

11/17/13 GALA-ND/SMC Official Recognition Webinar Notes

Moderators Note: 15 individuals participated in the session. Full names of those who participated have been removed to respect individual privacy concerns.

- This is a listening session, want member input
- The GALA trustees and board have done some initial research from 3 sources: member Tom Field's prior research, a contact from the Black Alumni group, and the ND Club of Boston.
- Objective of the webinar:
 - Providing info to and getting feedback from GALA members
- Background:
 - GALA's original purpose at founding in 1994 was to provide support and services that ND and SMC wouldn't
 - Over the years GALA has focused on
 - Engaging members in various events:
 - Regional social events for those who can't make it to campus, provide connection between members living in a geographic area
 - On-campus activities such as the annual tailgates and reunion panels, Queer Film Festival, speakers
 - Recognition – biannual Tom Dooley Awards
 - Supporting LGBT student groups and leaders
 - April Follies
 - Annual Campus Pride scholarship for ND or SMC student
 - Advocating for them and other LGBT issues with administration
- Comment from Chuck:
 - I would also add that over the years, especially in the early years of the 1990's, leadership engaged the NDAA in meetings on campus to push for changes and inclusion. There were several meetings with then NDAA executive director Chuck Lennon and a former staffer Kathy Sullivan. The NDAA got to know us better, and we got to understand their perspectives and limitations. We also over the years took an effort to march in various Gay Pride parades in Chicago and Boston, specifically. And we participated in the National March for LGBT Rights in Washington, DC, in 1993. We also marched in NYC City Gay Pride back in the day.
- Question from Chuck:
 - Does the NDAA consider us to be a part of the diversity mix, that is to say are we seen in the same light as Blacks, Asians, Latin@s, etc.? Or are we like women in so far as ND women's connect.

- Response: We're not sure
 - What about the Dooley Society (org of doctors)?
 - Response from Tom F: I think we should model ourselves after the Dooley Society because they are still an independent organization 501(c)(3) but are affiliated with the NDAA
 - They are not listed on the NDAA website, but have a link from the Tom Dooley website to the NDAA
 - May be an avenue to pursue
 - The Dooley Society gives the NDAA the out of not having to see us as a racial or ethnic group insofar as official church teaching does not consider us to be a legitimate minority.
 - That way we're affiliated but not an official 'leg' of the org
- Comment from Rose: I think we should try to get full recognition before saying let's down-size to affiliate status.
 - Response: This may depend on what we want from this relationship, if we're using them as leverage to reach more new members/alums, as well as what we can get from them
 - Chuck agrees with Rose's comment. Gay men were ND's first minority, before other minorities [women, people of color] were able to attend
 - Response from Libby: I agree with Rose also, let's not accept a second tier standing without first exploring if we would be accepted as an affinity group. That's the way corporate America does it.
 - Chuck: Rose makes a very good point and Libby speaks well to it. I would agree at this point. Still, we need to find out what they think in South Bend. We should be visible and celebrated along with all the other minorities. After all, we were the first minority so to speak.
- Comment from Tom H: We also have the added complication of our relationship with Saint Mary's to think about, and how this will affect that.
 - Comment from Tom: The NDAA have suggested simultaneous applications for the NDAA and SMC Alumnae group, and gave a contact at the SMC Alumnae org.
 - Comment from Chuck: Seems like SMC would be a slam dunk because they have a non-discrimination clause that includes sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Question from Chuck: Is the process different for applying to be an affinity group like the Black Alumni or an affiliation like the Tom Dooley Society?
 - Response from Tom F: The application process is the same, the same information will be sent in
- Question: Has GALA's name always been GALA-ND/SMC?
 - From Chuck: First name was GALA-ND, at March on Washington SMC was added to the banner, and it's been both ever since

