

March 18, 2007

Dear Provost Burish:

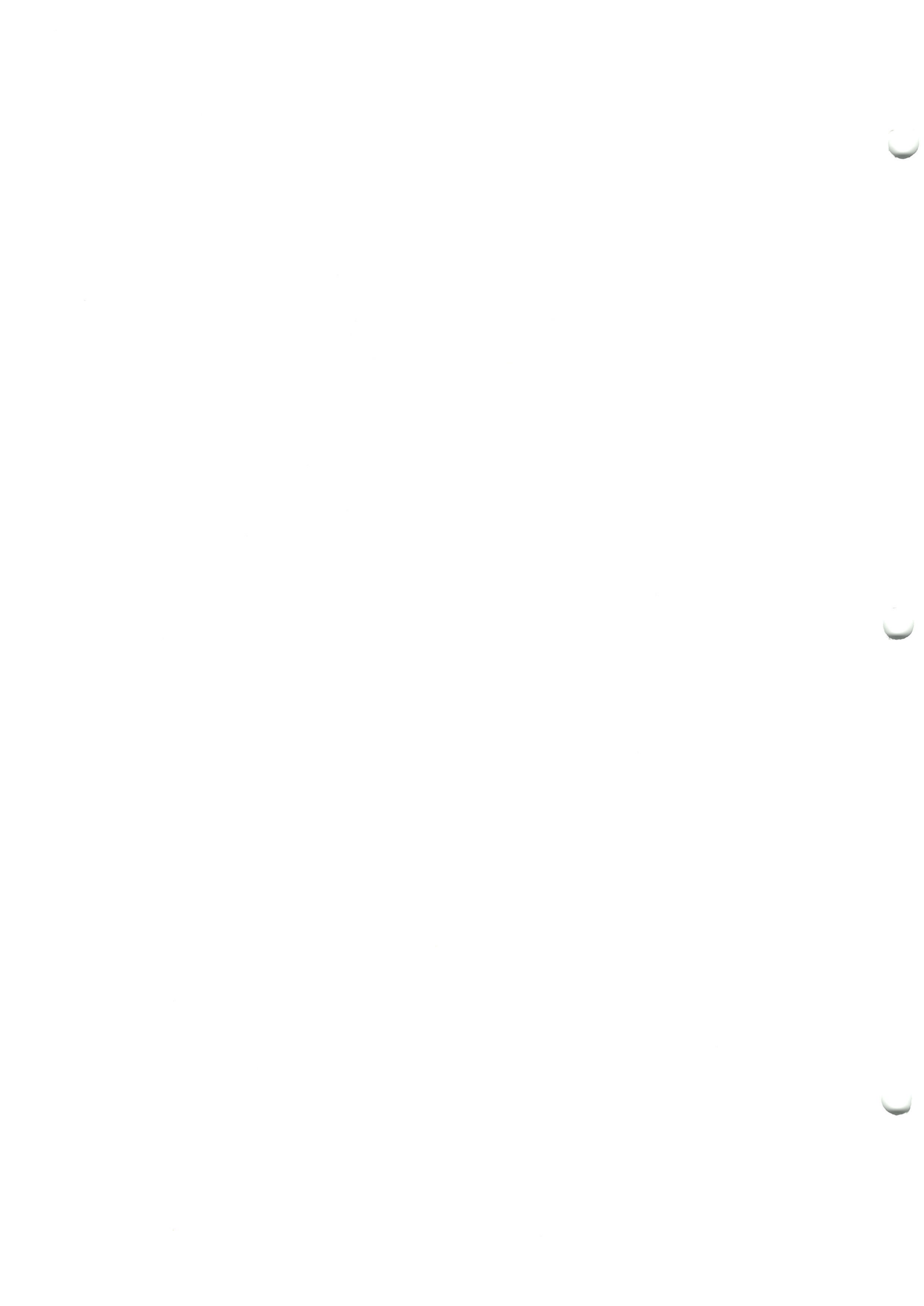
We, the Notre Dame Student Senate, are writing to urge you to reexamine the university's methods in the recruitment and retention of minority faculty. As students, we recognize that our college experience is enhanced not only by a diverse student body, but also by instructors who are from backgrounds different than our own. Though Notre Dame administrators and officials have several times declared publicly the university's commitment to diversity, not only in number, but in experience, this commitment is not often reflected in the faculty.

In his Faculty Address in 2005, Father John Jenkins declared that recruiting faculty from underrepresented groups would be one of his priorities as president of this university. Since then, he has reconstituted the University Committee on Cultural Diversity, chaired by Associate Provost Jean Anne Linney, which has worked to purchase the book Diversifying the Faculty to disseminate to academic departments to aid in their recruitment efforts; in addition, the Office of Institutional Equity was established to serve as a resource for both faculty and students.

While we respect and acknowledge these achievements, we are asking that the Provost's Office also adopt the initiative of recruiting and retaining faculty members from traditionally underrepresented groups as a priority. We recognize that much of faculty hiring and promotion is decentralized and handled at the departmental level; as such, we feel that the Provost's office, which is responsible for academic affairs at the university, **should be more proactive in this initiative and be responsible for ensuring that departments are expending the proper efforts and resources to both obtain and retain minority faculty members.**

The Student Senate Committee on Multicultural Affairs has explored the issue of minority faculty recruitment thoroughly throughout the year. In conducting research on the subject, the committee spoke to several minority faculty members; met with Jannifer Crittendon in the Office of Institutional Equity; performed an in-depth literature review; and analyzed national statistics. For a summary of our findings, please see the attached document.

In addition to increasing the numbers of underrepresented minority faculty in all disciplines, we are asking the university actively recruit and retain specialists of any race or ethnicity who are skilled in ethnic studies, especially in the specific area of Native American history and culture. In November 2006, the Student Senate passed a resolution to enhance academic opportunities pertaining to Native American affairs in order to both support the academic endeavors of Notre Dame's Native students and to give all students the opportunity to engage the issues facing indigenous Americans through time. Since then, members of the Multicultural Affairs Committee of Student Senate and faculty in



the College of Arts and Letters have been exploring the possibility of creating a Native American studies degree minor. This effort has been stalled because our university employs few specialists in this field.

We understand that the university is now ardently pursuing Catholic professors, but we contend that obtaining minority faculty members and specialists in areas of the study of the marginalized is equally important. After all, in his Inaugural Address, Father Jenkins stated that “if we were exclusively Catholic, we would be less catholic – less broad, less universal, with fewer opportunities to enrich our dialogue and test our ideas with those who share many of our values, but not all of our views.” We ask that Notre Dame enhance its faculty in all ways, for it is when we can see the world through the eyes of another that our own realities are intricately elucidated.

We also recognize that recruiting and retaining faculty of color is an arduous process and that success is slow coming, but we believe in Notre Dame, and as student leaders are dedicated to diversity in action at our university. We hope that you are willing to be similarly dedicated in improving Notre Dame’s diversity on the faculty level.

Sincerely,

Destinee DeLemos, Chair Committee on Multicultural Affairs of Student Senate

And

The Notre Dame Student Senate

