



## **STAFF REPORT**

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### **Update on the City of Belmont/Notre Dame de Namur University Advisory Board**

Honorable Mayor and Council Members

#### **Summary**

The creation of a Belmont/NDNU Advisory Board and Working Group in 2003 was a visible statement of the desire of the University, City and community to enhance communications and foster a closer relationship. Since that time, the Working Group prepared a report that was approved by the Advisory Board. Staff recommends the City Council accept that report and endorse its priorities.

#### **Background and Discussion**

Council Member Warden placed an item 9 on the August 13, 2002 agenda concerning forming an advisory committee between the City and the University. The Council approved forming a committee and directed staff to return with a plan. On November 12, 2002 Council approved the creation of City/NDNU Advisory Board. The purpose of the Advisory Board is to “provide a forum for formal communication and collaboration between the City of Belmont and Notre Dame de Namur University.” The Advisory Board was formally launched when a Partnership Agreement was signed in a ceremony at Ralston Hall on February 26, 2003 (Attachment A).

The Advisory Board is made up of the Mayor and City Manager, as well as the President of NDNU and a member of the Board of Trustees. The structure includes a nine-member “Working Group” made up of City, University and community representatives that meet more frequently and act as the “think tank” for the Advisory Board. Representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, school district, Central Neighborhood Association and Planning Commission all participate on the Working Group.

Since the Advisory Board was established, the Working Group has met eight times to discuss a variety of issues, culminating in the preparation of a report to the Advisory Board (see Attachment B). The Working Group presented the report to the Advisory Board on May 20, 2004 and the Advisory Board unanimously approved it. Attachment C is the notes from that meeting.

The key priorities outlined in the report are:

- Develop a marketing plan between NDNU, the Chamber of Commerce, and the City for selling and promoting NDNU memorabilia in local stores
- Partner to pursue the installation of NDNU banners on Ralston Avenue to create and encourage a “University-town” feeling
- Belmont recognize outstanding student achievements with a proclamation from the City Council and/or on the city website.
- Belmont include NDNU faculty and students as performers and/or artists at the Art & Wine Festival
- Encourage the City to direct economic development efforts toward student-oriented services (i.e., bookstores, coffee shops, affordable restaurants that stay open past 10:00 p.m.)
- NDNU work with the neighborhood association board (NAB), the city wide delegation of neighborhood presidents, to share information and ideas
- Invite students to dinners at homes of community members

This list is not intended to signify the exclusive efforts of the Working Group, but the priorities for focused attention over the next year. As some of these priority issues require support from, or action by, the City, staff would like the Council to review the report and discuss the priorities. Council concurrence with the priorities or alternative direction is sought at this time.

The working Group will continue to meet approximately every other month and the Advisory Board will meet annually.

**Fiscal Impact**

There is no direct fiscal impact to this report.

**Recommendation**

Staff recommends Council accept the report to the City/NDNU Advisory Board as shown in Attachment B and endorse the priorities outlined in it.

**Alternatives**

1. Provide alternative direction to staff
2. Take no action

**Attachments**

- A. City/NDNU Partnership Agreement
- B. Report to the Advisory Board
- C. Notes from the Advisory Board meeting

Respectfully submitted,

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Daniel Rich  
Assistant City Manager

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City Manager



*Belmont and NDNU: A Partnership of Contributions*  
**A report to the Advisory Board**

*Introduction*

Notre Dame de Namur University (formerly College of Notre Dame) has been located in Belmont longer than Belmont has been a city. The University and the City have always coexisted peacefully and worked together as needed, but in past years acted fairly independently of each other. Historically, the University was somewhat isolated from the community and the City did not think of itself as a university town.

In recent years, both the University and City have worked to enhance relations and in February 2003, the Mayor of Belmont and President of Notre Dame de Namur University signed a Partnership Agreement (Attachment A) formally launching an era of increased communication and collaboration.

The Agreement established an Advisory Board, with the purpose of providing a forum for formal communication and collaboration between the City and the University (NDNU). A Working Group was established at the same time, made up of:

- ✓ 3 NDNU representatives (a representative from the administration, faculty and student body)
- ✓ 3 City representatives (a representative of the City Manager, one from an operating department, and one from the Planning Commission)
- ✓ 3 community representatives (one from the Central Neighborhood Association, one from the Chamber of Commerce, and one from the school district)

The Working Group has met eight times in the past year and discussed a wide variety of issues (see Attachment B for meeting notes). This report is intended to inform the Advisory Board of the Working Group's efforts to date and to seek direction on action items for the next year.

