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## Notre Dame Black Alumni Appeal



**11,785 have signed.** Let's get to 15,000!



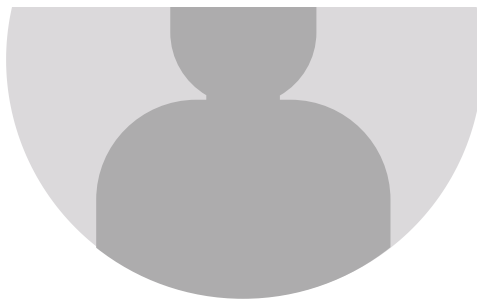
**Victoria Perdomo** signed 1 day ago



**Christy Teufel** signed 5 days ago

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**Chioma Amuzie started this petition to Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C and 4 others**  
**This is the experience of a Black student at the University of Notre Dame:**

“During a freshman Moreau class, a white student told me, in front of our peers, I was only accepted into Notre Dame because I am Black. The Moreau leader proceeded to cut me off when I tried to explain why that thinking is racist.”

"On move in day of my freshman year, my white roommate's father had a very unsettling look on his face when he first saw me. When I was organizing the room, he avoided talking to me and coming anywhere near me. A few minutes later I heard him say to my roommate, 'I don't want your beds anywhere close to each other.'"

“When I was a freshman, I accidentally missed a section meeting. The moment my RA saw me, she raced down the hall and yelled in my face. She then reported me to my rector. Later that week, I heard my white counterparts had not only missed that same meeting, but other ones in the past. They received no reprimanding. ”

"During my junior year, a professor invited Charles Murray, the author of the Bell Curve which asserts Black and Latino genetics are intellectually inferior, to speak on campus for “scholarly discussion.” On the day of his campus lecture, there were police surrounding McKenna Hall to blockade student entrance in the building. I had to yell at an officer to take his hands off a Black peaceful protestor. Then, I was denied access into a building where I had class, although my white classmates were permitted to enter. I was late to class after arguing with ushers to let me in, showing my student ID, pulling up my student schedule, and then emailing my professor who had to come downstairs and demand I be let in."

"These experiences worsen especially on game days when some visitors are a bit more explicit about their feelings toward Black people. I've seen mothers quickly grasp their children when I walk by them. I get stares. While riding my bike to see my friends, some children saw me and started showing me

monkey impressions. On another game day, while walking, this guy just mumbled the word "frog" when he passed me. When I tried to bring this up to my Rector or advisor, they ignored it and claimed that I was just being irrational."

"One night after a football game, my friend and I were sitting in my car in D lot. NDPD stopped by and asked if we were students. They then asked us what we were doing. The officer reported it and said he thought we were having sex under a blanket. There was no blanket in my car."

"When I was moving in, a girl and her parents asked if they could help. I told them that it was fine because my dad and uncle were just parking the car and would be back to help. She looked at me with this surprised look and said "Your dad?!!!" I was shocked. I overheard them later saying they couldn't believe that my dad was in my life."

"A student running for hall president put up posters of himself holding neckties of different colors with the quote, "Who says Notre Dame has a diversity problem?"

"My freshman year, my friend stayed over in my room after getting back from a party very late. Neither of us wanted to walk back to our dorms alone. My white roommate reported me. Both myself and my friend had a meeting with my rector and we were sanctioned. Several weeks later, I entered my room late at night and my roommate was laying in her bed naked with her boyfriend. I told my RA. No one in the hall did anything."

"One of my classmates sent a Snapchat to our class group chat with the caption "dumb niggers." The silence of my peers in the group chat, who either tried to dismiss it was the more traumatic part."

"I've been asked to step out of my car twice. Once near the gate near the main entrance and another time by the Stepan Center entrance. Not only asked to step out of my car, but I was searched. I not only had an ND license plate and a permit on my windshield both times, but I also showed my student ID."

"During my senior year, the n-word and 'Blacks should be picking cotton' was written throughout multiple residence halls and on the boards outside of black students' rooms."

