

du Lac: A Guide to Student Life

University of Notre Dame Mission Statement

Context

This statement speaks of the University of Notre Dame as a place of teaching and research, of scholarship and publication, and of service and community. These components flow from three characteristics of Roman Catholicism which image Jesus Christ, his Gospel, and his Spirit. A sacramental vision encounters God in the whole of creation. In and through the visible world in which we live, we come to know and experience the invisible God. In mediation the Catholic vision perceives God not only present in but working through persons, events, and material things. There is an intelligibility and a coherence to all reality, discoverable through spirit, mind, and imagination. God's grace prompts human activity to assist the world in creating justice grounded in love. God's way to us comes as communion, through the communities in which men and women live. This community includes the many theological traditions, liturgies, and spiritualities which fashion the life of the Church. The emphasis on community in Catholicism explains why Notre Dame historically has fostered familial bonds in its institutional life.

A Catholic university draws its basic inspiration from Jesus Christ as the source of wisdom and from the conviction that in him all things can be brought to their completion. As a Catholic university, Notre Dame wishes to contribute to this educational mission.

Mission

The University of Notre Dame is a Catholic academic community of higher learning, animated from its origins by the Congregation of Holy Cross. The University is dedicated to the pursuit and sharing of truth for its own sake. As a Catholic university one of its distinctive goals is to provide a forum where through free inquiry and open discussion the various lines of Catholic thought may intersect with all the forms of knowledge found in the arts, sciences, professions, and every other area of human scholarship and creativity.

The intellectual interchange essential to a university requires, and is enriched by, the presence and voices of diverse scholars and students. The Catholic identity of the University depends upon, and is nurtured by, the continuing presence of a predominant number of Catholic intellectuals. This ideal has been consistently maintained by the University leadership throughout its history. What the University asks of all its scholars and students, however, is not a particular creedal affiliation, but a respect for the objectives of Notre Dame and a willingness to enter into the conversation that gives it life and character. Therefore, the University insists upon academic freedom which makes open discussion and inquiry possible.

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 addition, the University seeks to cultivate in its students not only an appreciation for the great achievements of human beings but also a disciplined sensibility to the poverty, injustice, and oppression that burden the lives of so many. The aim is to create a sense of human solidarity and concern for the common good that will bear fruit as learning becomes a service to justice.

Notre Dame also has a responsibility to advance knowledge in a search for truth through original inquiry and publication. This responsibility engages the faculty and students in all areas of the University, but particularly in graduate and professional education and research. The University is committed to constructive and critical engagement with the whole of human culture.

The University encourages a way of living consonant with a Christian community and manifest in prayer, liturgy, and service. Residential life endeavors to develop that sense of community and of responsibility that prepares students for subsequent leadership in building a society that is at once more human and more divine.

Notre Dame's character as a Catholic academic community presupposes that no genuine search for the truth in the human or the cosmic order is alien to the life of faith. The University welcomes all areas of scholarly activity as consonant with its mission, subject to appropriate critical refinement. There is, however, a special obligation and opportunity, specifically as a Catholic university, to pursue the religious dimensions of all human learning. Only thus can Catholic intellectual life in all disciplines be animated and fostered and a proper community of scholarly religious discourse be established.

In all dimensions of the University, Notre Dame pursues its objectives through the formation of an authentic human community graced by the Spirit of Christ.

du Lac: A Guide to Student Life

Notre Dame, IN 46556 USA

duLac@nd.edu

© 2026 [University of Notre Dame](#)

