

OSCAR “INCLUSION STANDARDS” ARE EXCLUSIONARY

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has decided to institute “inclusion standards” governing eligibility for an Oscar, but not for all demographic categories: people of faith are not included.

Below is Bill Donohue’s letter to the president of the Academy.

April 4, 2022

Mr. David Rubin

President

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

8949 Wilshire Blvd.

Beverly Hills, CA 90211

Dear Mr. Rubin:

In 2024, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences will institute inclusion standards for Oscar eligibility. Those standards are based on race, ethnicity, sex, those with disabilities, sexual orientation and gender identity. Noticeably absent is any mention of religion.

The 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex and national origin; sexual orientation and gender identity were later added. Civil rights laws were also extended at a later date to those with disabilities, as well as veterans.

The Academy’s criteria cover all of these categories save for religion and veteran status. Though I am a veteran, in my capacity as president of the nation’s largest Catholic civil rights organization, I am particularly interested in why

religion—one of the original categories cited in the 1964 Civil Rights Act—was not mentioned by the Academy.

The Academy is a private organization and is thus not bound by these civil rights laws, so there is no legal issue here. But there is an ethical issue. Why, if the Academy is adopting inclusion standards, did it exclude religion as one of its demographic categories?

It is no secret that Hollywood is a gay-friendly community. Nor is it a secret that it is not religion-friendly. Why, then, would the Academy demand that movie production companies do a better job hiring more “LBGTQ+ people” but not *practicing* Catholics and Protestants? Clearly the former are already overrepresented; the latter are not.

I would appreciate hearing your thoughts on this matter. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

cc: Board of Governors