

ND Works Quarterly

SEPT/OCT 2022

Campus
news for
faculty
and staff



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HONORED

GRATEFUL

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(Photo by Barbara Johnston/University of Notre Dame)

News

NEWS BRIEFS

University News

NOTRE DAME MAKES HISTORIC COMPENSATION INVESTMENT, SURPASSING \$75 MILLION

In July, citing the perseverance and extraordinary contributions by members of the Notre Dame community over the past two years, President **Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.**, announced a historic \$25 million commitment to increase the base compensation for eligible hourly and salary University staff, faculty and student workers. This is the third component in a three-phase compensation enhancement strategy that the University introduced in April that in total surpasses \$75 million.

The most recent compensation increase took effect Aug. 1 impacting approximately 6,000 Notre Dame employees in South Bend and around the world.

“The work of Notre Dame is done by you, the dedicated faculty and staff I am proud to call colleagues,” Father Jenkins said. “We are grateful for your daily efforts to serve our students, our community and the world, and I am delighted that we are able to make this momentous investment in you.”

Eligible faculty and staff received a 3 percent raise while staff hourly wages were raised to a minimum of \$17.50 per hour. Student hourly employees are now paid a starting wage of \$15 per hour.

Executive Vice President **Shannon Cullinan** explained the three phases of the University’s compensation enhancement package. “Phase 1 of this plan occurred in April when the University funded a \$14 million one-time employee appreciation monetary award for eligible employees. In Phase 2, \$50 million was distributed in the largest merit pool in the history of the University. The changes announced for Phase 3 total \$25 million. The overall investment in recurring compensation from Phases 2 and 3 is the largest in the University’s 180-year history.

“We often speak of Notre Dame as being a force for good in the world,” Cullinan said. “Investing in our faculty, staff and students is an extension of those values and the right thing to do for our most valuable asset, our people.”

In their letter to campus, the executive officers also noted that this increase will have no impact on student tuition or financial aid.

John McGreevy, the Charles and Jill Fischer Provost, concluded: “Our faculty and staff make it possible for Notre Dame to achieve its mission: to educate the next generation of leaders and make discoveries that change the world. This was never truer than during the past two years. From pivoting to remote teaching and work, to rallying behind our return to campus, their perseverance has been remarkable. We are grateful.”

NOTRE DAME RECEIVES RECORD-BREAKING \$244 MILLION IN ANNUAL RESEARCH AWARDS

During fiscal year 2022, researchers at Notre Dame received \$244 million in research award funding, surpassing the previous record of \$222.7 million set in fiscal year 2021. This total includes nearly 800 separate awards from a broad array of federal, foundation and industry sources.

“Credit belongs to our talented faculty, who use this funding to help the University live out its mission to be a force for good in the world,” said **Robert J. Bernhard**, vice president for research and professor of aerospace and mechanical engineering. “Our researchers translate these dollars and cents into deeper understandings of ourselves and others and into new discoveries — in global development, nanoelectronics, wireless technology and hypersonics research, to name a few — that are improving lives around the globe.”

The largest research award of the year came from Lilly Endowment Inc. with a transformative \$35 million grant that will enable the University to expand its regional focus to challenges of human and environmental health. The core of this expanded emphasis will be within the newly expanding East Campus Research Complex. It will connect researchers and organizations throughout the region who are working to build effective human and environmental health programs.

“Enhanced research strength and impact are crucial to the University’s success, and I’m delighted to recognize the achievements and hard work of our researchers,” said **John McGreevy**, the Charles and Jill Fischer Provost.

Overall, at 44.2 percent of the total, federal funding was the largest source of research awards at the University. An additional 41.9 percent came from foundations and other non-federal sponsors, while 13.9 percent of award dollars came from industry.

The past year’s awards also helped Notre Dame expand its global footprint, with 145 awards, totaling \$93 million, supporting research in 61 different countries.



Employees smile for a photo at the academic year opening picnic. (Photo by **Peter Ringenberg**/University of Notre Dame)

Notre Dame introduces two new technologies for enhanced safety



The Notre Dame Police Department (NDPD) has introduced two new technologies to better protect and serve the campus community: body cameras for all sworn officers and a free smartphone app that provides a hub for one-touch calls to emergency dispatch and other safety features for students, faculty and staff.

