

Faculty Senate
Statement regarding the invitation to President Obama
to be the commencement speaker and to receive an honorary degree

Passed on April 22, 2009

The Faculty Senate supports the decision of Fr. Jenkins to invite President Barack Obama to deliver this year's commencement address and to bestow upon him an honorary Doctor of Laws degree.

The Faculty Senate affirms that the invitation to deliver the commencement address and to receive an honorary degree reflects the University's tradition of honoring our nation's leaders and encouraging dialogue with them on issues important to the extended University community and to the nation.

The Faculty Senate recognizes that President Obama holds positions that are consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church and positions that are inconsistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church and respects both those in the University community who support and those who oppose President Obama's visit for reasons of faith or conscience.

A number of outside groups have suggested that they would use the commencement ceremonies to advance their positions. The Faculty Senate respectfully asks those groups to find other venues to convey their opinions to President Obama or to the University of Notre Dame.