#), [Princeton](#), [Emory](#), [Rice](#), and the [University of Washington](#). We strongly believe the glossary of DEI terms should explicitly refer to the inclusion of all diverse communities.

Section II. Positive Feedback

Throughout our discussions, diverse members within the Notre Dame community expressed positive points of feedback about the Board of Trustees' Task Force Report on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We recommend that this section serve as a helpful marker of what the university can strive to include in forthcoming reports based on the structure they've already established.

First, we were pleased by the report's ability to initiate critical discussion on issues surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus. In calling attention to these issues by way of publicizing the Board of Trustees' intent to act on or address them, we felt that this could serve as a helpful tool to hold the university accountable for its desired outcomes in the future. We hope that this step towards publicizing the Board of Trustees' recommendations represents a continued relationship of transparency between the university and the student body on DEI issues.

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[3] "Glossary of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (DIB) Terms." https://edib.harvard.edu/files/dib/files/dib_glossary.pdf.
[4] "Glossary of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (DIB) Terms." https://edib.harvard.edu/files/dib/files/dib_glossary.pdf.
[5] "Diversity and Inclusion Definitions."
https://som.georgetown.edu/diversityequityandinclusion/resourcesforfacultyandstaff/diversityinclusiondefinitions/; "Defining DEI." https://diversity.umich.edu/about/defining-dei/.
[6] "Together at Notre Dame." https://diversity.nd.edu/together-at-notre-dame/.

We also acknowledge and appreciate the university's current efforts around DEI initiatives, and want to highlight the importance of both creating new initiatives *and* enhancing ones that already exist as we become more aware of problems that are occurring within our campus culture. We agree with the Board of Trustees' observation that DEI initiatives at Notre Dame are rich in number and are intended to positively impact the campus climate,[7] but want to emphasize that more action must be taken to break down the siloing of these initiatives.

Finally, we believe that the report succeeded in starting with a baseline of facts and statistics to ensure that everyone is on similar levels of understanding for where the university is positioned in terms of DEI efforts. Starting with this baseline of data allows the entire Notre Dame community to have central knowledge on diversity statistics in order to best approach and address these issues. However, we know that data alone is not enough to address existing issues. While there were many fantastic recommendations in the report, students had feedback on sections where they felt their voices were not fully represented, along with recommendations for administration to implement moving forward.

Section III. Constructive Feedback

Though the report was successful in bringing attention to where the university stands in regard to certain DEI issues and the state of existing initiatives, it is also critical to recognize aspects of the report that were lacking in scope for the purposes of identifying areas for improvement. Of particular concern to members of the steering committee was that the DEI report only covered topics related to race and socioeconomic status. As shown in our diversity definition above, there are many other aspects of individuals' identities with which DEI efforts should be concerned, including, but not limited to age, gender, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability, and religion. While the Task Force acknowledges that the report is written only in the context of racial and socioeconomic issues, it also states that "we believe our overarching aspiration is to act to ensure that EVERY member of the Notre Dame community feels not merely 'welcome' here, but rather that this is truly their home."[8] We appreciate this sentiment, but believe that creating a community where everyone feels welcome requires an acknowledgement of all ways in which diverse community members require support, rather than simply lumping all historically excluded groups together.

As it stands, the report does not grapple with the fact that, at it's core, the university is a "bastion institution of white power and privilege."[9] To ignore the significant contributions this characterization imposes upon students, faculty, and staff is to diminish the importance of the university's responsibility in dismantling such a structure that works against certain communities here. Quite evident is the lack of diversity within higher administrative institutional structures. Diversity at Notre Dame cannot narrowly focus on just students, faculty,

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[7] "Notre Dame Board of Trustees' Task Force Report on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion." https://president.nd.edu/presidents-initiatives/notre-dame-board-of-trustees-task-force-report-on-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/#conclusion
[8] "Notre Dame Board of Trustees' Task Force Report on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion." https://president.nd.edu/presidents-initiatives/notre-dame-board-of-trustees-task-force-report-on-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/#conclusion
[9] Quote from an anonymous attendee at the first Roundtable Discussion on DEI held on February 2021

and staff, it must extend to those with the most power at the university. Diversity in leadership is critical to fostering an inclusive campus representative of the *entire* campus community. These leadership teams, including the President's office, Provost's office, and the Board of Trustees, remain predominantly white and predominantly male. While the Board of Trustees' report recognizes that "hiring more diverse leaders at the most senior levels and cultivating diverse leadership at all levels will continue to be critically important,"[10] their analysis of the lack of diversity in senior leadership is lacking. We believe this particular truth should have been fully addressed in the report with an analysis of existing power structures. It's important that our institutional priorities around diversity, equity, and inclusion extend beyond merely the scope of students, faculty, and staff, but *especially* within the dynamics of leaders at the executive level.

