

Gay student loses scholarship at Baylor University

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A former student at Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary says losing his scholarship because he is gay is unfair. Matt Bass told his friends he is gay last spring, and word began to spread. When Truett officials met with Bass last fall, he would not answer questions about his orientation but acknowledged that he supports gay rights and marriage.

He was notified in December that he would lose his scholarship, money from Truett and the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Bass, 24, was not expelled but left after the fall semester because he could not afford tuition. Bass, who did not earn his undergraduate degree at Baylor, had been at Truett since 2001. Paul Powell, the seminary's dean, declined to discuss Bass's case but said homosexual behavior is forbidden in the Bible and thus inconsistent with Truett's mission. "If a person, according to Scripture, which is our standard, is not a part of the kingdom of God, how can they be in training for a minister?" Powell asked.

Bass said he does not believe his lifestyle conflicts with the Bible. He said he had met the requirements of his scholarship: making high grades and attending a church affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas. He said the pastor knows he is gay and "doesn't make a big deal about it." Bass was recently accepted to Emory University's Candler School of Theology in Atlanta. He plans on teaching and researching what he calls religious violence against minority groups.

In the Baylor student handbook, the school mentions "homosexual acts" along with incest and adultery and fornication under the sexual misconduct policy. Powell said some may be born with a predisposition to homosexual behavior but that they don't have to act on those desires. He compared the situation to some people's struggle with alcoholism. "Our standards of right and wrong are the Scriptures," Powell said. "If we ever abandon them, we're out of business. There's no reason for us to exist."

