

Michael Dugan, *Dillon Hall Senator*
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A RESOLUTION TO PUT STUDENTS FIRST BY SUPPORTING VULNERABLE STUDENTS, ESPECIALLY LOW-INCOME AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, IN THE ABSENCE OF ADEQUATE UNIVERSITY SUPPORT DURING THIS PANDEMIC

Whereas, [the Principles of University of Notre Dame’s strategic plan](#) state that, “[o]ur first and most fundamental operational charge is to protect the safety of our students, faculty, staff, and visitors. All of us at Notre Dame assume responsibility for creating an environment that prioritizes the physical and emotional wellbeing of members of our community”;

Whereas, we recall that, as Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C. [stated](#) in an interfaith prayer service in November 2016, “we are committed to respecting the dignity and worth of every human person, from conception to natural death, regardless of national or ethnic group, religious tradition, gender, race, socio-economic class, immigration status, sexual orientation or anything else”;

Whereas, all members of the community of the University of Notre Dame du Lac are called together in unity during this difficult time, recalling that, as Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C. has [stated](#), “[e]ither we walk together in mutual support, or we do not walk at all. Either we are all Notre Dame, or none of us are”;

Whereas, the administration of the University of Notre Dame du Lac continues to publicly emphasize a commitment to open and respectful dialogue, recalling that, as Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C. has [stated](#), “I believe there is no peaceful, fruitful future for us except through the respectful, constructive dialogue that is so critical for a democracy. Dialogue, one can argue, is the central activity of any university community”;

Whereas, the pandemic caused by SARS-CoV-2 has caused significant disruption to the operations of the University of Notre Dame du Lac, including the abrupt removal of students from residence halls in mid-March;

Whereas, students were not permitted to return to campus to pack and move their belongings during this time, and students already on campus were discouraged from packing to move out;

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Whereas, this has facilitated the need for the University of Notre Dame du Lac, in conjunction with guidance from public health officials, to develop a process to move students out of the residence halls;

Whereas, this Resolution shall contribute to the creation of a public dialogue between students and staff, on behalf of the whole undergraduate student body, in light of the circumstances faced by students during this difficult time;

Whereas, in that a letter dated March 31st, Ms. Erin Hoffmann Harding indicated some preliminary details about move-out, including descriptions on the ability of students to “select” an approved service;

Whereas, agents of the University subsequently communicated a detailed move-out plan to the student body writ large;

Whereas, on May 8th, 2020, details regarding required move-out appointments starting on May 22, 2020 and ending on June 11th, 2020 were released, giving students less than 3 weeks to book flights, make travel arrangements, make employment arrangements, or find proxies;

Whereas, this plan has provided an opportunity for students to select a four-hour time slot over a two-week window to pack and move out of their rooms;

Whereas, this plan has provided an opportunity for students to select a four-hour time slot over a one-week window for student-selected proxies to pack a student’s items and move it out of the student’s room;

Whereas, students whose parents are essential workers and/or who live in a single parent home may be forced to travel to campus alone and engage in the moving process alone;

Whereas, students who are traveling alone and are younger than 26 are unable to rent a car to transport their belongings to a storage unit;

Whereas, students or their family members may have pre-existing medical conditions that place them at higher risk of serious complications from COVID-19 with the large influx of students to the campus of the University over a relatively short time period;

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Whereas, the University of Notre Dame du Lac has committed to providing physical assistance to individuals throughout the move-out process, including assistance with moving heavy items;

Whereas, the University of Notre Dame du Lac has not made public to students detailed guidelines by which these staff will operate in order to keep both students and staff safe from unwanted transmission of SARS-CoV-2;

Whereas, the University of Notre Dame du Lac is, in light of public health recommendations, is not permitting students to stay in their dorm rooms during the move-out period;

Whereas, the University of Notre Dame du Lac has omitted to make funds generally available for student lodging near campus or travel to campus required by in-person move-out procedures;

Whereas, siblings on campus are not guaranteed move-out appointments on the same day;

Whereas, the moving company Handled was selected after Duke University utilized this company in their moving-out process;

Whereas, the flat rate of Handled is \$545 covers packing and storing of four, 4.5-cubic foot boxes and 3 bulky items;

Whereas, students who did not anticipate to pack for a moving company may spend significantly more than the base cost of Handled due to their inability to return to campus or find a proxy guest;

