



UD MEN FOR GENDER EQUITY



A Message from Dr. Eric Spina: Gratitude

I appreciate the opportunity to share a few words about the UD Men for Gender Equity (UDMFGE) initiative. My comments must begin with deep gratitude to the founders, especially Laura Bistrek, Lisa Borello, Margie Pinnell and many others who were part of the original planning team, and the Women's Advisory Council for identifying an excellent national model, doing the work to adapt it to UD, launching the initiative, and providing the intellectual and emotional energy necessary to sustain and grow it over the past two years. I am also grateful to the men who have quickly stepped forward to partner with the UDMFGE women leaders to model and advance at UD best practices of allyship, inclusion, education, and professional behavior intended to advance gender equity in ways large and small, visible and invisible.

While there are daily reminders that we have a long way to go to achieve the kind of gender equity that is consistent with the Marianist charism and that will lead to our optimal quality as a University, I regularly see evidence that the UD Men for Gender Equity initiative is making a difference. I see it in the proactive suggestions for the composition of search committees or in the language of position descriptions. I hear the increased advocacy for a change in key policies and practices. And I see male-identified colleagues acknowledging their learning, a greater understanding of existing gender inequities, and the ways that they can use their voices as agents of change. So, yes, while we are not "there" yet, the UD Men for Gender Equity initiative is leading to meaningful progress in hearts, minds, and actions where it matters.

As president, I understand that some progress on gender equity can only be made administratively, and I accept the responsibility for continuing to advance that work, certainly with support and advice from UDMFGE leaders and the President's Commission on the Status of Women.

However, as someone who now has 33 years of higher-education experience, I understand that even a crush of administrative changes and mandates alone will not allow us to achieve our goal of gender equity. Progress must be made at multiple levels and in a variety of ways, and the approach fostered by the UD Men for Gender Equity is critical for our ultimate success.

I pledge my support for this initiative and to our colleagues who are driving it forward, and make myself available to them in whatever ways will make a difference in eliminating gender bias and discrimination. I urge all members of the UD community to do likewise.

The effort to create a more inclusive and equitable environment for women begins with all of us.