

Letter to the Beacon

Earlier this week I spoke with students at a Fireside Chat sponsored by our student government. We had a wonderful, dynamic discussion. During the chat, there was some discussion about the university's position regarding sexual orientation. Later in the week I learned that some comments I made during this part of the program may have been taken out of context or perhaps misunderstood. I want to take this opportunity to make sure everyone at UP, especially our students, knows the true intent of my remarks.

Two years ago I commissioned a Statement of Inclusion for the University of Portland that was authored by members of our University community and approved by our Board of Regents. The policy reads as follows:

At the University of Portland, a Catholic University guided by the Congregation of Holy Cross, all dimensions of our communal life—teaching and learning, faith and formation, and service and leadership—are informed and transformed by prayer, scripture, and the Christian tradition. Our belief in the inherent dignity of each person is founded upon the social teaching of the Catholic Church. At the center of that teaching is the fundamental mandate that every person, regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, social or economic class, age, or disability shall be treated with respect and dignity.

Moreover, we seek to create and sustain an inclusive environment where all people are welcomed as children of God and valued as full members of our community. We condemn harassment of every kind, and assert that no one in our community should be subject to physical or verbal harassment or abuse. Further, no one shall be denied access to programs, services, and activities for any unlawful reason. We provide all who live, learn, and work at the University the opportunity to actively participate in a vibrant, diverse, intellectual community that offers a broad range of ideas and perspectives, so that we may all learn from one another.

University of Portland is a Catholic university, founded and guided by the Congregation of Holy Cross. As a Catholic institution, we follow the teachings of the Church. We also abide by the laws of federal and state government. The government has respected our right to create policies that we believe reflect the teachings of our faith, and that is what we have done.

The University of Portland values each individual in our community and is committed to the development of the whole person: physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional. We will never waver in our commitment to each and every member of our community.

We welcome and encourage spirited debate. On this and every issue, my hope is that we can engage with one another honestly and respectfully. As a priest and your president, please know

that nothing is more important to me than honoring the dignity of each and every member of this campus community.

Sincerely,

Jr. Bill