"During my freshman year Moreau class, a tall white male stood up and aggressively yelled at me. He constantly referred to me as 'you people.' The professor said nothing to him, but when I tried to respond I was told to calm down."

## **Introduction**

These excerpts represent only a few moments of racism that many Black, Notre Dame students have faced on campus. More often than not, the story ends with "and nothing happened." Too often, the university remains silent on issues facing members of her community. When choosing to attend the nation's premier Catholic institution, we expected to feel the spirit of Christ throughout campus; we expected to encounter the value and dignity for the human life that Notre Dame told us about in her brochures and in our tours. We expected that Father Sorin's vision for the university to be, "one of the most powerful means of doing good in this country," would translate to campus interactions. For many of us, these expectations were not met. Instead, throughout the journey of obtaining our prestigious

Notre Dame degree, we were left to deal with unchecked and unacknowledged racism that ran rampant throughout the Notre Dame community. Our aggressors were not reprimanded and the institution that we all wished to call our “home under the dome” made us feel like mere guests– or, in some cases, strangers.

While we appreciate the public statements, prayers and peace walks, we expect substantive change that will positively impact the culture and experience for Black students, faculty and staff. We expect a new level of accountability - one of the five values even our own faculty and staff are asked to uphold and live daily. By following the expectations listed below, we expect Notre Dame will evolve into an environment where Black students, faculty, and staff will feel comfortable attending and working for. Eventually, we expect the diversity of staff in leadership to grow. We expect to see the number of full time Black faculty increase. We expect to see the enrollment of Black students increase. In the case where there is no immediate action, we expect to go down another route.

Our weariness with the Black, Notre Dame experience drives us to get our degree and turn our backs to our alma mater; but our faith and passion for justice calls us to continuously fight for the community that remains and the truly inclusive and anti-racist Notre Dame that we hope to see. We are tired of Notre Dame’s silence and lack of empathy. It is for these reasons that we have chosen to fully divest from Notre Dame. We call on all Notre Dame alumni, from all races, that share our same hope of genuine inclusivity to join us in this divestment. This is a commitment to neither engage in alumni association events/activities nor donate to the University of Notre Dame until the necessary actions to foster an anti-racist, impartial, and inclusive environment have been taken. In addition, the Black Alumni will cease recruitment support, including, but not limited to, future decisions to not send our children and family to the University until action is identified. Our expectation is for senior officials to create a task force of current students, alumni, faculty, and staff to address these expectations within seven days.

### **Town Hall Meeting:**

In order to create an open line of communication, we expect Executive Vice President Shannon B. Cullinan, President John Jenkins, and Provost Marie Lynn Miranda to host a virtual town hall meeting before school resumes in the fall. In this meeting, current students, alumni, faculty and staff will be invited to call in and express their grievances directly to the leaders of the University. For too long, senior leadership has lacked an ear to the campus climate and has avoided sitting in front of the faces it has consistently let down. Senior leadership should be available to hear from the very parts of the university that make it go.

### **Mandatory Coursework:**

The first expectation that we have is for a Black History and Anti-Racism class to be created and mandated for all students at the university. There is clear unfamiliarity and ignorance of cultural differences among students, faculty, and staff, which contributes heavily to the racism that is experienced by Black students. The purpose of the course is to combat racism with formal discussion and education on different cultures. In order for this goal to be met, instructors of these courses will also be required to go through cultural competency training to familiarize themselves with the topics and learn how to facilitate open conversations about cultural differences between students. We propose for the course to be set up similarly to the Moreau course that first-year students are required to take. An

ideal course would discuss the definition of racism and its explicit/implicit forms, as well as covering cultural backgrounds on groups that have faced substantial racism in this country (e.g. African Americans, Native Americans, Latin Americans, Irish, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, etc.). We request that this class be activated and mandated by Fall of 2022 for all incoming freshmen from that year forward. To decide on the curriculum and instructor training of this course, our suggestion is for representatives of affinity departments at the university to collaborate on the material.