The report also did little to address Notre Dame's impact on the South Bend community. Despite efforts to work towards Rev. Edward Sorin C.S.C.'s vision for becoming a "powerful means for doing good in this country,"[11] the university often seems to separate itself from the surrounding community. The University of Notre Dame may surely take pride in being an "elite university, but this does not and should not mean that the university must be elitist"[12]. This is not to say that Notre Dame does not engage with local community efforts in any way; the Lead Innovation Team, Robinson Community Learning Center, and other university-sponsored programs undoubtedly have a positive impact on the community. However, Notre Dame has also been an important contributor to gentrification in South Bend neighborhoods, contributing to the ongoing housing crisis.[13] In addition, Notre Dame and its resources are largely inaccessible to community members. In order to support the university's mission to become a "force for good" in the community, we believe Notre Dame should more carefully consider the impact that its decisions has on the local community, prioritize using its resources to benefit the community, increase its engagement in community-led initiatives, and make an effort to become more open and accessible to community members.

In addition, we were disconcerted by the fact that the report did not include any action items or timelines for enacting any of these DEI efforts. We strongly believe in the need for the university to publicize quantifiable and time-bound goals so that those in charge are held accountable for seeing action items completed. In defining these goals, however, there must be an approach that values more than simply increasing numbers. We agree that "to make this a genuinely just and equitable institution, how we frame the challenge here affects the kind of proposals for action that we come up with."[14] We strongly recommend that the university reframe its DEI focus to prioritize promoting transformative change and taking specific action in light of this priority. We believe that this approach must center the voices of those most affected, including students, faculty, and staff from historically marginalized groups, in the creation and implementation of these goals.

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[10] "Notre Dame Board of Trustees' Task Force Report on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion." https://president.nd.edu/presidents-initiatives/notre-dame-board-of-trustees-task-force-report-on-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/#conclusion

[11] "Rev. Edward Sorin, C.S.C". https://ethicscenter.nd.edu/about/inspire/great-figures/rev-edward-sorin/

[12] Quote from an anonymous attendee at the first Roundtable Discussion on DEI held on February 2021

[13] "Gentrification in South Bend". https://connordemill.wordpress.com/2017/05/03/gentrification-in-south-bend/

[14] Quote from an anonymous attendee at the first Roundtable Discussion on DEI held on February 2021

Lastly, and most importantly, we propose an entire restructuring of how DEI issues are addressed on campus. Despite having a Vice President and Associate Provost for Institutional Transformation and Leadership Development, Rev. Dr. Hugh Page, Notre Dame's administrative structure has led to a patchwork framework of DEI initiatives that involve different strategies enacted across different departments and areas of the university. Though Dr. Page's role has addressed needs within some institutional DEI efforts such as the Notre Dame Scholars' Program, Notre Dame Learning, the Transformational Leaders Program, and the TRiO Programs; there are still gaps that exist. Our administrative structure is inefficient and the patchwork nature makes it difficult to quantify the progress of DEI efforts at the level of the entire university. Thus, we believe that the university would greatly benefit from a more cohesive approach to tackling DEI initiatives. Specifically, we request for the university to create a position for a Vice President of Institutional Equity and Diversity. We propose that the person in this role would be responsible for enacting and overseeing DEI initiatives across the entire campus and managing the efforts that are currently underway across individual colleges and departments. While this may seem like a bold request, this type of academic structure is already in place at many other elite universities, such as [Duke](), [Harvard](), and [Brown](). We believe that creating this position at the Vice President level would show that Notre Dame is truly committed to DEI efforts and would offer the best opportunity for efficient and cohesive progress on issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Section IV. General Recommendations

In this section, we offer an overview of general recommendations that were expressed numerous times throughout our multi-faceted discussions on campus-wide DEI initiatives.

