

## **On Hearing You Might Transfer**

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<http://ndsmcobserver.com/2015/01/hearing-might-transfer/>

To a student of color, on hearing you might transfer:

Dear Student,

Recently we learned you have become so disheartened by racism at Notre Dame that you are considering transferring to another school.

We were told you and other students received several racist messages on Yik Yak, the social media app that allows people to post anonymous messages for others to read. We don't subscribe to Yik Yak, but one of our students shared one of the messages you saw.

We were sickened. The message was racist, and it was infuriating. As awful as it was, we understand this may not be the only instance of racism you have encountered on the Notre Dame campus. So we can understand why you might want to leave. And we support, categorically, your right to make decisions that will enable you to feel safe, to flourish and to be happy — whatever those decisions might be.

We write this letter to share our thoughts with you and other students of color as you consider the future. We want you to know:

- Your faculty and staff care about you. We want to do everything we can to help you learn, grow and thrive at Notre Dame. We want to teach you, and we want to learn from you. And we will do all we can to help you feel that Notre Dame is truly your home.
- You have allies among your fellow students. As tragic as it is that some Notre Dame students are so lost in personal webs of ignorance and fear, many more students believe in the Notre Dame mission of promoting learning in the service of justice. The student who showed us the racist message was distraught at the thought you might leave. That student and others like her are your allies and your friends.
- You make Notre Dame a better place. Diversity in all of its expressions, whether racial, ethnic, economic, linguistic, aesthetic or other forms, makes for a stronger, smarter, more wholly human community. While it is not your responsibility to make Notre Dame a better place, we want you to know that your presence in this university matters.
- You belong here. When you received your letter from the admissions office telling you that you had been accepted to Notre Dame, this became your university. The library, the dorms, the classrooms — these are your places. The quads, the lakes, the Grotto — they are here for you. No one has the right to take these from you, and no one can. Let the haters leave, if that's what they choose. We will wish them better days and hope they someday learn to love others as God intended. Notre Dame belongs to you, not them. Why should you leave?

As you well know, a hallmark of the United States' past is institutionalized racism; and the struggle for justice and equality continues. The racist message you received makes clear that that struggle is taking place, too, at Notre Dame.

We write as Notre Dame faculty members to say your struggle is our struggle. We will stand beside you, and we will denounce all forms of hate speech as intolerable and unacceptable.

We wish you everything good as you consider your bright future, and we offer you our support.

Sincerely,

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