

New film group tackles tough topic for documentary

BY CRYSTAL BUREY

It took less than three months for one of the campus' newest student groups to tackle a controversial subject. The Lafayette Academy of Motion Pictures (LAMP) will soon bring the issue of transgenderism to the big screen.

LAMP, Matt Bilheimer's '10 brainchild, seeks to educate students in film production. Fellow film fanatics Ziad Foty '10 and Christopher Duru '10, who aided in the creation of the group, already have several projects in the works. Their center piece is an ambitious documentary focusing on Bryan Fox '10, a student

cameras and interviews change his focus in everyday life. "I'll just keep doing what I have to do," he said. Optimistic that students will have time to accept his decision before the actual physical and chemical transition begins, he said the most important thing for him right now is simple: keeping his mind on academics.

"It [is] a story that has a lot of potential to impact not only the Lafayette community but the United States as a whole," Foty said. "It's a unique story because it shows a different perspective that is alien to many Lafayette students."

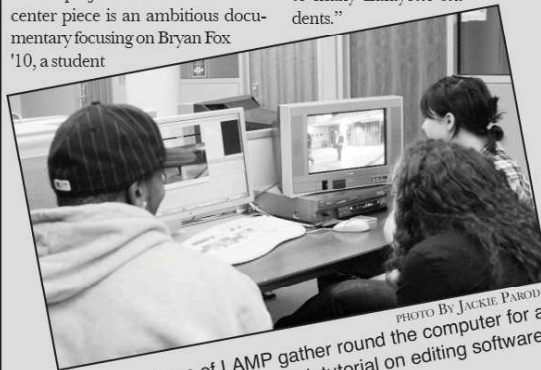


PHOTO BY JACKIE PARODI
Members of LAMP gather round the computer for a quick tutorial on editing software.

undergoing a transformation from female to male.

The taboo topic of transgenderism is a "culture not as explored on Lafayette's campus," Duru said.

The piece will tell Fox's story, chronicling the actual medical transition in addition to the changing dynamics of his family life. College President Daniel Weiss and Director of Intercultural Development Michael Benitez are also set to appear in the documentary, addressing the issue of transgenderism at Lafayette. Considered a generally homophobic campus by the student body, LAMP executives said they

want to grab the community's attention and tackle the topics no one else wants to discuss.

"I thought Fox would be slightly cautious," Foty said, "[but] he's handled the documentary proactively and he seems excited to get this story out. It's given Fox a drive."

The focal point of all the action, Fox said he doesn't mind being at the center of the film, preferring the campus to formally know about his change from female to male as opposed to gathering information through gossip.

A music major, he has yet to let

In terms of when the club plans on wrapping up their controversial piece, they said they are hoping to show off the movie at the end of year film festival. "We would like to open the film to the community; Fox's story can touch people," Foty said.

While the motion picture group is engrossed in their current project, members have already begun brainstorming other future creative ventures. No definitive projects have been listed yet, but they hope their upcoming endeavors will be as socially important to the campus community as the current piece on Fox.

"If you want things to happen on this campus, take the initiative," Duru said.

"[We want to] use LAMP as a tool for its members to explore social issues through documentaries," Creative Director Brett Lambie '09 said. With that in mind, LAMP moviemakers are also busy capturing events on campus and producing smaller, more creative short films.

"Ziad and I started the group because we think the film medium is neglected on the Lafayette campus in many ways," Bilheimer said. "This club is a way for students to get exposure to the film process."

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- Brett Lambie '09

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