First, a major piece of feedback from our meetings centered on the level of engagement between students and administrators. Many students expressed a desire for additional leadership opportunities, and for more opportunities in student involvement on various diversity committees. We believe that, moving forward, these expanded diversity committees can serve as helpful tools for gearing the university towards initiatives that best suit the needs of all community members. More specifically, we advocate for these diversity committees to work collaboratively with the Board of Trustees when issuing and implementing future reports and initiatives. Since these reports serve as helpful guides in determining how DEI initiatives take shape on campus, it is vital that the university effectively engage with members from staff, student, and faculty levels for feedback. Critically, this engagement must not be limited only to consultation with the Notre Dame community but should actively involve underrepresented communities in future decision-making processes regarding DEI issues at Notre Dame.

In addition, to increase student involvement in DEI initiatives on campus, DEI must be increased at all levels—administrators, staff, faculty, and students. Currently, the university is severely lacking in its representation of individuals from historically marginalized groups, particularly at the faculty and administration level. Diversity, equity, and inclusion should be prioritized so that the diverse student body can see themselves reflected in the power structure of the university. We believe that the university should actively work towards attaining a campus population that more closely resembles the demographics of the United States as a whole.

Regarding the demographics of faculty and staff across campus, we recognize a need for transparency in the hiring and promotion procedures across various academic departments and institutes. Currently, when individuals are denied tenure or passed over for a position, no explanation is provided to the candidate or members of the affected department. On this note, one member stated the following concern: "Our department has been trying to recruit faculty and we're unsure of why [the entire] applicant pool is white, or why we're not making offers to particular [diverse] candidates."[15] We think it would be extremely beneficial for hiring committees to publicly justify all of their hiring decisions to ensure that the committees' implicit biases are not impacting their decisions. Additionally, we believe that candidates' service records should be considered for hiring and promotions. While teaching and research are clearly important aspects of the candidates' professional experience, DEI-related service should also be valued, especially because we know that this burden falls disproportionately upon marginalized individuals.[16]

A related concern that many marginalized faculty conveyed to us is that they do not feel supported by the university, nor do they feel a sense of belonging on campus. A central reason for this is that they are often the only, or one of the only, people that share their identities in their department. Retention of marginalized faculty of any kind requires a strong support system of peers, and Notre Dame's homogenous community makes that very difficult.

Another challenge for marginalized faculty is that they often do not feel comfortable speaking out about the issues they face on campus out of fear that doing so may negatively impact their careers through risk of termination or unfair evaluations during promotion and tenure proceedings. At a school that is primarily white and male-dominated, it is vital that university administrators establish an effective line of communication between its historically marginalized faculty members and students while drafting these initiatives. In doing so, it's important that our top university leaders foster a sense of belonging and authenticity among the non-tenured faculty and staff members to allow for there to be opportunities for truthful feedback without risk of negative career repercussions.

The Board of Trustees report succeeded in presenting us with a helpful overlay of data regarding DEI on campus, although the report lacked any concrete action items that the university hopes to pursue in light of it. To offer a solution to this issue, we recommend that university leadership remain entirely transparent about the goals and timelines of their diversity initiatives. In doing so, this would help communicate to diverse communities that their concerns are being addressed in due fashion. Without making these initiatives publicly available, misconceptions around the university's priorities and interests can arise. This can result in diverse members feeling like there is a lack of concern or care about the issues pressing their respective communities. On a similar note, we want the administration to be honest about the slow rate of change for diversity on our campus. While it's always positive to acknowledge the work that has

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[15] Quote from an anonymous attendee at the first Roundtable Discussion on DEI held on February 2021
[16] "Faculty Service Loads and Gender: Are Women Taking Care of the Academic Family?" https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11162-017-9454-2; "We need a woman, we need a black woman': gender, race, and identity taxation in the academy." https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09540253.2011.606208

been done, the Board of Trustees' report seemed to have overemphasized minor areas of growth in terms of DEI. One example that came up in multiple conversations was the slow and marginal increase of diverse students on campus. An example from the Board of Trustees' report reads as follows:

> One aspect of diversity where the University has made significant progress in recent years is in attracting a more international student body. Undergraduate international enrollment has almost tripled over the past 30 years from 2.1 percent in 1990 to 5.7 percent in 2020. Although not a primary focus of this Task Force, the presence of our international students clearly contributes to the diversity of campus life and culture.[17]

Many members felt that overemphasizing minor increases in diversity statistics revealed more negatives than positives about the trajectory of diversity initiatives on our campus. Including language such as "tripled" seems to indicate a much more significant change than what is actually revealed in the report. Considering that this 3.6 percent increase in the number of international students on campus happened over a thirty year time-span, the impact seems too minimal and the wording too misleading for classification as "significant progress" in the report. While there may be other factors at play to indicate the significance of this progress, the lack of prior context or additional information results in students, faculty, and staff to feel that this indication is subpar.