The body cameras — developed by Axon Enterprise, a firm that develops technology for law enforcement, the military and general public — are now integrated with previously installed dashboard cameras in the University’s police cars.

“The increasing use of body cams in law enforcement is a positive development for the safety of our officers and the individuals with whom they interact,”

Mike Seamon, Notre Dame’s vice president for campus safety and University operations, said. “The cameras also help increase transparency and accountability as well as provide better documentation to support accounts from both officers and community members.”

“Body cameras have become a vital tool in law enforcement, and in benchmarking with other college and university police departments, we learned that many have or soon will be adding them,” NDPD Chief of Police **Keri Kei Shibata** said. “Safety is our top priority at Notre Dame, and the addition of body cams to go along with dash cams and the 1,600 video cameras positioned on campus will create a still safer campus environment.”

The ND Safe app is available to all Notre Dame students, faculty and staff and will allow users to access multiple resources all in one place, including one-touch calls to Notre Dame police, St. Joseph County’s 911 center and non-emergency assistance. Within the app, users can activate the Virtual Walkhome feature, which allows a police dispatcher to monitor their walk to or from a residence hall or other locations on or off campus.

Other ND Safe features include FriendWalk, designed to share a user’s location with friends or family; Mobile Blue Light, which shares the user’s location with NDPD; and Social Escape, a self-scheduled call to the user’s mobile phone as a means to leave an uncomfortable or potentially threatening situation.

“Safety is our top priority,” Seamon said. “These new and tangible tools join the many other measures we have put in place to ensure that NDPD has the latest technology available to make the Notre Dame campus as safe as possible for all who live, work and visit here.”

NDPD activated the body cameras in the summer, and ND Safe is now available to the campus community via the ND Mobile app or as a stand-alone app.

Download ND Safe App

Google

Apple

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Athletics

New leaders, new era in athletics

This year ushered in a number of new head coaches as well as role changes in Notre Dame Athletics. Here's a rundown of who's who on the field, on the court, in the pool and on the course.



Marcus Freeman was named the 30th Dick Corbett Head Football Coach on Dec. 3, 2021, after serving as a defensive coordinator. Prior to coming to South Bend, Freeman

spent four seasons as defensive coordinator at Cincinnati. During his time with the Bearcats, he was named the 2020 247Sports.com Defensive Coordinator of the Year and 2020

Broyles Award Finalist, along with being recognized as a nominee for the Broyles Award in 2019 and 2018.

Freeman joined the Bearcats staff after a four-year stint at Purdue, during which he coached linebackers and served as the Boilermakers' co-defensive coordinator in 2015. Freeman coached linebackers at Kent State in 2011-12 and began his career as a graduate assistant coach at his alma mater, Ohio State, in 2010.

Freeman is just the third Notre Dame head coach to have been selected in the NFL Draft and is the first since Ara Parseghian was drafted by the Pittsburgh Steelers in 1947. He is the 23rd Notre Dame head coach to have Division I playing experience and the first since Tyrone Willingham.

Salima Rockwell, a four-time national champion assistant coach and three-time All-American, was named the seventh head coach in Notre Dame volleyball history.

Rockwell coached nine years at her alma mater, Penn State University, as an associate head coach, assistant coach and director of operations over two different stints in Happy Valley (2006-2009 and 2015-2017). As a student-athlete, Rockwell was a three-time All-American setter for the Nittany Lions from 1991 to 1994.

Between her two coaching tours at Penn State, Rockwell spent five seasons (2009-2013) at the University

of Texas and was the assistant coach at Oregon State. A native of Pittsburgh, Rockwell began her coaching career as an assistant at the University of Pittsburgh from 2001 to 2003.

Rockwell has served as a color commentator for ESPN, Fox Sports, Big Ten Network and CBS Sports.

Chris Lindauer is the Peterson Family Head Swimming Coach, following 13 seasons with Louisville, most recently as associate head coach. As a student-athlete at Louisville, Lindauer was an All-American and four-time Big East champion.

