



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

Strategic Academic Planning Committee 2007-2008

Proposal Title: **The Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study**

Principal Investigator: **Mark Roche**

Proposal Participants:

Last Name	First Name	Department
Fuentes	Agustin	Anthropology
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Abstract

Notre Dame has the unique opportunity to create an institute for advanced study that builds on its distinctive Catholic identity and mission to help the academy rethink the role of religion and of ultimate questions in the modern world. Many distinguished institutes for advanced study exist in the academy; all of them presuppose that modernity is moving irreversibly toward secularization. Because history is turning out otherwise, the academy is struggling to catch up intellectually and culturally with the persistence of religion. The Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study will support research that is directed toward, or extends inquiry to include, ultimate questions and questions of value, especially as they engage the Catholic intellectual tradition.

The Institute will have an open intellectual agenda that permits scholars to pursue outstanding research in all areas. It will, however, have two interrelated emphases that are intended to help shape discourse and discovery within the University and the wider academy. The first emphasis is the incorporation of integrative and ultimate questions that often escape scholars enmeshed in the everyday and sometimes narrow practices of their own disciplines. The Institute will encourage artists, professionals, scholars, and scientists to reflect on questions that probe the bases of their discipline or extend beyond their discipline to integrate the insights of other disciplines. The second is the relationship between the descriptive and the normative or between the world as it is and the world as it ought to be. The Institute will encourage fellows to include values in their analyses and to ask how their findings can advance civilization.

The impact and influence of the prototypical institute for advanced study at Princeton shows how an institute for advanced study at Notre Dame could advance the University's ambition of becoming one of the world's preeminent research universities. The presence of such an institute will demonstrate our commitment to the advancement of knowledge. It will help attract superb faculty members to our campus, and the eminent scholarship of such scholars will inspire and energize our Notre Dame colleagues to advance beyond the very good and achieve the remarkable. It will also provide Notre Dame faculty and graduate students an opportunity to focus exclusively on their research. The success and appeal of institutes elsewhere and the potential of such an institute here led a committee of tenured faculty from across the University to recommend last summer that we "establish the Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Studies." Our colleagues understood that by creating such an institute we could advance both our general academic and our distinctively Catholic mission.

The Institute will support up to twenty scholars and five graduate students. It will host seminars and workshops and foster informal exchanges among the fellows to give them the opportunity to explore and test ideas in both formal and informal settings. Applications may come from interested individuals or groups. In some cases, the Institute may initiate an invitation to a select scholar or group of scholars who work on an area that is of pressing concern to the University, the academy, and the world.

The Institute will cultivate the contemplative ideal that is part of the Catholic heritage and an essential factor in the advancement of scholarship. The greatest advances do not occur in solitude, but in the company of others who share a passion for advancement and are open to dialogue. As an ancient rabbi said: "Make yourselves into groups to study the Torah, since the knowledge of the Torah can be acquired only in association with others."