Our final general recommendation is for all members of the Notre Dame community to take part in mandated microaggression training. In our conversations with Notre Dame community members, many individuals from historically marginalized groups shared instances of microaggressions from students, faculty, and staff members on campus. These individuals also expressed a lack of proper protocol for reporting these instances and bringing about sufficient consequences for offenders. We feel that a mandated microaggression training could provide the broader ND community with helpful knowledge on how they can best support and interact with their diverse peers. This will also help the university respond decisively against acts of racism, exclusion, or other discriminatory behavior to foster a true sense of belonging within the campus community. We strongly recommend that the university utilize its resources across diversity-related departments and academic institutes in establishing sufficient training for microaggressions.

Section V. Undergraduate Student Recommendations
In this section, we highlight undergraduate student recommendations to further DEI efforts on campus. We begin by listing recommendations that were shared by many diverse undergraduate groups, and then offer specific recommendations from undergraduate students based on four

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[17] "Notre Dame Board of Trustees' Task Force Report on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion."
https://president.nd.edu/presidents-initiatives/notre-dame-board-of-trustees-task-force-report-on-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/#conclusion

categories of historically marginalized identities: 1) first generation/low income, 2) LGBTQ+, 3) disabled, and 4) race and ethnicity.

First, we recommend increased transparency from university administration in the breakdown of financial allocations. While the Board of Trustees' report briefly mentioned broad numbers associated with these DEI initiatives, we would like to see a breakdown of where money is coming from, where it is going, and exactly how it is allocated to DEI initiatives at Notre Dame. This increased transparency will help address concerns related to financial aid and understaffing, among others.

Second, we request that the university actively works to increase the diversity of counselors at the University Counseling Center (UCC). Hiring more diverse counselors (in terms of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, etc) will allow students with different identities to feel more comfortable talking to someone who has shared experiences as them. We acknowledge the university's current efforts to diversify the UCC, but believe that this process must be ongoing and refined to ensure that we are truly using our resources to cater towards the mental well-being of our diverse community.

Third, we believe that the current housing requirements on campus should be readdressed. Requiring that undergraduate students live on campus for three years is difficult in many ways: dorms are often inaccessible for students with disabilities, single-sex housing is problematic for LGBTQ+ students, and room and board is often more expensive than living off campus, which disproportionately affects first generation and low income students. We recommend that the university lowers the on campus housing requirement to allow students the freedom to choose their living situation based on their personal circumstances.

First Generation/Low Income
While the DEI report does address some issues related to first generation and low-income (FGLI) students, we have further recommendations that will benefit these students. Overall, FGLI students expressed that they do not feel the same sense of community as other Notre Dame students because of the barriers that they face financially; these financial barriers often prevent FGLI students from being able to fully participate in the "Notre Dame experience." To help remedy this feeling of isolation, FGLI students would benefit from additional paid opportunities on campus to build up their resumes ahead of graduation. These students expressed that, while many of their peers were able to access unpaid opportunities to add to their work experience, they often felt like they were not in a position to do so themselves. Some of the specific suggestions related to this recommendation include: more mentoring programs (with diverse Notre Dame alumni), additional funding and opportunities for FGLI students who can't afford to travel and/or do unpaid internships, and summer programs directed at diversity.
LGBTQ+ Issues
LGBTQ+ students were frustrated and disappointed to find that the DEI report failed to mention any of the issues impacting queer undergraduate students on campus. Throughout our discussions with queer-identifying students, we have come up with a few recommendations that would improve their experience on campus. Specifically, we request additional financial aid and resources for queer students. Upon coming out to their loved ones, queer students face an

incredibly high risk of losing support from their family. Due to these circumstances, some students shared instances where either themselves or friends were concerned about affording their education at Notre Dame as a financially independent student. To ensure that no student has to suffer the immense stress of this occurence, we believe it is vital that the university seek to impose a fund for queer student enrichment.