*Review and analysis of the NDNU Master Plan*

The Working Group was given a tour of the campus and updated on the scope of the Master Plan. The group discussed the implications of the Master Plan for the community. Phase IA, the building of a new residence hall, will be completed in August 2004. This will bring an additional 200 resident students to campus. The arrival of the new students will increase the University's presence in the community. It will also have an economic impact on the City. The group felt the new

facilities would encourage increased pride in the University, promote a stronger “University town” image, and result in a positive fiscal impact on the City. The construction itself will also have a medium-term economic benefit to the City and region.

Issues discussed included:

- Fiscal impact on the City: When the new residence hall is completed in August 2004, approximately 500 students will be living on campus. Currently, to a large degree, resident students travel outside of Belmont to spend their money. The group concurred that it is important for the City to provide more student-oriented services, as well as more recreational opportunities, in order to keep students and their money in Belmont.
- Importance of creating a more “student-friendly” atmosphere in Belmont: students do not always feel welcomed by the community
- Concerns regarding the safety and the location for the future parking structure, both for students and guests of the university
- The new facilities encouraging increased pride in the University and helping to promote a stronger “University town” image

The group felt it was important for the community to become more aware of the changes on campus and for the City to incorporate these changes into the General Plan update.

#### Student Perspective on Belmont

The Working Group has the benefit of multiple perspectives on the NDNU/City relationship, including that of students. The Group’s student members surveyed other students at NDNU and reported that they would like to see the following:

- reasonably priced food places
- night clubs or places with live music
- discounts at local businesses (and a map of such stores)
- affordable housing
- jobs for students
- recruiting on campus
- retailers on campus
- establishments that stay open late
- bookstore/establishments that have live music
- shuttle service around town
- safer movement of vehicles in and out of the campus entrance
- banners on the roadways
- a sign on Ralston Avenue announcing school events
- more community support for NDNU athletic events on campus

Students indicated they tend to go elsewhere to shop, eat and play because Belmont is too small, has too few businesses, and businesses do not stay open late enough to adequately serve the students. Students felt that businesses do not promote NDNU and suggested that they sell school memorabilia. This input is valuable as the City and University continue to work together on new initiatives and as the City updates its General Plan and undertakes economic development activities.

### NDNU: an integral part of Belmont's Vision

The Working Group spent considerable time discussing the Belmont Vision project and the role of the University in the community. At the Group's urging, NDNU had nine representatives on six of the seven Visioning Committees. Through their active participation, and the other members' understanding of the importance of education to the community's future, the final Vision Statement developed by the community and adopted by the City Council has a heavy emphasis on education. In fact, it states clearly, "our University is intrinsic to Belmont's social, artistic and economic life."

Using this Vision as a foundation, the City and NDNU can work together to ensure it is carried out in policies and practices over the years ahead. The most important action will be to weave the intent of the Vision into the City's updated General Plan and the Economic Development Strategy. In addition, the stage is set for greater collaboration between the University, City and community for the mutual benefit of all parties.

### *Benefits of University Presence*

Many citizens are not aware of the benefits of a university presence and the numerous ways the University contributes to the community; it is, therefore, important to identify a variety of venues for educating and communicating this information to the community.

The group identified the following benefits of a university presence:

- Economic - money brought into the community by faculty, staff, students, and special events
- Cultural – theatre, arts, concerts, lectures, academic programs and special events
- Academic – the only university in San Mateo County
- Partnerships with local schools
- Classes and library open to the public
- Open space setting, re-greening and ecological efforts being made by the University in conjunction with their Master Plan
- Community involvement - throughout the year, faculty, staff and students work in partnership with local communities through a variety of activities that involve participation as interns and volunteers in community-based programs
- Facilities - Ralston Hall and other campus facilities used for community events
- Sports programs and athletic events
- Summer camps for youth

For a partial list of the ways NDNU enriches the community, see Attachment C. The Working Group felt it was important to educate the community on these extensive contributions and further enhance the partnership between the University and Belmont. The discussion also focused on other things the University could do, such as additional coaching or tutoring in the schools. It was pointed out that the contributions go both ways (for example, members of the City organization and the community participated in two community dialogues several months ago).

