

Eliza Smith, *Johnson Family Hall Senator*
Elizabeth Messman, *Pasquerilla West Hall Senator*
Renee Pierson, *Sophomore Class President*
Natalie Ortega, *Lewis Hall Senator*
Grace Franco, *Walsh Hall Senator*

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING A FULL-DAY OBSERVANCE OF MLK DAY

Whereas, [the University of Notre Dame du Lac](#) “seeks to cultivate in its students not only an appreciation for the great achievements of human beings, but also a disciplined sensibility to the poverty, injustice, and oppression that burden the lives of so many. The aim is to create a sense of human solidarity and concern for the common good that will bear fruit as learning becomes service to justice.”

Whereas, in 2015 the President’s Oversight Committee announced Notre Dame would [observe](#) MLK day through a two-hour gap of no class which lands on the hours 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m which normally fall during student lunch hours as it stands.

Whereas, considering most observed holidays (excluding religious holidays), there are no expectations as to how people spend their holiday, and observing MLK Day should provide individuals with the same freedom to pay respects to Martin Luther King Jr. and his efforts in any they choose.

Whereas, MLK day is a [federal holiday](#), and the only one that specifically honors the life of a person who fought for the rights of marginalized groups specifically Black and African Americans.

Whereas, we recognize and appreciate the efforts made by the university in events during Walk the Walk Week, but the university has not revisited this conversation and transitioned to a full-day observance [in recent years](#) despite [a large number](#) of Notre Dame community members seeking to foster dialogue and reflection.

Whereas, Notre Dame has an extensive background in their relationship to Martin Luther King Jr. thanks primarily to the late Father Hesburgh and his leadership during the Civil Rights Era.

Whereas, I conducted [a survey](#) the week of February 2, 2021, that gauged student interests on changing of MLK observance to a full day, their reasoning, and anything personal they choose to add, and this was sent to Johnson Family Hall constituents and contacts I have in the Black/African American Notre Dame community.

Whereas, [one student](#) finds that a full-day observance would be a chance to have “revered remembrance” and be able to serve the community as the legacy created by the Civil Rights Movement and Martin Luther King Jr. himself.

Whereas, [multiple students](#) from the previously mentioned survey call this change for Notre Dame would be “a sign of respect” and supports the continued “commitment to race reparations and equality.”

Whereas, [one student said](#), “The events they have currently are great, but they don’t give us the space to properly observe them.”

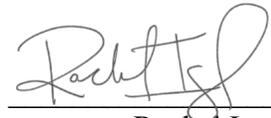
Whereas, the commitment to observance can continue to push Notre Dame towards a more diverse and inclusive climate and be used to incentivize diverse applicants which would benefit the entire Notre Dame community and their commitment to social justice and inclusion.

Whereas, the full-day allows for dedicated time to attend the events and seminars of Walk the Walk Week without the restriction of class schedules and workload.

Whereas, about [45% of employers give workers off](#) and the [stock market closes](#) for MLK Day with numbers steadily increasing, and this would allow for Notre Dame to continue their trailblazing efforts of equality and “being here for the people” as one student put it.

Whereas, all Ivy League schools (with the exception of Dartmouth College), Northwestern University, Villanova University, University of Chicago, and other [peer institutions](#) have MLK Day as a full-day observance and a paid holiday for staff and faculty.

Resolved, the Student Senate requests that Notre Dame will observe this federal holiday as a day of remembrance for the legacy of not only Martin Luther King Jr. but the entire civil rights movement for the full day with no class sessions and as a paid holiday for all faculty and staff, as it is declared per each given year. This will allow for a pause from focusing on academics and other commitments to devote personal time to reflect, converse with others, and learn topics regarding racial and ethnic history, diversity, inclusion, and equity.



Rachel Ingal
Student Body President