### **Accountability Board:**

A second expectation is the creation of an accountability board made up of a group of 15 faculty and staff members appointed each year by the executive boards of the historically Black organizations on campus, including but not limited to, Shades of Ebony, the Black Student Association, and Wabruda. This appointed board will report to Audit & Advisory Services, in turn reporting to the Board of Trustees. The goal for this group will be to ensure that a racially inclusive and anti-racist environment for students is being upheld. The board will receive training from the aforementioned anti-racism class at the beginning of each semester. Members of the board will be responsible for determining whether a reported act of racial insensitivity has violated the purpose of creating an anti-racist environment. Various groups can be sent to the accountability board after being reported for racial insensitivity including students, hall staff, St. Liam's staff, and the NDPD. By the start of the fall semester of 2022, we expect this board to be organized and ready to review cases.

Notre Dame's Spirit of Inclusion policy states, "We welcome all people, regardless of color, gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social or economic class, and nationality, for example, precisely because of Christ's calling to treat others as we desire to be treated... We consciously create an environment of mutual respect, hospitality and warmth in which none are strangers and all may flourish." Our experience has been far from that. Notre Dame has failed to protect its Black students, faculty, and staff on numerous occasions. To prevent any future instances of such, we expect swift and severe reprimanding of students, faculty, and staff who commit discriminatory and/or racist actions. We request the following definitions of discrimination and racism be adopted by policy and updated in du Lac:

#### *Discrimination:*

The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex.

#### *Racism:*

The prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race.

We would like to see a two strike system put into place. Upon ruling of a student's second discriminatory and/or racist incident from the accountability board, they would face disciplinary action such as probation or expulsion. As the premier Catholic institution in the world, Notre Dame has a responsibility and opportunity to be an example for anti-racism. We look to implement this policy at the same time as the inception of the accountability board, spring semester 2021.

### **Residence Life**

#### *Welcome Weekend*

In order to create a welcoming, inclusive environment within dorms, there should be significant improvement in regards to the facilitation of Welcome Weekend. Welcome Weekend sets the tone for the future of residents on campus. While Welcome Weekend focuses on fully immersing first-year students into the Notre Dame experience, we want to be explicit about the consequences of discriminatory and racist actions in the Notre Dame community. Right now, there is a lack of in-depth discussion on race and racism amongst Welcome Weekend staff. By prioritizing cultural competency during Welcome Weekend, we not only expect anti-racism round table discussions to be part of the Welcome Weekend's staff on-boarding, but we also expect a mandatory discussion of rules in dorms built around maintaining an environment for cultural competency. Welcome Weekend makes sure to emphasize the gravity of sexual assault prevention and the definition of consent. The same attention should be prescribed to cultural competency and racial inclusivity. The creation, addressing, and upholding of these rules for maintaining a culturally competent dorm environment will be overseen by the accountability board. By addressing the role and responsibility of the accountability board during Welcome Weekend to incoming freshmen, we hope to provide early education on cultural sensitivity, which will be reinforced in the anti-racism class. We believe this degree of focus on cultural competency during Welcome Weekend will be a catalyst to the Notre Dame community standing united in being an anti-racist institution year to year. By the fall semester of 2021, we expect this update to take place.

#### *Hall Staff*

To improve the climate of residence life, hall staff should have to update diversity training to require conversations on racism and the consequences for allowing it to go unreported or engaging in said racism. This will include Rectors, Resident Assistants, and Assistant Rectors. Currently, Resident Assistants attend a brief diversity and inclusion seminar along with some situational training that is not specifically focused on cultural awareness or racism. We want to see racial and cultural education emphasized during Rector, RA, and AR training to provide a solid foundation for how to prevent and respond to racist instances within the dorm. Our recommendation is to collaborate with the student Diversity Council to create an adequate curriculum to present to Hall Staff. Rectors, RAs, and ARs will have to face the accountability board for any reported violations and will have a two strike rule before losing their position and benefits of the role. By the fall semester of 2021, we expect this update to take place.

