



November 21, 2023

Dear Colleagues and Students,

This letter was slated to go out to you next Monday, but given the article in today's *Observer*, I decided I should send it now.

In August, I announced at the College's annual Forum that the Board of Trustees had approved an update to the Saint Mary's College non-discrimination policy. This update includes a shift in our language about who we will consider for admission as well as about how we will support employees across the continuum of gender expression. In terms of admission, beginning in Fall 2024, Saint Mary's will consider undergraduate applicants whose sex assigned at birth is female or who consistently live and identify as women.

We are still determining the practices that will follow from the policy. Earlier this year, I identified a group of individuals to serve on the President's Task Force for Gender Identity and Expression. This group is charged with gathering information and best practices from other Catholic colleges and women's colleges and will present their recommendations on student housing considerations, as well as on community education around both Catholic identity and women's college identity—matters that I know are important to all of us.

The revised policy demonstrates our commitment to providing an inclusive environment that responds to the needs of all women. We are by no means the first Catholic women's college to adopt a policy with this scope. In drafting the language for this update, I have relied on the guidance of the Executive Team and others to ensure that our message is not only in line with best practices for today's college students, but that it also encompasses our commitment to operate as a Catholic women's college.

Here at Saint Mary's we have been talking about ourselves as a community energized by difference and shaped by dialogue, civility and mutual respect. Pope Francis advocates for *love* as the appropriate approach to those who are different from ourselves: "Love, then, is more than just a series of benevolent actions. Those actions have their source in a union increasingly directed towards others, considering them of value, worthy, pleasing and beautiful apart from their physical or moral appearances. Our love for others, for who they are, moves us to seek the best for their lives." The revised non-discrimination clause seeks to advance just this kind of community, where we honor the dignity of all persons who work at the College and we follow an inclusive admission process that retains our identity as a Catholic women's college.

I am pleased that our Board approved and fully supports the new policy. This confidence from our Board underscores their commitment that as an employer, Saint Mary's must stand firm in its position as an inclusive community leader, and that as educators, we should continue to create an environment where all women belong and thrive. The policy can be found on the Saint Mary's College website (in the footer on every page); however, you can also find it here, below my email signature. If you have any questions about the updated non-discrimination policy, please reach out to a member of the Executive Team.

Thank you, in advance, for your support of this revised policy. I return, as I close, to what you might be thinking has become my personal refrain, and perhaps it has: what kind of community do we want to be, with and for each other?

Sincerely,



Katie Conboy, Ph.D.  
*President*

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## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Saint Mary's College is a Catholic women's college. Saint Mary's considers for admission undergraduate applicants whose sex is female or who consistently live and identify as women. Saint Mary's College undergraduate admission policies are informed by Title IV of the Education Amendments of 1972, which allows for single sex admission policies in institutions that have historically served women. Graduate degree programs are open to all.

The mission of Saint Mary's College is to empower women, through education, at all stages in life. Essential to this mission is fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus experience. This mission is inherently tied to the vision and values of our founders and sponsors, the Sisters of the Holy Cross. Through these values, Saint Mary's is committed to respecting the dignity of each person and valuing what each individual brings to our community.

Outside of the specific undergraduate admission criteria, Saint Mary's does not discriminate in admission, employment, or administration of its programs and activities on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, gender identity, age, disability, genetic information, military service, or any other characteristic or class protected under federal, state or local law. The College complies with all state and federal laws that prohibit discrimination, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Equal Pay Act and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act.

The policy can be found on our website [here](#).



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