Lindauer also served as assistant head coach and head conditioning coach for Cardinal Aquatics, where he coached and mentored age group swimmers.

Shawn Stiffler is the 22nd head coach of Notre Dame's baseball program, following 10 years at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU).

Prior to his time at VCU, Stiffler was an assistant coach at his alma mater, George Mason, for five years. He was drafted by the Minnesota Twins after playing at George Mason and was an honorable mention All-American out of Somerset High School in 1997.

Kyle Lynne Demeter is the new head golf professional for Notre Dame's Warren and Burke Golf Courses where she oversees daily operations. Demeter served 18 years on Notre Dame's women's golf staff,

first as an assistant and then as associate head coach.

Demeter will serve as the University's representative on the NCAA golf committees and the United States Golf Association as well as all other golf governing bodies and associations.

Caroline Powers Ellis is the head women's golf coach after spending six seasons as an assistant coach at her alma mater, Michigan State. There, she was an All-American and the 2013 Big Ten Golfer of the Year.

Powers Ellis completed her career as the school's all-time record holder in scoring average (74.26) and owns three of the top four single-season scoring averages in program history.

John Handrigan, who served as the head coach of Notre Dame men's golf for the past five seasons, was named the first Notre Dame director of golf in June, assuming a leadership role over both programs at the University. Handrigan is just the seventh head coach in the 89 years of Irish men's golf.

Handrigan finished his fifth season with the Irish last year. He came to Notre Dame following a six-year tenure at the University of Florida, where he served as the Gators' associate head coach in 2016-17 after a stint in Gainesville as an assistant coach.

Source: und.com

2022 United Way Campaign

for faculty and staff

October 10 to December 2

United Way supports programs in our community that have been vetted and regularly show measurable outcomes.

More information coming soon.

Visit und.com for full bios

People

Familiar faces, new places

An inspired and humble perspective greets a new academic year at Notre Dame with several new leaders in service. Those include five whose names and faces you'll recognize, but with fresh titles and ideas for their respective areas of the University.

Meeting on the steps of the Main Building following the Mass held to celebrate the opening of the academic year, this group exchanged enthusiasm for the year ahead — each one with similar sentiments about their new leadership appointments at Notre Dame.

HONORED

JOHN MCGREEVY

Charles and Jill Fischer Provost

"Notre Dame's aspiration to become one of the world's leading research universities while sustaining and deepening its Catholic identity is one of the most exciting projects in global higher education," **John McGreevy** said in accepting his new role.

"Given the many challenges we face in our nation, the Church and the world, this project has never been more important. I am honored to assist in this effort and look forward to working with faculty, staff and students to advance the work of Notre Dame."

McGreevy, a distinguished historian and former dean of the College of Arts and Letters, began his tenure as the Charles and Jill Fischer Provost of the University on July 1, the sixth provost at Notre Dame since the position was established in 1970. As Notre Dame's chief academic officer, McGreevy is responsible for the overall operation of the academic enterprise, including the faculty, colleges, schools, institutes, centers, libraries and student advising.

The Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History, McGreevy served as the department's chair from 2002 to 2008 and then for the next decade as the I.A. O'Shaughnessy Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, Notre Dame's oldest and largest college with 20 departments, more than 500 faculty members, over 2,800 undergraduates and some 1,000 graduate students.

As dean, McGreevy advanced the college in multiple ways, including significantly strengthening the social sciences; increasing the number of arts and letters majors writing a senior thesis by more than 30 percent, which in turn has led to more undergraduate research; introducing the nationally recognized 5+1 Postdoctoral Fellowship Program giving students who finish their doctoral degree in five years a year of post-

doctoral funding; starting new doctoral degree programs in Spanish, Italian, anthropology and sacred music; expanding programs and departments in the arts; enhancing existing elite programs in the humanities; growing the Institute for Latino Studies; and creating more interdisciplinary curricula across the University, including a major in neuroscience and minors in computing and digital technologies and business economics. He served as co-chair of the University's most recent core curriculum review.



