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# PRIDE can dance if they want to

## Controversy surrounding PRIDE dance leads administration to rethink policy

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PRIDE can dance if they want to

USD's tagline of "university of inclusion and diversity" was put to the test this week after the student organization PRIDE was denied the right to have a dance. The administration originally told PRIDE the event had to be titled and marketed as a social. After much controversy and debate, the event has now been allowed to move forward as a dance.

LIZ CROSBY/THE VISTA

According to Pamela Gray, the assistant vice president of public affairs, PRIDE, an organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered students, has a written agreement with the university signed in 1991 stating PRIDE would not hold any events such as a dance on campus. Both Pride's faculty advisor, Steve Sumner, and PRIDE President, sophomore Sam Keil, claim they have never seen this written document.

According to Keil, the administration informed her the dance could not be held on the basis that "it goes against the Catholic values of the university because it promotes the lifestyle of homosexuality."

"I guess the most appalling thing is the reasons that they used," Keil said. "Literally every other organization on campus is allowed to have a dance. They used the mission statement of the university to defend the Catholic school card. I think it's ironic they picked a part of the mission statement [about Catholic beliefs] but not the part about inclusion. Either that part needs to be taken out or it should be treated equal."

The dance was approved by Associated Students and the Director of the United Front Multicultural Center, Mayte Perez Franco, but was then rejected by Cynthia Avery, the assistant vice president of student life.

"PRIDE does a lot on campus to get events approved," Keil said. "We face a lot of challenges that other clubs don't face. It's an important issue because the university itself is saying it's okay to be separate but equal."

Since the denial of the dance, many students and faculty members showed their support of PRIDE at last Thursday's A.S. Senate meeting as well as Friday's President's Advisory Board on Inclusion and Diversity (PABID) open forum on diversity. Keil informed those in attendance at both meetings of the recent events concerning PRIDE and urged them to attend the social to support their cause. Discussion and commentary followed the announcement at both meetings.

Gail Perez, a professor of English and Ethnic Studies, said at the PABID meeting that she was going to file a form against the university for a bias-related incident.

"As a professor this really violates my teaching," Perez said. "If we are taught as a faculty to teach about the mission of the university in social justice, it seems to me this policy is incompatible with our mission. You cannot attack one group and everyone else is fine. We are all in danger when this happens. It makes depression and suicide more likely and legitimizes intolerance on our campus. Since when is persecuting youth a Catholic value?"

Senior C Marie Holloway, an open lesbian and member of PRIDE, also shared concerns. "When will the university explicitly say we accept all people regardless of sexuality? I pay the same tuition every straight student here pays. If the university wants to keep acting this way, I should get a refund on part of my tuition." USD representative Pamela Gray said "the university has had a longstanding agreement with PRIDE that events like the dance would not be allowed on the university campus. What I would like to think is we are now at a place to have a conversation to agree that PRIDE has the same opportunities as all other students have."

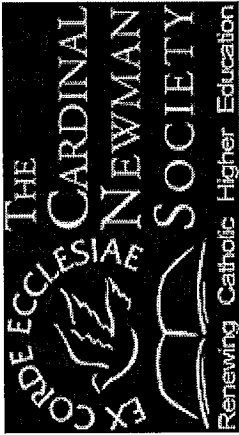
Keil, Sumner, Vazquez and Monsignor Dillabough met Tuesday afternoon to discuss the issues at hand. It was decided that PRIDE would be allowed to have the event as a dance. Keil said both Vazquez and Dillabough were supportive of their cause and creating a loving and inclusive campus.

"It's obviously progress but there's still the underlying issue of why we couldn't do it in the first place," Keil said. "Why was there that moment of discrimination? The wounds have not healed yet."

The dance will be held tomorrow in the Student Life Pavilion courtyard from 8 to 11 p.m.

USD's mission statement is as follows: The University of San Diego is a Roman Catholic institution committed to advancing academic excellence, expanding liberal and professional knowledge, creating a diverse and inclusive community, and preparing leaders dedicated to ethical conduct and compassionate service.

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### University of San Diego Approves Homosexual Group's Dance

Categories: 1 Campus Report, University of San Diego | Author: CNSweb | Posted: 10/14/2009 | Views: 1760

**(10/14/09)** Group leader: "we can have a DANCE, not a social mixer, a full-on DANCE!!!!"

The University of San Diego, a Catholic institution of higher education, gave permission to Pride (a campus "alliance" of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered queer and questioning students) to hold a campus dance on Friday, October 9, 2009. According to an e-mail obtained by *California Catholic Daily*, Pride met with the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Vice President for Mission and Ministry to discuss the dance and other issues regarding the group. The two administrators agreed to permit the event on campus. In the e-mail, a student leader wrote to the members of Pride, "we can have a DANCE, not a social or mixer, a full-on DANCE!!!! The University and administration support us and will continue to support us sponsoring a dance on-campus. This is a great step in the direction that we want to go...". By providing a venue for students struggling with homosexual tendencies to pursue romantic relationships, such dances may conflict with Catholic teaching on sexual activity outside of marriage. **Source: California Catholic Daily**

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## CAMPUS NOTES

The Cardinal Newman Society (CNS) Blog

### Gay Group's Dance at Catholic USD Themed "Do Ask, Do Tell"

This Friday (10/22) Catholic University of San Diego will host a dance on campus with a theme mimicking the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy of the U.S. Armed Forces. The event is sponsored by a USD sanctioned group called "PRIDE" which is described on their webpage as "An alliance at the University of San Diego for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered queer and questioning students and their supporters."

The student group also held dance last year (<http://www.cardinalnewmansociety.org/SearchCatholicColleges/UniversityofSanDiego/tabid/116/ct/Details/mid/1174/ItemID/716/Default.aspx>) with the University's permission.

According to PRIDE's events page (<http://www.sandiego.edu/pride/events.php>): "The theme is 'Do Ask, Do Tell.' Please wear your best military gear to show support for our troops. Human Rights Campaign 'Repeal Now!' dogtags will be given to everyone who attends."

Human Rights Campaign is an advocacy organization for "LGBT" issues that works at "both the state and federal level to achieve marriage equality." We learned on HRC's website ([http://www.hrc.org/sites/repealdadt/pdfs/NOH\\_PledgeForm.pdf](http://www.hrc.org/sites/repealdadt/pdfs/NOH_PledgeForm.pdf)) that the organization gives out dog tags in return for work people do lobbying their member of Congress to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell".

If PRIDE gives out HRC dog tags at the dance, they will be at very least creating a scandalous connection between a Catholic university (USD) and an organization that is fundamentally opposed to the Catholic Church's teaching on the sanctity of marriage.

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