

## Notre Dame Hallmarks

Hallmarks are the essential **characteristics, values** and **activities** of a Notre Dame learning community. The Hallmarks emerged in response to the question from both the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and their co-workers: **“What makes a learning community a Notre Dame Learning Community?”** The Sisters and the learning communities began to explore this question in 2003. The culmination of these discussions — seven Hallmarks that concisely and beautifully express the values of a Notre Dame Learning Community.

1. ***We proclaim by our lives even more than by our words that God is good.***
  2. ***We honor the dignity and sacredness of each person.***
  3. ***We educate for and act on behalf of justice and peace in the world.***
  4. ***We commit ourselves to community service.***
  5. ***We embrace the gift of diversity.***
  6. ***We create community among those with whom we work and with those we serve.***
  7. ***We develop holistic learning communities which educate for life.***
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### **We proclaim by our lives even more than by our words that God is good.**

- We believe, even in the midst of today’s reality, that God is good, and we stand firm in our commitment to honor that goodness in ourselves, in others, and in our world.
- We value life as an on-going spiritual journey of deepening relationships with self, others and God.
- We make relevant to the life of our contemporary learning community the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur history and the spirit of St. Julie Billiart. We seek to live this heritage by allowing it to influence our actions in today’s world.
- We create decisions and policies that reflect the mission and values of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and that are sensitive to the various stakeholders.
- We make decisions respecting, and informed by, the gospel values of our Catholic traditions and teachings.

### **We honor the dignity and sacredness of each person.**

- We develop and appreciate relationships that respect individual differences.
- We create environments that encourage the development of the whole person.
- We dedicate time, space, and personnel in support of the individual’s spiritual/personal journey.

### **We educate for and act on behalf of justice and peace in the world.**

- We educate on behalf of justice and are willing to take socially responsible actions against injustice (e.g., issues of discrimination against women and racial discrimination).
- We ground our action on behalf of justice in the spiritual practice of reflection-action-reflection.
- We infuse classroom experience with global perspectives and integrate classroom learning with civic and cultural interactions.
- We live and act with reverence for the earth and the environment.
- We commit ourselves to create just systems and relationships within our learning community.
- We make conscious the effect our decisions and actions will have on the lives of the poor by making choices which are rooted in the gospel.
- We foster responsible global citizenship and to that end we commit ourselves to the practice of dialogue, nonviolence and conflict resolution.

### **We commit ourselves to community service.**

- We integrate service-learning (community-based learning) into the academic curriculum and co-curricular activities.

- We ground our service in the spiritual practice of reflection-action-reflection, and we incorporate this process into our service-learning commitments.

**We embrace the gift of diversity.**

- We welcome to our community people of diverse cultures, ethnicity, race, socio-economic circumstances, gender, age, sexual orientation and faith traditions.
- We develop educational programs which expand our knowledge and understanding of the diversity in our world community and which celebrate the richness of that heritage.
- We initiate strategies and support services which respect individual learning styles and which build the self-esteem of each student.

**We create community among those with whom we work and with those we serve.**

- We remember and honor the legacy of friendship between the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur co-foundresses Julie Billiart and Francoise Blin de Bourdon, and we foster a spirit of friendship as foundational to our learning community relationships.
- We value and implement community-building activities, both social and spiritual, between and among all members of our learning community.
- We design and foster collaborative processes wherever possible; we ground decision-making in active participation and the principle of subsidiarity.
- We create interactive and collaborative educational experiences.
- We create an atmosphere of open and direct communication.

**We develop holistic learning communities which educate for life.**

- We design and implement academically excellent educational experiences.
- We create curricular/co-curricular interactions that facilitate student-centered learning/teaching environments.
- We actively support the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, psychological and social growth of the members of our learning community.
- We provide an environment and appropriate training for leadership development.
- We foster educational activities that develop self-directed learners capable of self-evaluation, critical thinking and creative responses to life situations.
- We work with and within a risk-taking and flexible organization which exhibits compassionate and socially responsible actions in response to issues of justice, bases its curriculum on cross-cultural perspectives and understandings and respects and explores the unique and complementary roles and gifts of women and men in society.