"Notre Dame's aspiration to become one of the world's leading research universities while sustaining and deepening its Catholic identity is one of the most exciting projects in global higher education."

McGreevy earned his master's and doctoral degrees in history from Stanford University after graduating magna cum laude from Notre Dame in 1986 with a bachelor's degree in history. He also taught for a year at Hales Franciscan High School in Chicago. Before returning to his alma mater in 1997, he completed a Lilly Foundation postdoctoral fellowship in humanities at Valparaiso University in the 1992-93 academic year and served as the Dunwalke Associate Professor of American History and Literature at Harvard University.

McGreevy is the author of four books, including the recently published "Catholicism: A Global History from the French Revolution to Pope Francis."

EXCITED

HEATHER CHRISTOPHERSEN

Vice President for Human Resources

Heather Christophersen was appointed vice president of Human Resources in July, taking over the responsibilities for the comprehensive support and development of all Notre Dame employees, directing the work of benefits and compensation, people services, strategic consulting, talent acquisition, learning and development, staff diversity and inclusion, and analytics and institutional equity teams.

Prior to her appointment to vice

president of HR, Christophersen served as the associate vice president of advancement services in Notre Dame's Office of Development. In this role she led the operational units of development, including the internal engagement, organizational strategy (finance and talent management), information technology and services, research and prospect strategy, gift management, and stewardship teams.

"I am thrilled and honored to serve Notre Dame, a place I deeply love, in this new capacity," Christophersen said. "I am most excited for the opportunity to have a positive impact on our talented and dedicated employees and, together with partners across campus, to continue

our efforts to ensure Notre Dame is a great place to work."

Prior to her role in University Relations, Christophersen served as director of maintenance at the University for four years, managing the maintenance operations of 190 campus buildings and more than 11 million gross square feet. Previously at Notre Dame, she was the director of strategic planning, director of sustainability and director of service programs in the Notre Dame Alumni Association.

Christophersen earned a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Notre Dame and a Master of Business Administration degree from Northwestern University's Kellogg School

of Management. Between time spent at her undergraduate alma mater, she worked in the chemicals industry for more than 11 years for BP Chemicals and Elevance Renewable Sciences in a variety of roles in manufacturing, logistics, asset management and business operations.

"I am most excited for the opportunity to have a positive impact on our talented and dedicated employees and, together with partners across campus, to continue our efforts to ensure Notre Dame is a great place to work."



People

HUMBLED

ANNE GRIFFITH
Vice President for
University Enterprises
and Events

“I am humbled and delighted for the opportunity to lead University Enterprises and Events, an extraordinarily talented and diverse team, in serving Our Lady’s University,” **Anne Griffith** said. “I look forward to leading my dedicated and caring colleagues in UEE to new heights through innovation, collaboration and an enduring commitment to Notre Dame’s mission.”

As vice president for University Enterprises and Events (UEE), Griffith will provide strategic executive leadership to Notre Dame’s hospitality, licensing and merchandising programs, leading 30 business units across campus including the Hammes Notre Dame Bookstore, the Morris Inn, McKenna Conference Center, retail and residential dining, and licensing. UEE also plays an integral role in most major campus events, including commencement, football gameday hospitality and concerts in Notre Dame Stadium. Griffith served as assistant vice

president for UEE for the year before her elevation to vice president and led the division’s business development, finance, technology, talent acquisition and management, marketing, continuous improvement and operational units. Before joining UEE, Griffith spent two years as director in the Office of the President and also took on additional responsibilities in the COVID-19 Response Unit. She spent the previous nine years in the Office of Development, serving as the senior director of the East Region, director

“I look forward to leading my dedicated and caring colleagues in UEE to new heights through innovation, collaboration and an enduring commitment to Notre Dame’s mission.”

of research and prospect management and assistant director of regional analysis.



Griffith earned her bachelor’s degree in business administration from Purdue University and an MBA from Loyola University. Before coming to Notre Dame in 2010, she held leadership positions with Baxter Healthcare, the Hartford Insurance Group, Johnson & Johnson and Procter & Gamble.

