

To begin, On behalf of QuEST and all of our many supporters, I would personally like to thank each and every person for being here. Today, I am truly proud to be apart of the Lafayette College community. Your presence and your participation in *Gay? Fine by me* defies the stereotypes of disinterest and apathy that society ascribes to the youth of our culture.

As many of you are aware, there is a perception of our college that is less than favorable, one that is tainted by intolerance and, perhaps, perpetuated by a lack of diversity. Princeton Review ranks Lafayette as #15 in Little Race/Class Interaction, and only a few years prior classified our school as intolerant. There is a general assumption on this campus that Lafayette is homophobic, and we enacted this t-shirt campaign in order to disprove this assumption. We wanted to send out a message: that any member of this community, regardless of sexual orientation, religion, gender, or race, has a right to feel comfortable and accepted. *Gay? Fine by me* is not a gay issue, it is an issue of basic human rights.

Recent events, such as the racial slur written in Ramer hall, have brought to light the existence of individuals on this campus who would perpetuate hate and intolerance. Now more than ever it has become essential that we as a student body and faculty join our efforts to let these hatemongers know that it is they who are in the minority. By wearing this t-shirt today, you are giving voice to the true feelings of this college, that hatred and discrimination in any form are unacceptable.

Helen Keller once wrote, "The greatest result of education is tolerance." And judging by the number of you participating, it would seem that Lafayette is fairly educated. But your participation in *Gay? Fine by me* should not end with today. I hope that seeing all of these LGBT supporters around you gives everyone the strength and conviction to stand up to any form of hatred. Continue to wear your shirt in the future, and wear it with pride.

But again, thank you all so much for your participation in today's event. It is truly inspiring to see so many allies against homophobia.