



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on April 6, 2021

Federal Court: College Officials Deliberately Discriminated Against Campus Christian Group

[The ruling issued on Monday](#) vindicating charges that Wayne State University's board members and administrators intentionally discriminated against InterVarsity Fellowship's campus chapter is a small victory in the long and accelerating war against Christians and their faith.

Judge Robert H. Cleland, a senior federal judge appointed to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan in 1990 by then-President George H. W. Bush, wrote



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that [Wayne State University board members and administrators] violated [InterVarsity Fellowship's local chapter]'s rights to internal management, free speech, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, and free exercise....

Defendants also violated the Establishment Clause [First Amendment to the Bill of Rights, to wit: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

He also dismissed any claims that the board members or administrators had immunity from sanctions over the case, allowing those sanctions to apply to them personally as well as professionally.

InterVarsity Fellowship/USA (IVF) has more than 600 chapters on college campuses in the United States and its chapter at Detroit's Wayne State University (WSU) has been present there for 75 years.

But when board member Ricardo Villarosa decided to stretch the school's anti-discrimination policy in order to prevent the group from having its usual access to campus facilities and events, the chapter enlisted the assistance of the Becket Fund and filed a discrimination lawsuit.

Wayne State University's efforts to be all things to all people all the time are incorporated in its non-discrimination policy:

[Wayne State] embraces all persons regardless of race, color, sex (including gender identity), national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, familial status, marital status,



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height, weight, disability, or veteran status and expressly forbids sexual harassment and discrimination in hiring, terms of employment, tenure, promotion, placement and discharge of employees, admission, training and treatment of students, extracurricular activities, the use of University services, facilities, and the awarding of contracts.

Villarosa apparently thought this gave him enough legal room to kick the group off campus by failing to automatically renew its status back in 2018.

The problem? The chapter only allows Christians to accept leadership roles in the chapter! As Judge Cleland aptly noted, this “small group of Christians ... were denied [campus benefits] because they require their Christian leaders to be ... Christian.”

Villarosa’s actions, wrote Cleland, “strike at the heart” of the First Amendment and are “obviously odious to the Constitution.” He added that Villarosa’s attempts to dictate how the chapter will select its leaders are “categorically barred by the Constitution.”

The lawsuit outlined just how “flexible” the school’s anti-discrimination policy was regarding other non-Christian groups:

1. Club sports teams are free to exclude members who did not fall within their prescribed sex or gender identity categories;
2. Greek letter fraternities and sororities were allowed to exclude members and leaders based on their sex and gender;
3. The Iraqi Student Organization required that its leaders be “dedicated Iraqi students”;
4. The Student Veterans Organization limited its membership and leadership positions to veterans, their dependents, and ROTC members;
5. The Eternal Message association mandated that its leaders “follow its mission” to “introduce people to Islam”;
6. And so on.

Unfortunately, Wayne State isn’t the only school with a blatant anti-Christian discrimination policy. Back in September 2019, the University of Iowa was enjoined from discriminating against its own ICF chapter. Earlier that same year, the school was enjoined from discriminating against another Christian group, Business Leaders in Christ.

It’s unlikely that these particular cases are exceptions, but instead they seem to reflect a growing anti-Christian agenda that is being adopted all across academia. Monday’s small victory is only a small part in the ongoing and accelerating war against Christ and His followers.



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