Additionally, queer students are disproporatiately more likely to feel as if they don't belong on campus, often citing Notre Dame's Catholic values. One way to bolster queer students' feeling of belonging on campus and to help them feel like their presence and opinions matter is to ask for their input and ensure that they are a part of all major university decisions. One student suggested a student-administration facing committee that could meet routinely to ensure that the needs of LGBTQ+ students are being met on campus. This committee would also be a good opportunity for queer students to provide feedback on DEI initiatives before the release of public reports.

Disability Advocacy
Similar to queer students, disabled students also expressed frustration at continued exclusion from university conversations surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion. We strongly believe that students with disabilities should be formally recognized as a marginalized group on campus and should gain access to mentorship programs, such as Building Bridges and the Balfour-Hesburgh Scholars program. In addition, students with disabilities should always be called upon, consulted, and heard in DEI conversations.

In addition, disabled students deserve full access to the Notre Dame experience. Students with wheelchairs are frustrated that half of residence halls are inaccessible to them, which prevents them from feeling fully included in the campus community. We believe that renovations to create residence halls that are fully accessible should be a priority on campus. Additionally, all new construction projects should prioritize accessibility.

Lastly, lack of awareness about disability remains a significant problem on campus. In an effort to combat this, all faculty and hall staff should undergo diversity training that includes disability, and disability should be represented in the "Building Community" videos that incoming first-years are required to watch. In addition, one week of Moreau First Year Experience should be dedicated to educating students about disability.

Race and Ethnicity
While some of the main focuses of the DEI report were race and ethnicity, we have additional recommendations that we would like to see enacted. First, Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) students emphasized that they would benefit from increased professional development opportunities that would better prepare them for their careers after graduation. Examples of helpful initiatives include mentoring programs focused on diversity, opportunities for low-income students who can't afford to travel or do unpaid internships, and increased networking opportunities with alumni.

Additionally, to honor the history of this university and the land upon which we teach and learn, the university must include Land Acknowledgements at every event, both large and small, and have a Pokagon flag flown on campus. This would demonstrate the university's commitment to acknowledging past harms and working towards a future which respects its Native students and the Pokagon community.

Finally, while we acknowledge the university's efforts to increasingly diversify in the Moreau experience, we want to emphasize the importance of this point. The university should continue seeking opportunities to expand its Moreau coursework and increase DEI classes for undergraduates, who have little understanding of diversity issues through Moreau or the university's pre-orientation programs. This must be done in consultation with underrepresented students to ensure that the coursework fully encapsulates the scope of DEI issues at Notre Dame.

Section VI. Graduate Student Recommendations

Graduate students at Notre Dame acknowledge ongoing efforts by university administration to keep DEI in the spotlight, but believe that more can be done to translate these well meaning intentions into positive impacts that improve the experience of historically marginalized groups on campus, making Notre Dame not simply a great place to be from, but also a great place to be.

Similar to the section of undergraduate student recommendations, this section will highlight recommendations that were shared by many diverse graduate student groups and offer specific recommendations based on four categories of historically marginalized identities: 1) first generation/low income, 2) LGBTQ+, 3) disabled, and 4) race and ethnicity.

Our first set of suggestions are for more funding and space for student clubs, in addition to a robust support system and peer mentorship network at all levels of the university. These initiatives will help to ensure that students from marginalized identities are able to find the support and sense of community that they need on campus in order to be happy, safe, and successful.

We also believe that the university needs to take additional steps to prevent discrimination on campus by mandating microaggression intervention and implicit bias training for all members of the campus community and acting decisively when instances of discrimination are reported. Many graduate students feel that instances of discrimination are not taken seriously when they are reported, which has led to severe underreporting of these events.

First Generation/Low Income

First generation and low income students routinely experience more barriers in accessing quality higher education and desirable careers. This is coupled with a lack of appropriate resources and support to fully realize their goals before and after graduation.

In light of these structural challenges, we believe that Notre Dame—as a well-endowed, reputable, and highly connected institution—can do more to ensure that first generation students, students from low-income families, and other underrepresented students are able to access and take full advantage of elite professional development opportunities locally, regionally, and internationally.

We recommend prioritizing access to premier academic and professional opportunities for these students, as well as generous funding to ensure that underrepresented students can successfully pursue opportunities at the same rate as their peers. We also recommend experiential mentorship programs led by former first gen/low income professionals, so that students from underrepresented backgrounds can attain substantive professional experience ahead of graduation.

