



GAY & LESBIAN ALUMNI *of*
NOTRE DAME & ST. MARY'S

GALA ND/SMC Official Recognition
with the Notre Dame Alumni
Association (NDAA)

November, 2013

Objective

To provide information and solicit feedback on a proposal to submit a formal application to the NDAA (Notre Dame Alumni Association) for recognition as an official alumni group under the NDAA umbrella

Background

- When GALA was originally created in 1994 the purpose was to provide support and services that the University was unwilling to provide
- Over the years this mission has been fulfilled through strong leadership and membership engagement and GALA remained “independent” from the NDAA

Focus

- Over the years the focus of the group has been on engaging members in a variety of activities:
 - **Regional Social Events:** Sponsoring regional events such as game watches, happy hours, summer BBQ's and cocktail parties
 - **Campus Activities:** Sponsorship of the LGBT film festival, various speakers on LGBT topics, an annual alumni reunion panel and an annual on-campus football tailgater for members, students & faculty
 - **Recognition:** Hosting the bi-annual Tom Dooley award event to recognize individuals demonstrating leadership on LGBT issues
- The group has also supported the LGBT student group and student leaders:
 - Sponsorship of the April Follies for LGBT students
 - Annual Campus Pride student leader
 - Active in advocating LGBT issues with the administration, the Faculty Senate, student government etc.

Changing Times

- Since the inception of the group society in general has changed its attitude toward LGBT individuals and the atmosphere on campus has changed as well
 - Same sex marriage in 14 states
 - Repeal of DODT
 - Repeal of DOMA for states recognizing same sex marriages
 - 4 to 5 movement in campus
 - University official recognition of the Gay/Straight Alliance (PRISM)
 - Recent public statements by the Pope

Proposed Relationship

- The NDAA acts as an umbrella organization for regional clubs and for national affinity groups
 - Geographical clubs as ND Club of NY
 - Affinity groups such as Asian-Pacific Alumni of Notre Dame, Black Alumni of Notre Dame, Hispanic Alumni of Notre Dame, and Native-American Alumni
- Recently The “Alumni Diversity Council” was created to more effectively engage, recruit, and support the University’s ethnically diverse students and graduates.
 - This group is a nine-member board, with one representative from each minority group and five selected at-large. This will enable the individual organizations to maintain their unique identities while simultaneously providing a focused voice on diversity issues as a whole
- The proposal would be to leverage a similar model as the existing affinity groups and create one for LGBT alumni

Value of Aligning with the NDAA

- **Group Identity-** With official recognition the group could continue to have our own identity and be focused on the specific needs of our members. The group would continue to have our own mission and governance (officer/board).
- **Independence-** If modeled similar to other "diversity" alumni groups, we could continue to raise money and grant awards, scholarships, etc. based on our own set of criteria.
- **Finances-** As we raise money we could take advantage of the NDAA's investment practices which removes the burden from the club administering oversight to the funds. The NDAA services is strictly administrative in nature and does not impact the use/granting of the funds.
- **Communication/Outreach-** As a member of the NDAA, we could leverage the broader network of regional clubs to partner for events and activities. We could also continue to have independent events solely for our members.
- **Influence-** By becoming a partner with the NDAA we could better educate and inform on the unique needs to LGBT alumni. As we have all seen in corporate America, having a seat at the table is a powerful position vs. being on the outside looking in.

Application Process

- **Application Procedures:** The Notre Dame Alumni Association's application procedures are quite informal and are phrased in terms of directions for forming geographic alumni clubs (i.e. city or state clubs). According to these directions, "The formation of a new Notre Dame Club ... is solely dependent on the firm desire and strong commitment of five or six dedicated alumni." This core group should contact the Alumni Association, which will determine the need for the new organization and present its application to the Alumni Association Board of Directors for approval.
- **Documentation:** Recognition applications submitted to the Alumni Association should be in letter form. Typically, they should include the names of the officers of the proposed group, a mission or vision statement indicating the group's likely activities, and a set of by-laws. Sometimes an outline of the group's background and history is also included.

Q & A

- Will GALA continue to have both Notre Dame and Saint Mary's alumni as part of the group?
 - GALA would petition the NDAA as the first step in this process. Depending on the outcome we would then evaluate how to approach the Saint Mary's alumni group
- Will GALA keep its name and identity?
 - To be determined. The name of the new group will reflect the scope and mission as defined in the charter. Several changes could include the official University logo on the group website and/or a recognition of a broader LGBTQ membership base
- The administration has not been friendly to LGBT students and alumni in the past. Why do we think things have changed sufficiently to warrant such a move?
 - The recent step to recognize the student group was a major step forward toward LGBT members of the Notre Dame community. With this move the administration was able to reconcile the concerns of maintaining their Catholic beliefs with support for LGBT students. It is only natural that this same approach can now be applied to alumni as well. In addition, the Pope's position on LGBT Catholics has been one of tolerance and support vs. ridicule and condemnation

Q & A

- Dues and Donations:
 - Will any of my dues go to the larger NDAA and not be used for our membership?
 - Will any money I give to GALA count toward my annual contribution for the football lottery?
 - Can I give money to the university and have it directed toward GALA?
 - The broader question on how the club and the NDAA is still being investigated. It is believed that the new LGBT organization would remain independent from a financial perspective. Exact rules on the flow of \$ between the two groups would need to be worked out.
- Will this mean that the Notre Dame Magazine will finally recognize my legal same-sex marriage?
 - We hope that once one part of the University recognizes LGBT alumni others in the University will follow suit
- The university still doesn't have an inclusive non-discrimination clause. Would becoming an official organization be condoning that?
 - Up to now GALA has remained independent on this issue with the University. We may better be able to influence this issue from the "inside" than from the "outside"

Members Questions and Comments