



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on March 5, 2012

N.C. University Rules Campus Club Not Christian Enough

Christian organizations continue to be assaulted on college campuses across the nation. At the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, a Christian club is suing the school after it ruled that the group isn't religious and so must allow students of other faiths — or no faith — to join and even be in leadership if it wants to receive university recognition.



The [Alliance Defense Fund](#) (ADF), which is representing the group “Make Up Your Own Mind,” pointed out that the university’s non-discrimination policy includes an exemption for student groups that require their members and leaders to embrace the same beliefs. The exemption states, “Student groups that select their members on the basis of commitment to a set of beliefs (e.g., religious or political beliefs) may limit membership and participation in the group to students who, upon individual inquiry, affirm that they support the group’s goals and agree with its beliefs.”

But when the Make Up Your Own Mind club applied for recognition under the exemption, university officials denied their request, insisting that the club is not sufficiently religious because it is “not affiliated with a church but rather a local non-profit organization.” But the ADF noted that the university’s qualifications for religious organizations do not require that they be affiliated with a church, and the school recognizes other religious organizations that have no church affiliation.

Additionally, noted the conservative legal advocacy group, the Christian club has a clear religious mission and purpose, and because of that requires its leaders to agree with its statement of faith and its overtly pro-life values.

A few months after its initial rejection by the university, the club resubmitted its request for official recognition, offering clear evidence from its constitution that it is a religious group. When the university failed to act on the new application, the group filed suit in federal court with the help of the ADF.

ADF Senior Legal Counsel Jeremy Tedesco said that the university appeared to be giving itself the sole authority to determine which student groups are religious and which are not. “Saying that a Christian club isn’t religious is flatly absurd,” he said, “especially when the university has granted its belief-based exception to numerous other clubs.”

He told the [Christian Post](#) that it is actually “pretty rare” for a student group to be affiliated with a church, citing InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, an internationally known group that has a chapter at



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the school, as just one example.

Tedesco pointed out that the First Amendment “forbids the government from determining what is and what is not ‘religious,’ yet the university is doing exactly this by telling a Christian group that it is not religious. The Constitution protects the right of all student groups to employ belief-based criteria in selecting their members and leaders.”

He also said it is ridiculous for a university to charge that a group is discriminating because its members want to be led by people who share their religious convictions and values. “What we are seeing on public university campuses is religious groups routinely getting denied recognition,” he told [Fox News](#). “They are denied access to a speech forum that is opened to all other student organizations on campus.” He added that “we should get very nervous when the government decides it has the authority to determine what is and what isn’t religious. That’s a dangerous concept.”

A statement from UNC-Greensboro said that the school was assessing the situation to determine if it could be handled in-house. “We are gathering information and assessing the allegations of the suit,” said the statement. “If we discover that the matter in question was handled improperly, we will swiftly take corrective actions.”

Christian groups at several universities have found themselves targeted over the past years for their policies requiring members and leaders to embrace Christian values. As reported by [The New American](#), in 2010 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a chapter of the [Christian Legal Society](#) at the Hastings College of Law in San Francisco could not require members to sign a statement of faith that prohibits homosexual behavior and requires a belief in God.

Similarly, in 2011, following a complaint from a homosexual student that he was dismissed from a Christian fraternity at Nashville’s Vanderbilt University, the school began forcing Christian groups receiving school funding to follow an updated non-discrimination policy that conflicted with some of the groups’ own faith-based bylaws and policies. As reported by [The New American](#), Vanderbilt’s policy “is a model of political correctness, 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....”

And late last year a [Christian a cappella singing group](#) at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill was investigated for possible violation of that school’s discrimination policy after its members voted to expel another member who was openly homosexual. While the university’s policy allows groups to limit their membership based on common religious beliefs, it bars discrimination based on sexual orientation. The university ultimately cleared the group of any wrongdoing, ruling that it could not find evidence that Psalm 100 had expelled the member because of his homosexuality.



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