GRATEFUL

MICKI KIDDER
Vice President for
Undergraduate Enrollment

“Ensuring that a Notre Dame education is accessible to future cohorts of talented students, our leaders of tomorrow, and to do so at a university I love so deeply, is a privilege and honor.”

Micki Kidder now leads the undergraduate enrollment team in building and deepening relationships with prospective students and enrolling and supporting scholars who value a Catholic-centered education. The division is home to several units that support students from the beginning of their college search to final year on campus, including the Offices of Pre-College Programs, Undergraduate Admissions, Financial Aid, Student Accounts and Student Shared Services. With this appointment, University President **Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.**, made the leadership of the Enrollment Division a vice presidential position that will report to the president, with a secondary reporting line to the provost. Prior to her new position, Kidder served three years as the inaugural leader of University Enterprises and Events, during which she developed a division-wide strategic plan to reimagine the University’s hospitality offerings and ensure that students, staff, faculty, alumni and campus visitors enjoy a distinctive and inclusive Notre Dame experience that reflects both the University’s rich traditions as well as the vibrancy and energy of today’s campus. An innovative and strategic leader in building diverse and inclusive cultures, Kidder created the Embrace

initiative within UEE and has been a featured speaker at national conferences, including for the Council for Advancement and Support of Education and the ASU+GSV Summit. Previously a member of Notre Dame’s University Relations senior management team as associate vice president and executive director of development, Kidder played a key role in the University’s fundraising efforts, including leadership of the individual giving, athletics advancement, annual giving and advancement services teams. Kidder first joined the University in 2004, serving in roles in the Offices of the President and Executive Vice President, where she managed major campus-wide initiatives such as the University’s Strategic Emergency Preparedness and Response Protocol and Office of the Board Secretariat. Kidder is a 2000 graduate of the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University and is a certified public accountant. She holds a certificate of education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and earned her Master of Business Administration degree from Notre Dame’s Mendoza College of Business in 2019. Kidder also serves as a term assistant teaching professor of management and organization in Mendoza. Kidder said: “I am humbled to serve Our Lady’s University in this new capacity, and grateful for Don Bishop and earlier predecessors for their strategic and selfless leadership. Ensuring that a Notre Dame education is accessible to future cohorts of talented students, our leaders of tomorrow, and to do so at a university I love so deeply, is a privilege and honor.”



HONORED

REV. HUGH R. PAGE JR.
Vice President for Institutional Transformation and
Advisor to the President

The **Rev. Canon Hugh R. Page Jr.** now serves as the University’s inaugural vice president for institutional transformation and advisor to the president. In his new role, Page will serve as a strategic leader working closely with the president and University leadership to create and coordinate an integrated diversity, equity and inclusion strategy centrally and across the various divisions, colleges and schools. “This is an exciting step in the University’s ongoing commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, and I am honored to be the first person selected for this new role,” he said. “We must be intentional and creative in investing our energies and resources if we are more fully to become an inclusive and welcoming community — one where a commitment to justice and love animates all transformational endeavors. I look forward to working with Father Jenkins, University leaders, faculty, staff, students, alumni and other partners to achieve our goals.” Page, a professor of theology and Africana studies, was appointed vice president and associate provost for institutional transformation and leadership development in 2021. His major responsibilities include administrative supervision of the Center for Social Concerns, Notre Dame Scholars’ Program, Balfour-Hesburgh Scholars Program, AnBryce Scholars Initiative, Transformational Leaders Program, TRIO Programs, Academic Community Engagement, Notre Dame Learning and domestic gateways. He served as Notre Dame’s vice president and associate provost for

undergraduate affairs from 2013 to 2021 and was dean of the University’s First Year of Studies for 14 years. During this time, he helped create the University’s Moreau First Year Experience course sequence. He has also served as associate dean for undergraduate studies in Notre Dame’s College of Arts and Letters and director of the African and African American Studies Program. He was instrumental in the development of the latter into the Department of Africana Studies, which he later chaired from 2012 to 2015, and has been involved in numerous diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. Page will report to Father Jenkins and assist in formulating and leading the implementation of a broad strategy around diversity and inclusion, monitor progress on that plan, convene diversity leaders, anticipate challenges and work with units to catalyze structural and cultural change that will serve the University’s ideals around diversity and inclusion. He will advise the president and University leadership and serve as a public University representative to constituencies outside the immediate campus community. An Episcopal priest, Page is an honorary canon of the Cathedral of St. James, Diocese of Northern Indiana. He holds a bachelor’s degree in history from Hampton University, two master’s degrees from the General Theological Seminary in New York, a doctorate in ministry from the Graduate Theological Foundation, and master’s and doctoral degrees in Near Eastern languages and civilizations from Harvard University. He joined the Notre Dame faculty in 1992.



