



Georgetown University's Student Activities Commission voted Friday to maintain university funding for Love Saxa, a pro-marriage student group that had been accused by fellow students of promoting intolerance and hate.

The activities commission's Nov. 3 vote regarding Love Saxa was in 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.

They voted 8-4 to reject the argument levied by students Chad Gasman and Jasmin Ouseph that Love Saxa had violated standards that student organizations are ineligible for recognition and 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 one of many groups operating on campus with positions that affirm the teachings of the Catholic Church," Georgetown's senior director for strategic communications, Rachel Pugh, told student newspaper The Hoya.

"Through [SAC], the University supports more than 100 co-curricular student organizations with access to benefits, including Love Saxa. We strongly support a climate that continues to provide students with new and deeper contexts for engaging with our Catholic tradition and identity."

Members of the activities commission deliberated for several hours on Thursday night and into Friday morning following a hearing on Monday into the allegations of Love Saxa's intolerance.

The vote is not binding, and is a recommendation to the university's director of student engagement. It can be appealed, and Ouseph and Gasman have said they intend to do so.

As a recognized student group, Love Saxa receives \$250 annually in funding from the university and has access to classrooms for events.

In a Sept. 6 column in *The Hoya*, Love Saxa's president, Amelia 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.

Fr. James Martin, SJ, a prominent advocate of dialogue with and acceptance of LGBT groups by the Church, told CNA last month that he supports the right of Love Saxa to promote its views at Georgetown.

“Why should a student group that espouses Catholic teaching respectfully be defunded by a Catholic university? As long as Love Saxa treats LGBT people (both on campus and off campus) with 'respect, compassion and sensitivity,' as the Catechism requires, then they should be able to have their say on campus,” he said.

Robert George, a professor of constitutional law at Princeton University, said the effort to defund Love Saxa “ought to be a matter of grave concern for honorable people across the ideological spectrum.”

Georgetown is a Catholic university in Washington, D.C., founded by the Society of Jesus in 1789