



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on October 26, 2012

Tufts Univ. Bans Christian Group Over Biblical Leadership Requirements

Over the past couple of years higher education institutions across the nation have been targeting student Christian groups that require their leaders to embrace the tenets of biblical Christianity. In mid-October Tufts University in Massachusetts became the latest example of that secular intolerance when the school's student government banned [Tufts Christian Fellowship](#) (TCF), the school's chapter of [InterVarsity Christian Fellowship](#), because of the group's requirement that its leaders embrace the "basic biblical truths of Christianity."



That requirement placed TCF in violation of Tufts' new non-discrimination policy, which forbids discrimination on the basis of among other things, religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression — all areas where TCF's Christian convictions would place it at odds with the governing authority at Tufts.

In September the student governing body recommended that TCF move its belief requirement from its bylaws to its mission statement, which would have placed the group in compliance with the school's policy. When TCF declined to make the change, Tufts' student government stripped the Christian group of its official recognition.

The move means that TCF will no longer be able to use the Tufts name for official campus activities, and its members, all Tufts University students, will not be able to schedule events or reserve space on campus through the university's Office for Campus Life. The group will also not receive any operating funds that approved groups receive from the school.

The group had 10 days to appeal the punishment, and Elaine Kim, one of TCF's leaders, told the campus newspaper, the [Tufts Daily](#), that it intended to do so. "We're deciding to appeal this decision because we feel like just the purpose of our organization is to ... encourage understanding and celebration of each belief [listed in TCF's bylaws], and the best way to fulfill that purpose is to have leaders that are centered on and unified by these beliefs," Kim said. She added that "we feel like we have the right to be selective on the basis of belief for our leaders since we're a student group that is trying to encourage understanding about a faith-based set of beliefs."

In 2000 TCF faced a similar situation after a student complained that she was denied a leadership position because of her views on homosexuality. After going before the school's Committee on Student Life, composed of both students and faculty, the group was able to stave off censure over its beliefs and maintain official recognition.

In the latest attack, reported [World](#) magazine, TCF has been targeted by a group calling itself the Tufts Coalition Against Religious Exclusion, which leveled that charge that TCF was in violation of the school's nondiscrimination policy. In a *Tufts Daily* editorial, Brandon Archambalt, a member of the Tufts Coalition Against Religious Exclusion, accused TCF of "hate speech" because of its biblical beliefs concerning homosexual behavior, and demanded that the school ban the Christian group. The school's



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student judiciary committee agreed, stripping the InterVarsity group of its official recognition. Tufts isn't the only university targeting Christian student groups over their beliefs. As reported by [The Blaze.com](#), Yale University has threatened to ban a men's Christian fraternity, [Beta Upsilon Chi](#) (BYX), for violating the school's anti-discrimination policy because of the group's requirement that members embrace biblical Christianity. "From the fraternity's point of view," reported The Blaze, "faith is central to the organization's structure. As a result, there is only so much compromise that can be made before a line is crossed and certain values must be unfairly given up."

BYX executive director Jason Hoyt told [World](#) magazine that "every fraternity has an ideal candidate that they're looking for in their pledges. Part of ours is that the candidate wants the same things that we want, and what we want is to develop our relationship with Christ."

One of the most high-profile attacks on Christian college groups has occurred at Vanderbilt University, where, as reported by [The New American](#), a complaint by a homosexual student who was dismissed from one of the school's Christian fraternities, prompted the university to launch a crusade in an effort to force Christian groups on campus to toe the line on Vanderbilt's non-discrimination policy.

"The university's policy is a model of political correctness," reported *The New American*, "stating that in addition to all of the other ways in which it does not discriminate against individuals ('on the basis of their race, sex, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability...'), the university also 'does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression....'"

Ultimately the policy led over a dozen Christian groups, some which had been part of Vanderbilt university for many years, to sever their official ties with the school, giving up recognition and some funding.

As for TCF's future at Tufts University, Elaine Kim told the *Tufts Daily* that while she and other TCF leaders could not predict the outcome of the group's appeal of its ban, the group's presence would continue on and around campus. "We don't know what the results are going to be," Kim said, "but we'll continue to read the Bible and pray together."

Photo: Bendetson Hall, on Tufts' Medford/Somerville, Massachusetts, campus, houses the university's Office of Undergraduate Admissions.



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