Members present: John Affleck-Graves, Panos Antsaklis, A.J. Bellia, Ryan Brellenthin, Seth Brown, Tom Burish, Laura Carlson, Rev. John Coughlin, O.F.M., Greg Crawford, Stephen Fallon, Mary Frandsen, Glynnis Garry, John Gaski, Nasir Ghiaseddin, Tom Gresik, Paul Huber, Dennis Jacobs, Rev. John Jenkins, C.S.S., Lionel Jensen, Peter Kilpatrick, A. Graham Lappin, John LoSecco, Kelly Martin, Scott Monroe, Nell Newton, Hugh Page, Cathy Pieronek, Rev. Mark Poorman, C.S.C., Joseph Powers, Bill Rayball, Keith Rigby, Grant Schmidt, Jim Seida, Cheri Smith, Greg Sterling, Julianne Turner, Carolyn Woo, Jennifer Younger

Members and Observers excused: Kevin Barry, Dennis Doordan, Kathleen McDonald, John McGreevy, William Nichols, Susan Ohmer, Don Pope-Davis, Ava Preacher, Ann Tenbrunsel, John Welle

Members absent: Robert Bernhard, Neil Delaney, Kathryn Lam, Michael Lykoudis, Chris Maziar, Dale Nees

Guests: Dennis Brown, Assistant Vice President, Office of Public Affairs & Communication, Todd Woodward, Associate Vice President, Office of Public Affairs & Communication

Observers present: Harold Pace,
Observers absent: Brandon Roach, Daniel Saracino

1. Opening prayer: Father Jenkins called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m. and invited Prof. A. J. Bellia, Law School, to give the opening prayer.

2. Approval of minutes: Father Jenkins asked for comments and corrections to the minutes of the September 28, 2009 meeting. Father John Coughlin noted that he had been erroneously identified as a C.S.C. priest; his order is O.F.M. As there were no further comments, Prof. Lionel Jensen moved to accept the minutes as so amended; the motion was seconded by Prof. Carolyn Woo, and approved unanimously.

3. Strategies for positioning the University Academically on the Website: Todd Woodward and Dennis Brown
Father Jenkins welcomed to the Council Todd Woodward and Dennis Brown, from the Office of Public Affairs and Communication, who have been invited to make a presentation to the Council on the current

and future plans for establishing, maintaining and developing the university's position on the web primarily through the university's website. Jenkins noted that Woodward, a 1993 ND graduate, came to the university in 2006 with extensive private sector consulting experience.

Mr. Woodward thanked the Council for the invitation to speak about the ongoing project of the university website. The purpose of the website is to meet the differing information needs of a large and varied audience. There is no simple way to reach all the audiences, which include prospective as well as current audiences of students, staff, faculty and family, and, additionally, general public audiences (peer groups, visitors, media, alumni). The website serves as an 'extranet' for many users, connecting external users with information about ND. It also serves as an 'intranet' to connect in-house users with internal information connected with the operations of the university. There is another 'intranet' service, but the website has proved to be the simple and direct entry for many campus users.

Woodward spoke about the redesign of the front page, which previously had the appearance of a 'link farm' on which users spent very little time and got a minimal experience. The addition of the video carousel now provides users with an immediate interactive experience on the front page. The videos are designed to provide the user with a short, informative clip about ND and possibly even to bring the user back to the site, while also slowing the user down long enough to find more reasons to stay at the site.

Websites as destinations for users are changing, Woodward said. Because of the many other ways of having information streamed to the user-- via social networking sites for instance-- destination websites need to respond innovatively. Currently the ND website averages 800,000 visitors annually; in the last three months, it has averaged 900,000 per month. Of these visitors, nearly half are unique, defined as visiting for the first time in the month. In the last month, over 1 million videos have been streamed, about half of those from ND's video channel and half through sites such as YouTube and Facebook. The top destinations chosen from the ND site are admissions, academics, and the sights and sounds links. In fact, many users who cannot get to South Bend love to look through the various cameras mounted on campus to see how beautiful it is. In January, 2010, a reconstruction of the website will begin, in conjunction with a team of academics.