- From Tom F: GALA should keep own name, traditions, history, leave as much intact as possible, don't think anything will have to change when joining
- Comment from Libby: Expanding the Group to GLBTQ is probably something we should do whether or not we align with the NDAA
 - Response from Chuck: As far as branding goes, we want our organization to continue to be as fabulous and awesome as it already is. And more. :) Changing to LGBTQ is a mouthful, awkward to say. We already make clear that we are LGBT and Q inclusive. The name has cachet, too, already.
 - Response from Libby: The name doesn't have to change, just as long as our written material/web-site etc. makes it clear that we are fully inclusive.
 - Response from Melanie: Absolutely. That's a great point. It should be already-- please let us know if you catch anything that isn't inclusive or have suggestions for how to be more up front about that
 - Response from Chuck: well, we once had a transgender officer.
- Question from Chuck: Why would joining the NDAA be condoning ND's non-inclusive non-discrimination clause? I think us joining the NDAA would undermine that.
 - Response from Megan: I think it would be easier to be "in" on discussions of the non-discrimination cause when we're at the table, rather than being outside of the conversation.
 - Chris and Chuck agree
- Question posed: Does anyone think we should not move forward with reaching out to the NDAA?
 - Tom: I'm keeping reservation that I don't necessarily trust them. 2/3 of recent statements from ND were about celibacy. Need to go into this with eyes wide open, they have dragged their feet in the past and pull things, such as in the Vietnam protest days. Same sort of thing, you would start a discussion and then they wouldn't do anything. A lot of talk but no action. Never blatant, but uncooperative.
 - Jim: Are Pope Francis' recent comments influential to the University? Can we quote the Pope to sway the University as in just cool it?
 - Kristen: Based on conversation we've had, seems like we hope the Pope's comments will move the conversation towards acceptance, but comments could also be used to avoid the question.
 - Chuck: Does Malloy have influence? He said he'd think about standing by Catholic clergy who choose to
 - Jack: It seems like the Catholic Church in America is trying to figure out what the Pope means
 - Chuck: The Bishops seem to be trying to figure it out, but seem to be slow learners. There's a Bishop in IL trying to do exorcisms against

gay marriage, another who says that it leads to an increase in youth suicides. I think that ND has improved in some ways in it's position on gay individuals, but I don't understand why in the same breath in talking about gay people that they have to bring up chastity. To me this is a no brainer, I think this should have been done a long time ago. How will we know if we don't ask?

- Libby: I agree. What are we prepared to do if NDAA says no, you can't come in?
 - Tom, Chuck: We keep fighting the fight
 - Chuck: We make a big stink about it and find out why we're different
- Tom O: Study what was done with the student group, and pose the point that students are now being accepted for four years but then having no home to go to afterward like everyone else. No harm in asking.
- Jack: I think there's no harm in asking.
- Tom O: Chuck Lennon has said that needs are being met by the main/geographic groups for this as well as for other minority groups.
- Chuck: I think that was their mistake to open the door to that, Lennon wanted all one, not separated like it is.
- Tom F: The NDAA is waiting anxiously for us to apply. No reason to think that we will not be welcome.
- Jim: If they say no, it's embarrassing to them. They're on the wrong side of history.
- Comment from Megan: One point for the Dooley Society standing: they have complete control over their finances and member records. NDAA would love access to the active physician alumni records, but that is not something that the Dooley Society shares with NDAA -- is the converse something that may be a concern of members of GALA -- not having ND "know" or "mark" them as gay?
 - Response: That's a really good point, being sensitive about that and not giving information to the University that our members wouldn't want them to have.
- What we seem to be hearing is that we should move forward with this, and they may be waiting with open arms or they may go the way they have historically.
- The GALA Board of Trustees and officers have a call scheduled at the beginning of December to discuss next steps and map out how we will be moving forward.
 - Also, we'll be considering how SMC plays into this and how to move forward with them as well.
- Chuck: You mentioned a vote of membership—do we need this to move forward?

- Response: In Article 6 of our Constitution (see website for updated 2012 version, available on the “About” page, and now updated) it states:
 - Amendments may be proposed and communicated to the membership and must be approved by a two---thirds (2/3) vote of the dues---paying members. All votes are to be done via on online ballot under the supervision of non---elected, dues paying members of a Nominations and Elections Committee.
- So we will at least have to vote about whether or not to join if it comes to that. However, we as officers and trustees also want to be sensitive to the opinions of our members, knowing that we represent you, and wanting your opinions before moving forward. In the past, there has been unrest voiced about working with the ND Administration in any capacity, but those members who feel this way clearly were not on the webinar tonight to voice their opinions, or else have changed them due to recent developments such as the establishment of PrismND on campus. The officers and trustees will be discussing if this needs to be an immediate next step on our conference call in early December.