

BYU clarifies code on homosexuality: Homosexual orientation no longer a violation

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Brigham Young University, the large flagship university of the Mormon Church, has changed its honor code and will no longer list homosexual orientation or “feelings” as violations.

While gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender activists are claiming victory, the school, based in Provo, Utah, says it has merely “clarified” a section of the honor code. The amended code says: “One’s stated sexual orientation is not an Honor Code issue,” and “Brigham Young University will respond to homosexual behavior rather than to feelings or orientation and welcomes as full members of the university community all whose behavior meets university standards.”

However, acting on one’s homosexuality through sexual intimacy, giving expression to homosexual feelings and advocating for homosexual behavior are still violations of the code and grounds for expulsion at Brigham Young.

Members of the Soulforce Equality Ride, a gay-rights group of 50 young adults traveling by bus to religious colleges and universities—including BYU and its satellite branches—hailed the change as a significant victory. “The energy around this issue and the pressure provided by our presence were certainly a factor in changing this policy from being the worst in the nation to being on par with most other antigay schools,” Soulforce’s Haven Herrin said April 17 in a statement.

BYU spokesperson Carrie Jenkins said that the code “has been rewritten to clarify that the university will only respond to a student’s behavior, not their sexual orientation.” Jenkins contended that the clarification had nothing to do with the Soulforce group’s campus demonstration. *—Religion News Service*