Referring to his chart, Woodward noted that among peer institutions such as Stanford, Duke and Princeton, ND comes in fourth in unique visitors. One explanation for Stanford's very high numbers may be the frequency with which faculty and staff have established an active presence on the web, creating new materials and 'pushing people back to the home website.' Additionally, faculty work with other companies creates an automatic 'spread-around' of contacts that also pushes users back to the website. For ND, this is a central question: how can we boost our traffic in the next two to three years? Pushing content out onto the web may be the best way to achieve this goal.

Woodward turned the presentation over to Dennis Brown, who spoke about the video portion of the website. Brown said the stories selected for the video carousel focus on campus developments or items deemed newsworthy. Of the standard news criteria-- timeliness, proximity, prominence, oddity,

conflict, suspense, emotions and consequence—timeliness ranks high while suspense and conflict rank low. The selection team has years of experience judging news and developing a standard for the subjective decision of what people will want to hear and see at the ND website. The key to all choices is enhancing the academic reputation of the university, as well as a focus on undergraduate teaching and the Catholic nature of the university. Preference is given to stories which involve research, particularly stories which can be developed with action visuals. Two video series are ND Experts, which uses a faculty member talking about current events, and Academically Speaking, which highlights faculty who've been recently promoted to endowed chairs or full professor. Fourteen faculty will be featured this year. The two man team which produces the website videos has made 125 in the last 2 years.

Woodward concluded the presentation by discussing the future of web-based communications. Users are searching for information as well as 'nesting' or having information streamed to them. Facebook has seen a 200% increase in users; Twitter has increased by 1000%, and Linked In by 100%. The means for getting information is changing rapidly, and the 'content piece' will be a central way of establishing viability. As a university, ND can be a major contributor, with strong content resources both academically and in the area of spirituality.

Woodward sees his goal as making it easier for faculty to disseminate their information onto the web through education of faculty in the tools needed as well as provision of functional tools to accomplish delivery of information. He noted that a primary campus need is an effective blogging tool, as one significant way to establish web presence. In terms of education, he would like to see training for faculty in the many uses of Facebook and Twitter and other such social networking tools. His team will also continue to support those centers, institutes and colleges on campus which want to capture more content and will continue to offer them more places to feature content, such as iTunes U. Further, his team will continue to help coordinate and guide those creating knowledge, to establish protocols, to provide tools for the production, and to assist them to do it well. "We want ND to be effective and also to take advantage of the opportunity present."

Woodward took questions and comments from the council. Prof. John Gaski made a suggestion that the communications department might be able to make use of the fact that ND is ranked #11 on the basis of US News' objective criteria. Gaski encouraged further publicity of this ranking, as a way of influencing change in the subjective perception of ND. Woodward agreed that ND contends with established preconceived notions, particularly among peer institutions, where ND's reputation is undeservedly not what it should be. He noted that he is developing a plan to engage peer provosts and planners, most likely on a one-to-one basis, as personal communication seems to be the most effective way to approach this group. He cautioned that sometimes direct marketing materials can have an adverse effect.

Prof. Greg Sterling asked about the development of search engines, noting that if ND does not appear on the first page of a Google search, then users will not get to the ND website. Woodward noted that when one does google ND, the academic piece comes up first rather than a sports links, which indicates that ND's content is in fact beginning to get out. He said that as faculty and staff continue to push

content out onto the internet, and as ND establishes on the web expertise in more content areas, then ND will more consistently show up on Google searches. He said that search engine optimization is a project that he does not yet have the team to address.

Prof. Paul Huber asked about difficulties with the search feature on the home page, noting that he is concerned that prospective graduate students who have difficult or failed search experiences will be turned away from considering ND. Woodward said that the search process is run by the library, and he offered to check on search procedures.

