

The University of Tennessee

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June 10, 1974

MEMORANDUM

From
TO: Dr. Edward J. Boling
Dr. Joseph E. Johnson

To
FROM: Charles E. Smith 

Attached is the draft report of the special Board Committee which heard the appeal of the Gay People's Alliance. Ron Leadbetter has advised me that the draft has been reviewed by Mr. Baugh and the three members of the committee and that they endorse its content. E. S. Bevins will present the report to the full Board.

If you have any questions or concern about the report, please let us know.
Thank you.

CES:ka

cc: Mr. John Baugh
Mr. Ron Leadbetter

This looks good to me! Did you notice that on attached survey the student body is not supportive of this group.



PROPOSED FINDINGS OF FACT AND RECOMMENDATION

On February 20, 1974, the Special Committee appointed by the Board of Trustees to consider the appeal of the Gay People's Alliance for formal recognition as a student organization at The University of Tennessee conducted a hearing for the purpose of receiving information from the Gay People's Alliance to assist the Committee in reaching a decision as to whether or not the formal recognition sought should be granted.

The Committee has thoroughly reviewed and carefully considered the testimony and exhibits presented, as well as the organization's constitution, whereupon the Committee has reached the following conclusions:

1. The Committee finds that the members and officers of the Gay People's Alliance have had unrestricted opportunity to engage in the free exchange of ideas on The University of Tennessee, Knoxville campus. According to the testimony, the members and officers of the Alliance have taken unlimited advantage of this opportunity on numerous occasions by participating in formal and informal discussions and seminars, by speaking to University classes and organizations, by sponsoring a "Free University" class in Gay Culture, and by participating in a variety of other similar activities which have taken place on the campus.

2. The Committee further finds that the primary purpose for which the Gay People's Alliance seeks formal recognition is to obtain the right to reserve and make use of facilities of The University of Tennessee for a variety of other activities and to obtain the tacit approval by the University of those activities which accompanies such recognition and which in effect says:

"The purpose of this organization is one which may appropriately be furthered by making use of the facilities of a public institution of higher education."

3. The Committee finds that the particular activities contemplated and planned by the Gay People's Alliance are not activities intended to facilitate or permit the expression, discussion or exchange of ideas and opinions. To the contrary, the Committee finds that the main thrust and purpose behind the contemplated and planned activities is to provide a social environment which will enable homosexuals to meet and socialize with other homosexuals, both active and latent, with greater ease and more respectability. The evidence presented further convinces the Committee that the ultimate purpose of providing an atmosphere conducive to the establishment of such homosexual acquaintances and social contacts includes providing homosexuals with a convenient and "respectable" means of locating and becoming acquainted with individuals desiring to engage in homosexual sex acts.

4. The Committee finds that the scheduling and holding of

such contemplated and planned social activities on the campus of The University of Tennessee would degrade the high purposes of an institution of higher education, would encourage disrespect for and violation of the state law pertaining to crimes against nature, and would prove disruptive of the continued proper functioning of The University of Tennessee as an educational institution.

Therefore, such activities should not be recognized as appropriate activities to be held within facilities and on property owned by The University of Tennessee, nor should the University in any way facilitate the provision of such activities to its students or provide respectability by granting formal recognition to the organization sponsoring such activities.

5. In reaching these findings, the Committee has given substantial weight to the credibility of the individuals testifying on behalf of the Gay People's Alliance. In doing so, the Committee finds that the testimony of several of those individuals was characterized by a lack of candor and forthrightness. With regard to several matters, there was direct contradiction of testimony. Responses to questions were frequently evasive and occasionally non-existent.

6. The testimony further leads this Committee to find that the current constitution prepared by and submitted to the University by the Gay People's Alliance is a contrivance prepared

solely for the purpose of obtaining recognition and does not in any significant way reflect the true intent, organizational structure, or procedures of the organization.

For these reasons this Committee recommends that the Gay People's Alliance be denied recognition by The University of Tennessee as a student organization at the University.