

Gay Straight Alliance seeks to revalue gay awareness at Lafayette

BY CAITLYN KELLEHER

Lafayette's unfriendliness towards gays has long since passed from top ten lists to campus legend. But with the lack of a consistent gay-awareness group, some wonder about the current status of that animosity.

Next Thursday, the Gay-Straight Alliance will propose a change in identity to student government, renaming itself QUEST, Questioning Established Sexual Taboos.

Following a semester of inactivity, next week marks the second name change for the group in two years. Last semester, GSA did not maintain a budget or hold group events.

Student response has been mixed, although quiet. Most students interviewed requested anonymity before addressing the is-

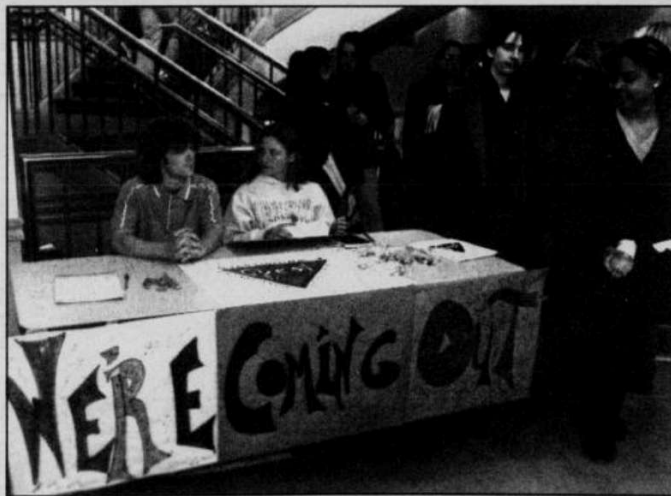


PHOTO BY MATT JOHNSTON

Although the Gay-Straight Alliance planned to propose the new title QUEST on Wednesday, the move was postponed a week because of a death in one of the members' family.

sue. These students acknowledged that there are cold feelings towards gays at Lafayette, but questioned the usefulness of a student group.

Most students spoken to said

that homosexuality is generally not discussed on campus. Some said they believe that it is not discussed because the student body is closed-minded.

Chantel Pasquarello '02, felt

the opposite. "I used to think that the campus was closed minded, but I realized that people just don't discuss the issue," she said. She hopes that the group will be able to open up discussions.

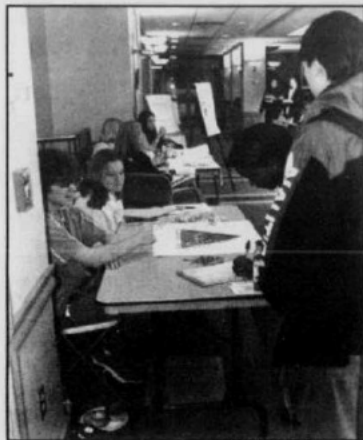
Other students believe that the lack of discussion is because of the fact that sexual orientation is not a typical topic for discussion. These comments were almost always qualified with a statement that there was nothing wrong with homosexuality.

Students spoken to felt that QUEST [GSA], as a specialized group, will only cater to a small percentage of the student body.

Beth Rosseau '01, one of the students behind GSA's upcoming proposal, agreed with the need for a specialized group, but also said the group's new focus includes educating the campus. The group is designed to "support people that are homosexual

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QUEST looks to find identity at Lafayette



PHOTOS BY MATT JOHNSON

Although not yet recognized by student government, QUEST operated a table in Fannon this week under their new name.

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and bisexual and those people with issues, and to be there for those people who don't understand the reasoning or issue," she said.

It was a lack of student interest that caused GSA to become inactive this past semester, said Brian Want '00, former club president. "I think that on a college campus there are rises and falls of interest," he said.

James Krivoski,

dean of students, echoed Want's sentiment. "Sometimes things happen and the leadership changes. The reason they come and go is not related to the goals," said Krivoski. When asked if the campus was homophobic, Krivoski said, "I think that it is difficult to characterize an entire student body."

"Truly homophobic people are in the minority but the majority of people don't speak out about it," said Want.

Some have made attempts to bring attention to campus homosexuality. "[An] increase diversity and awareness on this campus is a positive," said George Beres '00, former student government president.

Perhaps signalling student government's then attitude about

the need of such an organization, Beres made numerous requests to *The Lafayette* to run a story about the then-defunct GSA. "It is difficult to establish such a group, but [it] needed a boost," he said.

Anonymous, most students said a group of this type is not going to make a difference. "People aren't going to change unless they want to," said one student.

FWYT *That's What You Think*

Do you think Lafayette needs a homosexual awareness group?

BY
STEPHANIE DINATALI &
DANA SAMUELS

Rose Sullivan '00



"Most definitely. This school is too homophobic."

Karl Klingman '00

"No. I don't think a group like that is warranted at Lafayette."



Cassidy Ludlow '00

"Yes, this campus definitely needs a group to bring about some awareness. There is a lot of prejudice and ignorance towards those with different sexual orientations on this campus, and we need to work to rectify that."



Randy Copenhauer '02



"It's probably a good idea, but I'm not going to be a part of it."