“This is an exciting step in the University’s ongoing commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, and I am honored to be the first person selected for this new role.”

Construction



(Photos by Matt Cashore/University of Notre Dame)

The Wellness Center expansion

By Natalie Davis Miller, NDWorks

The Wellness Center is nearing completion of an expansion project that has lengthened the building on both the north and south ends, bringing much-needed patient care space for additional exam rooms, a larger physical therapy room, and well-being services. Visitors entering through the main entrance will notice updated furniture, a paint refresh and new carpeting/flooring, as well as an expanded pharmacy that includes a large over-the-counter retail space with a separate waiting area for customers and additional consultation rooms. The building maintains its original main entrance and drive-thru window.

The physical therapy area was updated with additional patient care space as well as access to more equipment and offices for staff.

A new well-being resources service area includes a separate waiting area



and room for wellness coaches and emotional well-being professionals.

“The newly expanded Wellness Center will provide even more opportunities for faculty, staff and their families to improve their

overall health and well-being,” said **Denise Murphy**, senior director of compensation and benefits in Human Resources.

When the Wellness Center opened in 2012, it was the first medical facility of its kind on a university campus. It provides a full suite of health services to faculty, staff and their eligible dependents. The center is managed by Premise Health.

“My thanks to Premise Health for their partnership through the years and for a steadfast commitment to advancing enhanced health and wellness services to our campus community,” said **Heather Christophersen**, vice president of human resources.

The Wellness Center will celebrate the expansion completion with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday, Sept. 30 at 3:30 p.m., with facility tours from 3:45 to 5:00 p.m.

WELLNESS CENTER EXPANSION FACTS

8,249	20
original Wellness Center square footage	staff in 2012
12,764	50
new Wellness Center square footage	staff in 2022
5	900+
treatment rooms added	original pharmacy square footage
6	1,700
offices for emotional well-being	new pharmacy square footage

