Senate Signs Tufts’ Name to Same-Sex Marriage Petition

Resolution Awaits Approval From President, Administration

by JESSIE CAMPBELL
Observer Editorial Board

This past Sunday, in a vote of 16 to one with seven abstentions, the senate passed a resolution for the Tufts Community Union to be added to a petition in support of making same-sex marriages legal.

Several weeks ago, graduate student Glenn Grossman presented this issue during an open forum. The resolution was then officially proposed by Tufts Transgender, Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Collective Representative Shou Min Tan.

As a result of its passage, the TCU will be added to the national petition sponsored by the Lambda Marriage Project to have same-sex marriages legalized by all states as well as by the national government. According to Tan, the resolution was a civil rights issue, namely the right to marry, which will allow same-sex couples to have certain marital rights such as tax breaks, spousal benefits and hospital visitations.

The majority of the debate during Sunday’s meeting surrounded the senate’s right to make this decision on behalf of the student population. According to Ericka Rovira who cast the one opposing vote, “I was not voted into office on how I felt about same-gender marriages or my other political views. I was voted in based on how I wanted to improve the university.”

Additional reservations included the student population who would oppose the passage of a law permitting same-sex marriages, citing that they were also a part of the senate’s constituency and their opinions needed to be taken into consideration as well.

The next step for the resolution is for it to be presented to President John DiBiaggio and the rest of the administration for their approval and to sign the petition as well.

If approved, a cover letter and the resolution with the TCU signature will be sent to the Mass. state legislature, governor of Massachusetts and national senators and representatives. The TTLGBC will strongly contribute to this mailing.

The mailing campaign is the final step for the resolution to show support for the issue. “I hope that this will bring attention to the issue and show that there are educated people out there thinking about it and supporting civil rights. This is one way to help make sure that there are people out there supporting same-sex marriages as a legal issue,” TTLGBC Co-Coordinator Carl Sciortino said.

Additionally, Tan hopes that the passage of the resolution will help encourage other universities to support the petition.

“I hope that the action on the senate’s part will set an example for the rest of the schools, both in the Boston area and across the nation. Hopefully, this will lead to a stronger grassroots movement or at least an awareness of the injustice that plagues this nation and eventually have this injustice rectified,” Tan said.

Although the petition is a part of a national campaign, current students are pleased with the senate’s decision to support the resolution.

“We, as a group, are very grateful that the senate supported the resolution. The fact that they didn’t back down meant a lot to us,” Sciortino said.