

To Whom it May Concern:

- ① not correct caricature
- ② Higher Education - potentials
- ③ student life? campus?
- ④ not representative of ND
- ⑤ what kind of students does commercial attract

On behalf of the Student Senate, the Diversity Committee is writing this letter to ask for removal of Notre Dame's new television advertisement during football games this year. The Diversity Committee understands that it is a very well intended commercial to promote the wonderful academic programs that Notre Dame offers and to attract prospect students to apply to Notre Dame. However, the Diversity Committee is also very concerned about the consequences that this commercial brings. While it is nicely done to depict the unique religious aspects of Notre Dame, it fails to portray other essential elements that make Notre Dame distinctive. It is a very one dimensional portrayal of Notre Dame, which will not only attract prospects who already share similar experiences with the current students, but it will also discourage students with diverse backgrounds to apply.

While Notre Dame seeks diversity as it is stated in Notre Dame's mission statement, "The intellectual interchange essential to a university requires, and is enriched by, the presence and voices of diverse scholars and students," the one-dimensional ad that only illustrates the importance of Catholic faith does not attract students with diverse backgrounds. As important as traditional faith development is, it is also vital to draw people with different backgrounds in order to spark conversations and exchanges of knowledge and experiences. People who cannot identify with the television advertisement may hold different views from the majority of Notre Dame students; however, that is not necessarily bad. People essentially learn about social issues and further stand in solidarity through exchanging dissimilar opinions to achieve a harmonious society tolerant of different viewpoints and lifestyles.

Not only does the commercial fail to attract students with diverse backgrounds, it also fails to represent the Notre Dame student body. Indeed it is impossible to include all aspects of Notre Dame since the school has many unique characteristics and qualities; nevertheless, it is inappropriate to represent Notre Dame in such a stereotypical way. While the majority of Notre Dame students are white, rich, and Catholic, they are not all the same and do not represent the entire student body. Everyone has unique stories to share; a video clip that shows a white girl from a suburban neighborhood praying does not illustrate how Notre Dame students are unique. Furthermore, as much as Asians, Jews, homosexuals, atheists, and the poor are not part of the homogeneity, they also attend the school. The commercial completely neglects their presence. The advertisement generalizes the Notre Dame student body and ignores the marginalized.

The Diversity Committee believes that Notre Dame needs a different television advertisement during half time of football games that fully captures all dimensions of Notre Dame. Notre Dame is indeed more than being Catholic. Notre Dame is an institution that uses its unique Catholic faith to stand in solidarity with the marginalized in order to achieve the common good. Notre Dame should try its best to include those that are marginalized as "the university prides itself on being an environment of teaching and learning which fosters the development in its students of those disciplined habits of mind, body, and spirit which characterize educated, skilled, and free human beings." In this way, the commercial will attract those students who can contribute much more to the school based on their diverse experiences.

The Diversity Committee is concerned about the image that Notre Dame is creating to the public. The Diversity Committee fears that the television advertisement will hurt the efforts made by students and faculty who have worked continuously on promoting awareness on diversity. The Diversity Committee would like the commercial to emphasize Notre Dame's "spirit of inclusion," which is what the university strives for—"a spirit of inclusion among the members of this community for distinct reasons articulated in our Christian tradition. [Notre Dame] prize[s] 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." Notre Dame should change the commercial to something that would better represent the Notre Dame student body in more dimensions; this includes diversity.

Sincerely Yours,

The Student Senate