

**Resolution on the Creation of a Women's Resource Center**

REALIZING that the University of Notre Dame is not only one of the top 20 institutions, but one of the top Catholic institutions in the country without a University-sponsored, -funded, and -staffed Women's Resource Center.

RECOGNIZING that at 47% of the student body, the female population is not only a numerical minority at Notre Dame, but also a subordinate minority in terms of historical representation, power and status.

NOTING that there is a discrepancy between the prominence of a University facility, such as the Office of Multicultural Students Programs and Services (MSPS), which effectively serves 21% of the student body, and the inefficiency of a student-run club, which cannot meet the needs and concerns surrounding women's issues.

ACKNOWLEDGING the consensus among faculty and students that despite holding coeducational status for the past 31 years, gender relations at Notre Dame are below the socially acceptable standards required for fostering the supportive community needed to encourage student growth.

ENVISIONING a Women's Resource Center that would:

- benefit from adequate professional staffing able to devote a majority of their time to the programming and educational needs of the University community.
- provide a lending library with literature on topics of women's health, sexuality, feminism, domestic violence, psychology, careers, and further gender related materials.
- sponsor varied and topical programming aimed at preventing sexual violence and providing support and advocacy to victims of sexual violence. Possible events or activities include establishing a sexual-assault crisis line, strengthening SafeWalk, designing more involved and appropriately timed Freshman Orientation prevention programming, and assisting victims with their desired course of action.
- provide a networking system for the many campus organizations that center around gender relations and women's issues (i.e. A Life Uncommon, C.A.R.E., The University Committee on Women Faculty and Students, MSPS, the Standing Committee, etc.).
- provide literature, information, programming, and networking resources on the interlocking web of isms (i.e. religious discrimination, racism, sexism, classism, etc.) and how these affect every facet of student life, as well as life beyond the dome.
- enhance female students' academic experience by providing academic programming centering on women in the workforce and in society.
- provide meeting space for different campus groups related to gender relations.

EXPECTING that the Notre Dame administration will recognize the needs of its sons and daughters and lend its support to the Notre Dame community.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the University commits the appropriate resources to the creation and maintenance of a Women's Resource Center.

*Respectfully submitted by the Student Senate Gender Relations Committee.*

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The Gender Relations Committee of the Student Senate has chosen to focus our efforts on the state of gender equality at Notre Dame, specifically in relation to the current effectiveness of the Women's Resource Center. After having researched many of the top 20 universities in the nation as well as the top Catholic universities, our research has shown that Notre Dame's Women's Resource Center is severely underdeveloped. As it stands, our resource center is a student run club whose assets do not even approach those of our peer institutions.

Despite holding coeducational status for the last 31 years, it is widely acknowledged that Notre Dame's gender relations are below the socially acceptable standards required for fostering the supportive community needed to encourage student growth. One need only glance at recent headlines of the Observer to understand that Notre Dame has an ever-increasing responsibility to educate its students on matters of gender relations. We believe that the establishment of a university-sponsored Women's Resource Center could ameliorate gender relations at Notre Dame in many ways as detailed in the following list (not exhaustive):

A Women's Resource Center would:

- benefit from adequate professional staffing able to devote a majority of their time to the programming and educational needs of the center.
- provide a lending library with literature on topics of women's health, sexuality, feminism, domestic violence, psychology, careers, and further gender related materials.
- sponsor varied and topical programming aimed at preventing sexual violence and providing support and advocacy to victims of sexual violence. Possible events or activities include establishing a sexual-assault crisis line, strengthening SafeWalk, designing more involved and appropriately timed Freshman Orientation prevention work, and assisting victims with their desired course of action.
- provide a networking system for the many campus organizations that center around gender relations and women's issues (i.e. A Life Uncommon, C.A.R.E., The University Committee on Women Faculty and Students, MSPS, the Standing Committee, etc.).
- provide literature, information, programming, and networking resources on the interlocking web of isms (i.e. religious discrimination, racism, sexism, classism, etc.) and how these affect every facet of student life, as well as life beyond the dome.
- enhance female students' academic experience by providing academic programming centering on women in the workforce and in society.
- provide meeting space for different campus groups related to gender relations.

At 47% of the student body, the female population is not only a numerical minority at Notre Dame, but also a subordinate minority in terms of historical representation, power and status. At 21% of the student body, underrepresented ethnic and racial minorities at Notre Dame enjoy access to a fully-staffed and functioning resource center – Multicultural Students Programs and Services. Our vision is that Notre Dame recognizes the needs of its female students and devotes the same amount of resources, staffing, and funding to the creation of a fully staffed, independent Women's Resource Center as it commendably has toward its multicultural minority.

The Gender Relations Committee feels that the need for this center is crucial to the personal development of individual Notre Dame students. The creation of this center is long overdue and, as we have investigated, almost unilaterally supported by a majority of students. We hope that the Notre Dame administration will recognize the needs of its sons and daughters and lend its support to the students who are willing to undertake this cause.

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