Prof. Manos Antsaklis reported that when his external colleagues follow up a ND web-link, often they are brought back to a professional page rather than the ND front page. Is there any record of such uses? Woodward said that Google analytics only function on the front page of the website; his team has not yet been able to develop comprehensive analytics for other parts of the site. Antsaklis asked further about faculty use of the front page as an intranet; he would like to be able to track the work of colleagues in other disciplines. In the past, he could use ND Reports for access to this kind of information. Woodward noted that Gordon Wishon, OIT, is working with others to take a look at the intranet, which all agree needs to be improved. Ideally, in-house users would not use the front page for intranet needs. He mentioned that ND Reports is now available in electronic form. In response to a question from Ryan Brellenthin, student government representative, Woodward said that the goal is to use the front page to 'push information out' onto the internet and to curtail use of the front page as an intranet.

Finally, Prof. Antsaklis asked about a review team to evaluate the content which is chosen for the front page. He suggested that as part of the process of redesigning the front page such a team would be useful since this material represents the public face of the university. Woodward said that Dennis Brown is the decision maker on content. Brown acknowledged that it is impossible to make everyone happy, and his team places a high value on balancing content over time. He noted that the front page is composed of more than the video carousel; there are scores of things posted or linked there and many different ways for users to get information.

Prof. Joseph Powers commented on the prominence of the carousel when one visits the front page. He said it presents a technological concern because under certain circumstances, it significantly slows down the loading speed of the website. Woodward agreed that this can be a problem, one which has had to take a back seat to more pressing concerns. He noted that there does exist an alternate site which does not have the video carousel, speeding up the loading process. He said that as websites and the web are ever changing, it is possible that the video carousel will not be a permanent part of the front page; this is a decision that would be made in conjunction with university administration. His team is sensitive to the need to stay on top of the changing web environment.

Grant Schmidt, student representative, said that students overall are very pleased with the new look of the front page. He asked about possible improvements to the calendaring feature, providing easier and more efficient access to the many cultural opportunities on campus. Woodward said a team has been

working for the last three months on assessing calendar tools. The list has been narrowed down to three options. The goal is to have a new calendar up and running by February, 2010, one which is easy to use and easy to post on to, with interactive features.

Prof. John LoSecco: asked about ND courseware efforts. Dennis Jacobs said that ND has a modest 40 courses available via a consortium using Open Sourceware. Brown noted that in media reports on the availability of electronic courses, ND is consistently among the two or three universities reported as having courses available.

Tom Burish, noting that 70% of users are from outside the university, asked about the effectiveness of the front page for prospective faculty and students. Is there a mechanism for evaluating this kind of use? Woodward said that only limited funds have been spent on research (which is different from the business world). Admissions used a consulting group to assess the website for prospective students and found strong results, which was good news.   Woodward noted that Human Resources works closely with administration on website utility for prospective faculty, and they are pleased with the value for faculty. However, family members' needs have yet to be sufficiently addressed on the website.

Woodward noted that until recently, local websites were not even tested for usability before being put up. This culture is changing, but it takes a lot of staff to be really effective. He agreed that better analytics would be useful but are expensive.   He also said that of that 70% outside users figure, a large percentage is likely alumni, but there is no data to confirm that guess.

Prof. Glynnis Garry asked about ways to subscribe to the website besides through social networking sites.   Brown said one idea under consideration is a daily news wire that would be sent to all faculty, staff and students. While some worry that this could become simply spam for users, the idea is being explored as a potential valuable resource for communication. Discussions are underway among his group, the Provost's Office and Student Affairs. Woodward said that pushing information out onto the internet is a significant enterprise, and his team works closely with communications directors, such as Marie Blakey, at all the centers, institutes and colleges. These groups are in control of their own websites, where they create the content and push it out; his team assists in development of these sites.

Father Jenkins thanked members for their attention and questions. He thanked Woodward and Brown for their informative presentation, noting that the university will continue to ramp up the website as a prominent access point for ND information.

4. New Business: There was no new business.

5. Committee meetings:
Father Jenkins announced that the meeting would now disperse to committee meetings. He directed members to the sites for the three meetings.

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 4:20 p.m.