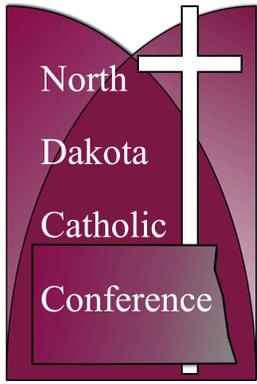


January 10, 2022



Representing the Diocese of Fargo
and the Diocese of Bismarck

103 South Third Street
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Bismarck ND 58501
701-223-2519
ndcatholic.org
ndcatholic@ndcatholic.org

Dear Parents:

On behalf of Bishop David D. Kagan and Bishop John T. Folda, I am writing to alert you of a concerning development at the University of North Dakota (UND).

As you and your child consider prospective higher educational opportunities, we urge you to examine the campus environment and whether it is conducive or hostile to not only the Catholic faith but also the truth about the human person. Unfortunately, colleges and universities across the nation are enacting policies that not only impose flawed ideologies on students but also restrict their rights to free speech and religion.

We wish to call particular attention to a “gender inclusion” policy proposed by UND.

The proposed policy requires campus-wide use of preferred pronouns, acceptance of an “expressed gender identity,” and the rejection of any assumption of a binary, or biological-based gender. The scope of the proposal is quite expansive, covering not only faculty and staff, but students, student organizations, and even campus visitors. Failure to adhere to the policy would be a violation of the UND's Discrimination and Harassment policy, with corresponding penalties.

The proposed policy also applies to on-campus housing, which UND requires for all freshmen. According to the proposed policy, an individual will be assigned housing according to their “expressed gender” rather than their biological sex. In fact, no one, apparently, can inquire about the individual's actual sex. A freshman female, for example, could be assigned, without any prior knowledge or approval, a roommate who is a biological male but “expresses” as a female. Indeed, it would appear from the proposal that asking about the roommate's biological sex or asking for a different roommate would be prohibited.

We recognize that everyone should be treated with respect and that the university has a role in facilitating a respectful learning environment. However, this proposal goes beyond setting mere rules for administrative tasks. Indeed, it embraces and demands acceptance of a particular ideology about gender and language that is contrary to Catholic teaching and infringes upon free speech and religious rights. The proposed policy even requires student organizations to use preferred pronouns, accept expressed genders, and reject binary understandings of gender *even if doing so conflicted with their sincerely held religious beliefs.*

UND has not yet finalized the policy but may do so soon. Please consider contacting UND administrators and asking them to reject this flawed proposal.

The contact information is:

President Andrew Armacost
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701.777.2121

Jed Shivers
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Donna Smith
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Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher Dodson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Christopher Dodson
Executive Director
General Counsel
North Dakota Catholic Conference