### *Working Group Ideas*

The Working Group discussed numerous ways to improve communication and collaboration between the City, community, and NDNU. All agreed the relationship is and should be reciprocal. The group came up with the following ideas:

#### *NDNU outreach:*

- Continue/expand communication through the Community Connection Newsletter, Events E-List, City of Belmont newsletter, City calendar of events, Park & Rec activities booklet, Belmont Today, NDNU website, the public library, etc.
- Develop outreach via neighborhood associations and the Senior Center
- Explore venues for communicating the many ways the university contributes to the community
- Use the popularity of the Christmas Carol by having “booths” or other campus information available to attendees
- Publicize the sports teams and sporting events to attract people to NDNU
- Make regular presentations to the City Council and/or School Board. Give Council members NDNU shirts or hats to wear during the presentation. Also hang the NDNU banner behind the Council during the presentation
- Work with the neighborhood association board (NAB), the city wide delegation of neighborhood presidents
- Explore ways to improve outreach and communication with local schools as a way of promoting university activities and resources
- Distribute “Friend of NDNU” automobile decals as a way to build identification and support in the community
- Provide “affordable” educational courses for the community, especially seniors
- Open the gymnasium for community use
- Encourage use of the NDNU library by the community. Implement a system for the community to check out books
- Erect an information sign near the entrance to campus to be used to identify upcoming NDNU events
- Establish an informational kiosk at strategic locations such as Safeway, Carlmont Center, and/or the train station with NDNU calendars, academic information and event communication
- Increase NDNU participation in community events
- Establish regular movie nights on campus that are open to the community

#### *City outreach:*

- Encourage the City to direct economic development efforts toward student-oriented services (i.e., bookstores, coffee shops, affordable restaurants that stay open past 10:00 p.m.)
- Provide affordable housing for upper division students who wish to live off campus
- Install banners across Ralston Avenue at the beginning of the year welcoming University students
- Send the Belmont City newsletter to students on campus
- Strategize to better incorporate the University and its needs in the General Plan

- Identify and support ways to become more student-friendly, i.e., new student packets including letters of welcome from the City and the Chamber of Commerce, map of city and businesses, discount coupons, and calendar of community events
- Recognize outstanding student achievements with a proclamation from the City Council and/or on the city website
- Create leadership opportunities for students on local commissions or committees

*Partnerships with City/NDNU/Community:*

- Install NDNU banners on Ralston Avenue to create and encourage a “University-town” feeling
- Develop a slogan that links NDNU and Belmont together in their efforts for a better community
- Explore Shuttle bus service between NDNU and transportation/shopping centers, as well as in residential areas
- Create an annual joint NDNU/city/community event designed to bring the community together on campus (as has been done with the annual production of the Christmas Carol)
- Promote discounts for students at local stores
- Develop a marketing plan between NDNU, the Chamber, and the City for selling and promoting NDNU memorabilia in local stores
- Expand internship opportunities throughout the community
- Introduce the community to the talent available at NDNU by inviting the faculty and students to perform/display art at the Art & Wine Festival
- Invite students to dinners at homes of community members

*Conclusion*

The creation of a Belmont/NDNU Advisory Board and Working Group in 2003 was a visible statement of the desire of the University, City and community to enhance communications and foster a closer relationship. In addition to the specific ideas listed on the previous pages, the mere presence of a forum for dialogue has been tremendously valuable. A strong, sustainable partnership is in place.

It is the desire of the Working Group to continue our work and focus attention in the next year on specific targeted action items. Specifically, we recommend the Advisory Board authorize the Working Group to devote attention to the following priorities:

- Develop a marketing plan between NDNU, the Chamber of Commerce, and the City for selling and promoting NDNU memorabilia in local stores
- Partner to pursue the installation of NDNU banners on Ralston Avenue to create and encourage a “University-town” feeling
- Belmont recognize outstanding student achievements with a proclamation from the City Council and/or on the city website.
- Belmont include NDNU faculty and students as performers and/or artists at the Art & Wine Festival
- Encourage the City to direct economic development efforts toward student-oriented services (i.e., bookstores, coffee shops, affordable restaurants that stay open past 10:00 p.m.)

- NDNU work with the neighborhood association board (NAB), the city wide delegation of neighborhood presidents, to share information and ideas
- Invite students to dinners at homes of community members

The Advisory Board is asked to approve this list, add to the list, or provide alternative direction to the Working Group. After the Advisory Board action, the report and recommended priorities will be presented to the Belmont City Council.

Please note, this list is not intended to signify the exclusive efforts of the Working Group, but the priorities for focused attention over the next year. The Working Group will continue to look for opportunities to enhance collaboration, make Belmont more student-friendly, and foster more personal interaction between the NDNU community and the citizens of Belmont.

The Working Group will continue to meet throughout the year and recommends the Advisory Board meet annually or as needed.

Attachments:

- A. Partnership Agreement
- B. Working Group Notes
- C. NDNU Contributions to the Community