

Baylor sues former seminary student over lewd e-mails

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WACO (AP) — A former Baylor University seminary student who lost his scholarship because he is gay is accused of sending lewd e-mails to employees and their families.

Baylor filed a lawsuit Wednesday alleging that beginning last fall, James Matthew Bass sent more than 1,000 e-mails containing pornographic images and messages. Baylor officials also obtained a restraining order Wednesday against Bass, prohibiting him from sending e-mails to Baylor officials and their families.

Bass could not be reached for comment.

The action updates a petition Baylor filed in November against a defendant identified as John Doe. At the time, Baylor's attorney said officials did not know who sent the e-mails to administrators at the world's largest Baptist university.

The lawsuit says many e-mails were sent under the names of Baylor employees or their family members, and one purported to be from an unidentified Baylor employee's child who implored the parent to stop committing sexual abuse.

Some e-mails referred to sexual activities by Jesus Christ, and others contained racial epithets, according to the suit.

One group of e-mails incorrectly reported the death of a faculty member who recently had a stroke, and an obituary for an administrator was sent to news organizations, according to the suit.

Another e-mail, sent in the name of a George W. Truett Theological Seminary administrator, reported to one of Baylor's accrediting agencies that the seminary was involved in a cheating scandal involving faculty and students, according to the suit.

Baylor spokesman Larry Brumley said university officials would not comment on the case.

In the lawsuit, Baylor asks for unspecified damages caused by the e-mails and reimbursement for costs incurred from the school's efforts to track and limit the number of e-mails.

The petition also asks the court to require Bass to produce his computer equipment for inspection by Baylor representatives, and to prohibit him from changing any data stored on that computer.

It was unknown Wednesday if the court acted on that request.

Bass, 25, received national media attention last year after he lost his scholarship when seminary officials learned he is gay.

The seminary sent him a letter in late 2003 saying his scholarship was revoked because living or advocating a homosexual lifestyle is inconsistent with the seminary's purpose.

At the time, Bass said he left because he could no longer afford the tuition. He also said he felt forced out, although he wasn't directly asked to leave. He later moved to Georgia to attend Emory University's Candler School of Theology in Atlanta. — — —

Information from: Waco Tribune-Herald, www.wacotrib.com