Construction

Campus construction updates

NEW RESEARCH BUILDING

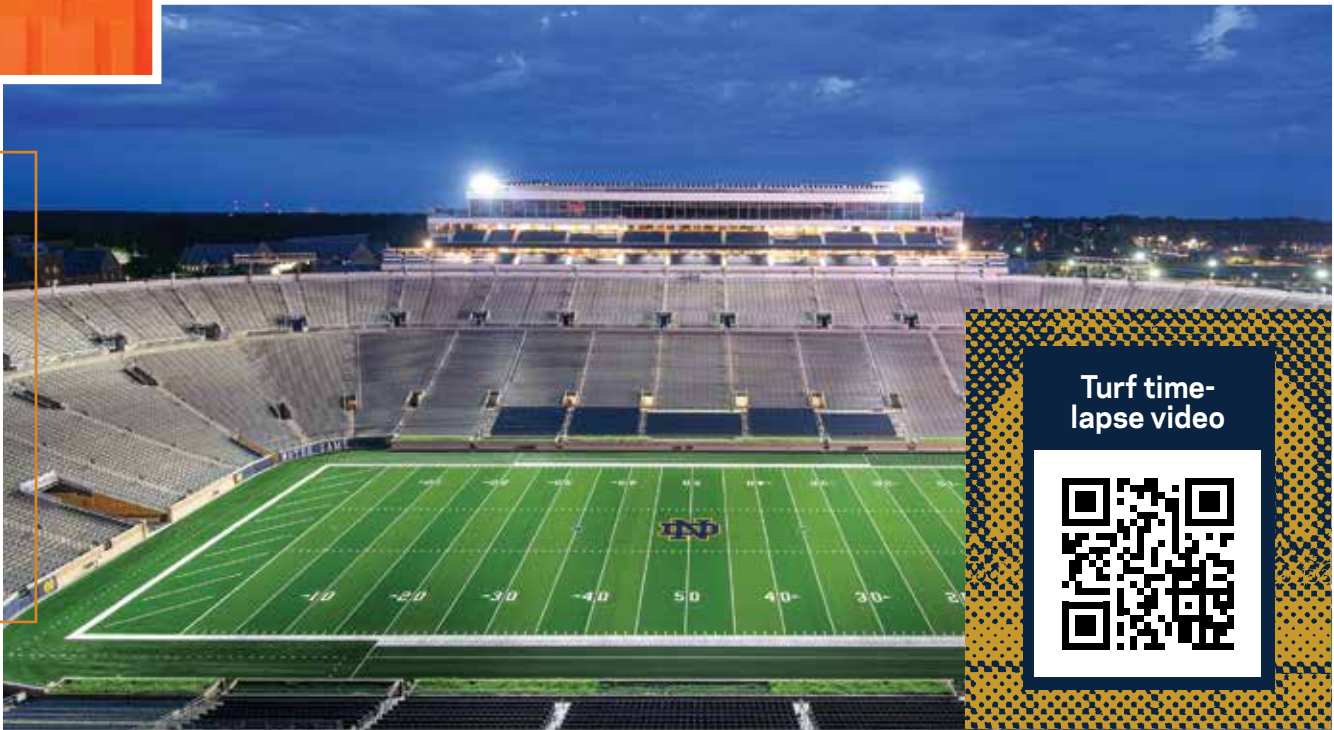


NEW MEN'S RESIDENCE HALL

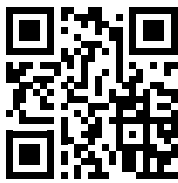
► New construction continues around the Wellness Center. Crews are working on the foundation of the new men's residence hall to the east of the Wellness Center while work continues on the new research building to the south.

NOTRE DAME STADIUM UPDATES TURF

► Notre Dame Stadium was recently updated with new FieldTurf. The installation of the artificial turf occurred during two weeks in July. University photographer **Matt Cashore** caught the action in a time-lapse video.



Turf time-lapse video



HYDRO FACILITY DEDICATED

► Notre Dame dedicated a new hydroelectric facility, ND Hydro, along the St. Joseph River during a ceremony Monday, Sept. 12, in downtown South Bend. Situated along the riverbed beneath Seitz Park, the 2.5-megawatt facility started generating power for the University in May and has operated at about 70 percent capacity since then based on spring and summer river levels. As a source of clean, renewable energy, the state-of-the-art facility will generate an estimated 7 percent of the electricity for campus and offset 9,700 tons of carbon dioxide annually, benefiting both the University and surrounding community.



Read more and watch video





I Am ND

I am :

Olivia Mitchell



By Natalie Davis Miller, NDWorks

Olivia Mitchell is the “human Google” when it comes to all things Notre Dame football. If someone has a question about the program, she has an answer or knows who has the answer. And if you’re watching either a home or an away game, she’s had her hand in it. Mitchell is in her third year as the director of operations for the Notre Dame football program. This means coordinating a variety of administrative details from top to bottom: pre-season camps, practice arrangements, summer camps, team travel and the annual coaches’ clinic — just to lightly touch on her responsibilities. She also supervises an operations staff and student workers. Managing operations involves great attention to detail. A typical day during the season means a plethora of meetings preparing for the game ahead. The players start

the day as early as 6:15 a.m. and wrap up at 7:45 p.m. Mitchell manages a calendar that, long term, includes projecting games a few years out and in the short term involves making sure the team is loaded on a bus and ready to go. “Schedules are very, very detailed — whether that’s a hotel schedule or a bus schedule, the schedule for the team is down to the minute,” she said. “That’s one thing that I had to adjust to when I first came into football operations. You don’t round up or down. If the time is 3:15, it’s 3:15 — on the dot.” Football operations is responsible for all the materials that point players, coaches and staff to where they need to be, from plane seating assignments to the time they need to

