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NEWS: BREAKING NEWS

Change to university policy alters protection for religious groups

By **KYLE BLAINE**
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Campus religious organizations may be less secure than they were a year ago following changes made to the student handbook, the Hustler today learned.

Vanderbilt University last year removed a clause protecting religious associations from its nondiscrimination policy following allegations that a Christian fraternity on campus asked an openly gay member to resign because of his sexual orientation.

The change, made on Dec. 8, 2010, removed a sentence that guaranteed freedom of religious association for external organizations that associate with the university. The change was made after the Hustler reported the allegations on Nov. 5, 2010.

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Four student religious organizations at Vanderbilt University may be in jeopardy following a review by the school's administration that takes issue with the groups requiring their leaders sha

The text read, "Vanderbilt University is committed to the principle of nondiscrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression, or the perception of one's sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. In affirming its commitment to this principle, the University does not limit freedom of religious association, does not require adherence to this principle by government agencies or external organizations that associate with, but are not controlled by, the University, and does not extend benefits beyond those provided under other policies of the University."

The Hustler reached out to university officials for comment this afternoon but has not yet received a response.

The change can be seen in the student handbook by comparing the Dec. 8, 2010, version with the March 29, 2011, version.

The news of this change comes amid scrutiny and national media attention of the university for placing four religious groups on provisional status due to noncompliance with the nondiscrimination policy.

Today, the university is repeatedly **tweeting** a statement released on Sept. 15 that reads, "We made the decision to give the organizations not yet in compliance provisional status, allowing us to continue to work with them to achieve compliance while allowing them to continue to have the same full access to the Vanderbilt campus as they have had in the past."

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