

Georgetown Pro-Marriage Group Faces Sanctions Following Student Complaints

WASHINGTON — A pro-marriage student group at Georgetown University is in danger of being defunded and barred from campus facilities, after fellow students have petitioned that it be recognized as a “hate group.” The Hoya, Georgetown’s student newspaper, reported on Oct. 20 that Love Saxa, a student organization promoting Catholic doctrine regarding marriage, will undergo a Student Activities Commission hearing on Oct. 23 to defend itself against charges that the group fosters hatred and intolerance. The hearing is a response to a petition filed by a student-senator in the Georgetown University Student Association and supported by leaders of “gay pride” student organizations at Georgetown.

Love Saxa intends to petition for a delay before the hearing takes place. The group told CNA it was only officially informed of the hearing’s date on the evening of Oct. 19, giving them an insufficient amount of time to prepare. The group also says members haven’t been given a copy of the petition or an exact rendering of the charges against them. Love Saxa’s student-president, Amelia Irvine, told CNA, “I believe that Love Saxa has the right to exist, especially at a Catholic school. We exist to promote healthy, loving relationships at Georgetown.”

In a Sept. 6 column in The Hoya, Irvine wrote that “we believe that marriage is a conjugal union on every level — emotional, spiritual, physical and mental — directed toward caring for biological children. To us, marriage is much more than commitment of love between two consenting adults.” Leaders of “gay pride” student organizations at Georgetown denounced this language as “homophobic” and claimed it violated university standards.

The university’s Student Organization Standards state that: “Groups will not be eligible for access to benefits if their purpose or activities ... foster hatred or intolerance of others because of their race, nationality, gender, religion, or sexual preferences.” Love Saxa is accused of fostering hatred and intolerance because of its support for Catholic teaching regarding marriage.

Love Saxa receives \$250 of funding from the university and is permitted to use university facilities for its activities, according to The Hoya. Results of the hearing could lead to loss of funding and facility access, among other sanctions, the newspaper reported. Irvine told CNA that Love Saxa is hopeful about the results of the hearing. “We’re optimistic that the university will uphold our right to exist, given that we share the Catholic view on marriage,” she added. In an Oct. 20 editorial, The Hoya’s editorial board advocated for Love Saxa’s defunding. The editorial board wrote that Love Saxa fosters intolerance by “actively advocating a limited definition of marriage that would concretely take rights away from the LGBTQ community.”

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