Race & ethnicity
Structural change, which acknowledges and challenges racial microaggressions and outright racism in a sustainable manner, requires institutional buy-in so that these efforts do not fade away as equity and justice-oriented students, faculty, and staff transition out of the university. Intentional and substantive investments must be directed towards anti-racist efforts that move the needle for groups that have and continue to be historically marginalized on campus and across the globe. Given Notre Dame's generous advertising budget, we believe that additional work can be done to forefront issues which directly impact BIPOC communities, in a thorough and non-tokenistic manner.

In this vein, we believe that the university should prioritize actively uplifting and supporting Native and Indigenous students, staff, and faculty on campus and in South Bend year-round. We recommend that Notre Dame prominently display and recite Land Acknowledgements on the homepage of the Notre Dame website, as well as at the beginning of all campus events, including athletic games. These acknowledgements should be coupled with genuine efforts to repair the harm done to Native and Indigenous persons and communities on-campus and in South Bend, based on recommendations from the communities themselves. We also recommend: (1) flying the Pokagon flag on campus year round; (2) ensuring full financial support for accepted students from the Pokagon Band of the Potawatomi; and (3) displaying accurate information about Notre Dame's colonial history in a prominent location on the Notre Dame website, on campus tours, and in the Eck Visitors Center.

A final note relates to the particular experiences of Black students at Notre Dame. In response to protests across the country and the growing visibility of the Black Lives Matter movement, the Notre Dame Police Department issued a statement on equity in policing. This statement highlights important factors to consider for Notre Dame's current and future engagement in supporting Black community members. An excerpt from the statement reads as follows:

> We must continue to provide an environment where students, faculty and staff, and guests and visitors can come and experience all that Our Lady's University has to offer without fear. We must hold ourselves and each other to a higher

standard and we must stand up for those who are unable or feel that they cannot stand for themselves.[18]

Two years later, Black community members are still acknowledging their acquired social trauma and racial justice fatigue, while simultaneously looking for opportunities to heal as a community. On this note, we believe there needs to be more designated spaces on campus to accommodate the needs of Black students and organizations. This space should allow for better opportunities to engage in helpful dialogue around issues impacting the Black community, along with opportunities to come together for community support. As one member stated, it would be beneficial to have at least "one central place so people know where to go for resources, for mentorship, or whatever it is that they might need."[19]

Disability advocacy
Given the nature of our initial conversations with students, faculty and staff, we were unable to elicit specific recommendations related to diversity concerns impacting graduate students with disabilities. Given this, disability concerns at the graduate level are not included in our current draft of feedback and recommendations. However, acknowledging the importance of these concerns to creating a full picture of DEI issues at Notre Dame, we recommend the university continue seeking input from graduate students with disabilities, ensuring initiatives and forthcoming recommendations are properly aligning with these members' needs.

LGBTQ+ issues
The LGBTQ+ community at Notre Dame experiences many barriers to feeling included at Notre Dame that often hinder their full success. We believe Notre Dame should take steps towards ensuring the LGBTQ+ students feel at home at Notre Dame. One way to do this is to change policies making it easier for students to change their preferred names and indicate their preferred pronouns. This should be coupled with more resources for the campus community on gender-inclusive education, university campaigns to combat LGBTQ+ discrimination, and clear messaging from the university explaining that students' preferred pronouns must be used. We also recommend that the university take necessary steps in avoiding gendered language to promote the inclusion of gender identities beyond the binary. We recommend that the university look towards other campuses instituting similar policies, such as Ohio University.

Another strategy that will increase LGBTQ+ students' feeling of belonging at Notre Dame is for the university to increase its charitable giving to organizations supporting LGBTQ+ communities. This could be LGBTQ+ activist groups, shelters, or organizations like TREES. As the pre-eminent Catholic university in the United States, we believe that Notre Dame has a responsibility to demonstrate its commitment to its diverse commitments through acts of charity.

In addition to increasing external support for LGBTQ+ communities, Notre Dame should increase resources for its LGBTQ+ students on campus as well. While we believe this should be

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[18] "Equity in Policing". https://police.nd.edu/equity-in-policing/
[19] Quote from an anonymous attendee at the first Roundtable Discussion on DEI held on February 2021

done through tuition-based scholarships, we also think it is critical that the university support its LGBTQ+ students through funding for academic supplies, housing, food, and other expenses as the need arises. In order to counter the multiplicity of discrimination that our LGBTQ+ community faces on campus and to ensure their full success, Notre Dame administration must support these students when they face hardship. We also hope to see the university include acknowledgments of same-sex couples in family resources moving forward.