#### **Campus Healthcare**

COVID-19 has revitalized the conversation about health disparities in underserved communities. Several studies, such as that from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (Laveist & Nuru-Jeter 2002)<sup>1</sup>, have found that patients who are of the same race as their provider report more satisfaction. Implicit bias in health care serves as the foundation for poor health outcomes, particularly in the Black community. It's worth noting that within the Black community, Black women experience these traumatic and unsettling experiences with health care providers at an alarmingly higher rate than their peers. Our expectation moving forward is that the University will make incremental improvements in the hiring of racially diverse health care providers. We would like to see Black health care providers make up 20% of St. Liam's staff by 2022. In addition to expecting change in the racial diversity within the St. Liams staff, we expect at the beginning of each semester that the entire staff preview the aforementioned Black



History/Anti-Racism course to better serve and provide for its heterogeneous student body. We also expect that anyone who visits St. Liam's will be able to fill out an evaluation at the end of each appointment. This evaluation, composed of questions about comfort, respect, and cultural competency, will provide incentive for St. Liam's staff to maintain an overall standard of performance. If any red flags come up, it will be reviewable by the accountability board. By mandating that the St. Liam's staff becomes more culturally competent in dealing with its students, we expect fewer instances of neglect amongst Black students. If Black students experience neglect by St. Liam's, the expectation is that the accountability board will oversee alleged cases of misconduct. In the instant that one St. Liam's staff member has multiple complaints regarding their experience, we are requesting removal of the health care provider(s) in question from the St. Liam's staff.

### **Campus Policing**

History continues to remind us that abuse of police power continues to disproportionately impact Black people. We demand better conduct amongst the Notre Dame Police Department when interacting with Black students at Notre Dame. There are several actions that can be taken to meet expectations. Notre Dame police must enroll in bi-annual cultural competency courses like other members of the Notre Dame community are expected to, as this will better guide them in their conduct with Black students. We expect that they are also mandated to take the Black History/Anti-Racism course. Far too often there are instances of police officers racially profiling Black students and questioning their status as a Notre Dame student, while their white peers roam campus freely. Transparency is also an issue between law enforcement and Black students. This conduct can be improved by mandating that officers wear body cameras and have large print badge numbers on their badges and/or uniforms. This allows any Black student to feel confident that officers will not be exempt from reprimanding if there is evidence of their misconduct on campus. If Black students experience discrimination by NDPD, the expectation is that the accountability board will oversee alleged cases of misconduct. In the instant that an NDPD officer has multiple complaints regarding their experience, we are requesting removal of these officers from the NDPD staff.

### **Closing**

The crimes against Black people did not start today. On every level, institutionalized racism has guaranteed for centuries that Black people remain at the bottom of society. Recently, the tragic murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and others have caused a seismic shift. At this time, individuals, organizations, and parts of the government are scrambling to atone for the marginalization of Black people. At the same time, Black people are using their voices and advocating in new ways without fear of retaliation because for the first time, the nation as a whole is listening and watching. The debate these days is, "Which side of history will you end up on?" If Notre Dame believes it, "...seeks to cultivate... a disciplined sensibility to the poverty, injustice, and oppression that burden the lives of so many," is that not a commitment to be on the right side?

In Notre Dame,

Black Alumni



Laveist TA, Nuru-Jeter A. Is doctor-patient race concordance associated with greater satisfaction with care?. J Health Soc Behav. 2002;43(3):296-306.

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## **Updates**

8 months ago

10,000 supporters

8 months ago

Chioma Amuzie started this petition

## **Reasons for signing**



**Natalie Thomas** · 8 months ago

I'm signing because as a black Notre Dame alum, I have certainly experienced and witnessed racism on campus in both blatant and discrete manners. Yet, the administration has never sufficiently fulfilled or addressed the pain and grievances of their black students. Father Jenkins never publicly condemned any racial bigotry that occurred o... [Read more](#)

[31](#)[Report](#)

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**Kylie VanArsdale** · 8 months ago

I am signing because Notre Dame deliberately silences black voices demanding change on campus. No amount of prayers and listening sessions will ever be enough to make real change.

27

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