be at the hotel. It means flying out to away game sites prior to the game to work with the hotel. It’s about taking care of a group of 170 to 250 people. “It comes down to if you miss one small detail, it can throw off the entire operation,” Mitchell said. “We need to achieve success on Saturday at the game. We are working to make sure that everybody’s goals come together whether we’re on the road or at home.” Mitchell’s journey to football operations started in Chicago, well before the 2016 graduate began coursework at Notre Dame in the Mendoza College of Business. A high school cheerleader for four years, she loved all sports but zeroed in on football. Her father, a Notre Dame and Chicago Bears superfan, helped feed that love for football. “We would sit in our game room on Saturdays and watch Notre Dame, and the Bears on Sundays, and I’d learn more about the game from him,” she said.

There was one football show, “The Game,” that opened her eyes to what would become her future. “There was a female character on that show who was an agent for football players,” Mitchell said. “And I saw her presence, how her character commanded the room and worked in that space traditionally for men. I thought, if she can do it, I can do it. That’s how I learned football was an option for a career.” A visit to the University sealed the deal. “Once I got on campus, I realized that it fit me so well — knowing not only that I wanted to go into football, but the rigorous academics as well. I always expect excellence from myself.” Mitchell immersed herself in the world of Notre Dame football from

“We need to achieve success on Saturday at the game. We are working to make sure that everybody’s goals come together whether we’re on the road or at home.”

(Photo by Barbara Johnston/University of Notre Dame)

the very beginning of her college career. As a first-year student, she took the initiative to email several people in the Athletics Department. Her first response was from the football office. She began an internship as a football recruiting assistant, a position she held for four years. She also supported the team as a cheerleader during years two through four (students couldn’t be cheerleaders in their first year).

Mitchell’s marketing degree added to her success. In her current role, she draws on experience gained in group projects where she and her classmates learned to work toward a specific business goal. “I think in operations specifically, it’s about working with a team and working with different departments. No matter what department is in our building, you have to have great connections and great communication. I think Mendoza does a really good job of putting you in situations where you learn how to do that, with so many different people,” Mitchell said.

Her ascent after graduation began with coordinator of operations, followed by assistant director of football operations for two years before becoming the director. Working within the football program has never been an issue for Mitchell. She is always met with respect from the players,

coaches and staff. “I think it is interesting for people to see someone who looks like me in my position. They aren’t used to it at all. So, I introduce myself with my title so they know that it’s time to go. We have to get it done and I’m the person that needs you to get it done,” Mitchell said. This isn’t always the case outside of the football program, as Mitchell works with outside vendors such as hotels and bus companies. Her method for dealing with resistance is to “kill them with kindness,” a strategy she also learned in her days at Mendoza. “It’s making sure that you build those relationships first. That you exude that confidence and that you know what you’re doing. Sometimes it’s telling them, ‘Hey, I’ve been doing this for a while and this is my team and I know what’s best for them, I know what we expect from them. And we’re asking that same expectation of you,’” Mitchell said. The best part of Mitchell’s job is the players. She gets to watch them mature from a first-year student-athlete who might have “a chip on his shoulder” to a leader who everyone is looking to for answers. “During the off season, we have some of our seniors speak in front of the team. It’s amazing to see their growth, not only as football players but as men,” Mitchell said. Mitchell’s appointment as the director of football operations also represents a growth in the field, not only for women, but for women of color. She is one of a handful of women in this position in Division I football. She is the first Black woman in this position at Notre Dame. “When you’re put in a position such as mine, you don’t think about being the first or one of a few,” Mitchell said. “You really are just grateful for the opportunity. And you know you can do the job because you’ve had the experience to get it done. I think it shows people that a young Black woman can take on a job like this and be successful in it, at one of the most successful football programs in the nation. It fills me with pride to be able to track that path and show people that we can do it.”



I am ...

- a woman in football
- a Notre Dame grad
- growing and learning every day
- a self-care enthusiast
- committed to being an example for what is possible when you set a goal and are relentless in its pursuit