Additionally, the university should increase accessibility to [bathroom maps](#) on campus. While these resources already exist, they are often difficult to find and hinder many students' comfortability on campus. We recommend working with the Gender Studies Program, PrismND, and GlassND to advertise these resources to students at pre-orientation programs and through social media.

Finally, we recommend the university revisit its protest policies, especially for students who wish to demonstrate against anti-LGBTQ+ speakers. In 2019, speakers invited to the University of Notre Dame spread disinformation and pseudoscience about trans-identifying youth. While students felt constrained in their ability to protest against these speakers, the next semester, a student group was granted permission to demonstrate against a discussion held by the Gender Studies department on "Affirming Care for Gender-Diverse Youth."[20] This seeming double-standard compounds LGBTQ+ students' feelings of isolation and discrimination on campus. Thus, Notre Dame must revisit its protest policies, allowing students to fully express their values and morals.

While we've broken this report down into specific diversity categories to highlight the unique recommendations of each of the university's diverse communities, we also recognize the critical importance of intersectionality in approaches to DEI. All of the categories that we've identified are not mutually exclusive, they interact with one another and many of the members of our Notre Dame community are represented in multiple categories. Just as the oppressions that we experience intersect and amplify each other, so too must the strategies that we create to address these oppressions. Thus, we implore the university to incorporate an intersectional analysis[21] in the design of DEI initiatives and the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

Conclusion
To conclude, we want to reiterate that the University of Notre Dame is making significant strides towards addressing DEI issues on campus and making Notre Dame an inclusive community for students, faculty and staff from all backgrounds. The *Notre Dame Board of Trustees Task Force Report on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* is a wealth of information, including statistics, a summary of current DEI initiatives, and critical recommendations for improving the university's DEI work. This report is a fantastic starting point for making necessary changes and has laid a foundation for this steering committee's own report. We share the Board of Trustees'

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[20] Story shared from an anonymous attendee at the first Roundtable Discussion on DEI held on February 2021

[21] We recommend the university consult with institutes and departments on campus, like the [Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies](#), that are already doing work to incorporate intersectional lenses into their institutional frameworks.

commitment of ensuring that, "EVERY member of the Notre Dame community feels not merely 'welcome' here, but rather that this is truly their home."[22]

With this in mind, we've created this report to highlight the voices of underrepresented communities at Notre Dame, and to push for DEI initiatives that center the voices of those most affected. Our report is a culmination of conversations with students, faculty, and staff across campus who want meaningful change to make Notre Dame feel like home for everyone. We hope that this report will spark conversations between students, faculty, staff, and administration and that this will be just the beginning of a much longer journey towards reimagining DEI at Notre Dame.

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Abigail Abikoye
College of Science Diversity Council & Inclusive Excellence Committee, Biological Sciences

Maria Mikaela Bona
The Accomplice Project

Zakiya George
Shades of Ebony, 2021-2022 President

Lenai Johnson
The Accomplice Project

Bupe Kabaghe
African Students Association

Josh King
Access-ABLE, President

Tavin Martin
Student Government, 2022- 2023 Director of Diversity & Inclusion FGLI

Luzolo Matundu
Shades of Ebony, 2022-2023 Co Vice President

Jill Maudlin
Student Government, 2022- 2023 Director of Diversity & Inclusion Disability Advocacy

Amaya Medeiros
Student Government, 2021-2022 Director of Diversity & Inclusion

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[22] "Notre Dame Board of Trustees' Task Force Report on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion." https://president.nd.edu/presidents-initiatives/notre-dame-board-of-trustees-task-force-report-on-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/#conclusion

Camille Mosley
Graduate Students Against Racial Injustice at Notre Dame

Allan Njomo
Student Government, 2021-2022 Student Body President

Yvette Pino
Native American Student Association of Notre Dame

Dara-Marie Raggay
The Accomplice Project

Elise Snyder
Graduate Students Against Racial Injustice at Notre Dame

Chelsea Southworth
Graduate Students Against Racial Injustice at Notre Dame

Chelsea Weibel
Graduate Students Against Racial Injustice at Notre Dame

Faith Woods
Student Government, 2022- 2023 Director of Diversity & Inclusion Race & Ethnicity