Whereas, on the Financial Aid website, the anticipated cost of travel is listed with a median of \$750, with the low of \$500 and a high of \$1000;

Whereas, the cost of moving-out process well exceeds the anticipated cost of travel for those who have to travel long distances;

Whereas, about one-half of undergraduate students that attend the University of Notre Dame du Lac receive need-based financial aid;

Whereas, Notre Dame has announced that it would forego receiving \$6 million in federal coronavirus relief funds that the Wall Street Journal [described](#) as “money designed to help

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low-income students pay for school as families struggle from the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic,” in the hope that other institutions would use these funds;

Whereas, in the aforementioned letter to students on March 31, Ms. Erin Hoffmann Harding stated, “[t]he Office of Student Enrichment is available to assist students for whom a return trip to campus might present a particular financial hardship.”

Whereas, eligibility for assistance from the Office of Student Enrichment is determined by the Office of Financial Aid, based upon the financial situation of a family as provided to the University in the 2019-2020 Financial Aid Application;

Whereas, for students whose families have experienced unexpected financial hardship, the Office of Financial Aid makes available the Change of Circumstances form;

Whereas, this Change of Circumstances form indicates that the Office of Financial Aid will not process requests for additional assistance until twelve weeks after an employed individual has been terminated from their job;

Whereas, this Change of Circumstances form does not make explicit any guidance regarding the impact of furloughs of one’s financial status;

Whereas, this Change of Circumstances form does not make explicit any guidance pertaining to the death of a parent or guardian, aside from related medical expenses;

Whereas, the University of Notre Dame du Lac has approved a single moving service, Handled, to pack and store the items of students who are unable to either obtain a willing proxy or return to campus themselves;

Whereas, the Office of Student Enrichment has made available funds for certain students returning to Notre Dame, as determined by the Office of Financial Aid and the Office of Student Enrichment, to subsidize the cost of packing and storage services provided by Handled;

Whereas, the Office of Student Enrichment has generally omitted to make funds available for students, aside from graduating seniors, to assist with the cost of shipping items to the primary residences of students;

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Whereas, the Office of Student Enrichment has omitted to make funds available for students to travel to return to campus in order to reclaim their possessions;

Whereas, the Office of Student Enrichment has omitted to make funds available for student lodging near campus required as a result of these move-out procedures;

Whereas, many low-income students are deeply concerned about the ability to reclaim their belongings while maintaining financial stability;

Whereas, the services offered by Handled do not fully address the concerns of students who require items currently in their on-campus rooms;

Whereas, international students have been disproportionately affected by the restrictions put in place by government authorities, both of the United States and of other nations, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic;

Whereas, international students who attend the University of Notre Dame have experienced circumstances that could not have been reasonably foreseen, including the closures of international borders *en masse* and widespread prohibitions on travel to the United States;

Whereas, the University of Notre Dame du Lac has not yet committed to waiving certain undue burdens for international students associated with move-out, including but not limited to fees charged for failure to return a room key;

Whereas, some students who have not previously had to file for financial aid, including international students, may nonetheless require financial assistance from the University of Notre Dame du Lac in light of the economic effects of this ongoing pandemic;

Whereas, all members of the undergraduate student body are deeply affected by the decisions of the University of Notre Dame du Lac and its agents, especially those decisions made in response to the ongoing pandemic of COVID-19;

Whereas, this Resolution serves to amplify the voices of students, and to put forth the position of the undergraduate student body on these aforementioned issues affecting campus life; therefore, be it

Resolved, by the Student Senate of the University of Notre Dame du Lac, that the undergraduate student body calls upon the University of Notre Dame du Lac and its agents to take the following measures to put students first in this time of crisis:

- I. The University of Notre Dame du Lac ought to modify its move-out procedures in order to provide more flexibility to all students, especially low-income and international students, by taking the following actions:
 - A. Creating an extension of the window for students or student-selected proxies to reclaim possessions and complete move-out that will end no earlier than July 1, 2020;
 - B. Enabling students who have already selected their move-out slots to reschedule their move-out for any time in the aforementioned extended window;
 - C. Creating explicit guidance stating that students who are not able to return to campus be permitted to hire local moving companies as their proxy guests, rather than current guidance requiring students to be physically present should they choose to hire a local moving company, and that University staff shall be present at all move-outs of proxy guests in order to reduce the potential for theft to occur;
 - D. Making clear that students in areas that are under stay-at-home orders that prohibit travel to the campus of the University of Notre Dame du Lac will be not be required to reclaim their possessions from their dorm room sooner than the earlier of either July 1st or twenty-one days after such student's state or local jurisdiction lifts such stay-at-home order;
 - E. Waiving the fee associated with failure to return a room key for international students or permitting international students time to return their room keys immediately before the beginning of the next term in which students will return to on-campus living;
 - F. Extending the length of time slots for students in the move-out period, where possible, to permit students more time to pack their belongings while still abiding by the recommendations of local and state authorities regarding public health;
- II. The University of Notre Dame du Lac ought to direct relevant officials in Office of Financial Aid to:
 - A. Swiftly publish additional clarifying guidance for its [Change of Circumstances form](#) that includes explicit guidance for cases of unexpected changes in financial circumstances due to parental death;
 - B. Swiftly publish additional clarifying guidance for its Change of Circumstances form that includes explicit guidance pertaining to international students whose families or direct sponsors have experienced either significant local inflation or significant depreciation of their local currency against the U.S. Dollar;
 - C. Swiftly publish additional clarifying guidance for its Change of Circumstances form that includes explicit guidance for cases in which students who previously have not applied for financial aid may apply for assistance;
 - D. Take all appropriate actions necessary to begin to consider requests for reevaluation due to unemployment, as outlined in the Change of Circumstances

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form, at a time beginning at four weeks after termination, rather than the current twelve;

- III. The University of Notre Dame du Lac ought to make available additional funds to the Office of Student Enrichment to financially assist additional students with all move-out expenses, including expenses incurred in any of the following manners:
 - A. Travel to the campus of the University of Notre Dame du Lac for each newly eligible student, and up to two guests per eligible student, for the purpose of completing in-person move-out;
 - B. Lodging near the campus of the University of Notre Dame du Lac for each newly eligible student, and up to two guests per eligible student, for the purpose of completing in-person move-out;
- IV. The University of Notre Dame du Lac ought to make available specific funds, in a manner consistent with all restrictions administered by Office of Foreign Assets Control of the United States Department of the Treasury and all other legally binding restrictions, to be disbursed as in-kind transfers to assist international students by subsidizing the direct costs associated with the declared move-out procedures, including direct subsidies of expenses incurred through packing, shipping, and/or storing the possessions of international students;
- V. The University of Notre Dame du Lac ought to direct relevant agents to:
 - A. Swiftly publish detailed and explicit forward guidance to students regarding the potential for tuition reimbursement, room and board reimbursement, Observer fee reimbursement, or any other reimbursements that may be created as a result of changing public health circumstances that restrict student access to in-person classes or residence halls;
 - B. Swiftly publish detailed and explicit forward guidance to students describing the sorts of changes in public health circumstances that would result in the restriction of access to in-person classes or residence halls;
 - C. Swiftly publish detailed and explicit forward guidance to students describing the sorts of restrictions to campus life that may be implemented due to public health concerns, including any actions regarding:
 - 1. Implementation of social distancing protocols as they apply to dining halls and other on-campus eateries;
 - 2. Implementation of any curfew for on-campus students;
 - 3. Modifications to parietal visitation hours;
 - 4. Restrictions on student travel during the academic term, both by individuals and by registered student groups;
 - 5. Restrictions on the use student offices by registered student groups;
 - 6. Restrictions on the size and locations of events put on by registered student groups;
 - 7. Restrictions on the availability of in-person medical services provided by University Health Services;
 - 8. Restrictions on the availability of in-person counseling services provided by the University Counseling Center;

9. Restrictions on the availability of in-person religious services facilitated via Campus Ministry;
 10. Restrictions of the availability of on-campus housing for student whose study abroad will be canceled;
- D. Swiftly publish detailed and explicit forward guidance regarding the implementation of:
1. Quarantining procedures for students who test positive for COVID-19;
 2. Academic accommodations for students who are directed to self-isolate due to potential exposure to COVID-19;
 3. Required testing protocols for those students who may have been exposed to COVID-19;
- E. Publish detailed and explicit forward guidance regarding the return of students after winter break;

Rachel Ingal
Student Body President