

# Eye on Campus

## "That's So Gay!" National Coming Out Week Kicks Off With Academic Discussion Forum

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National Coming Out Week was commemorated in highly academic fashion on Monday, October 11, during Common Hour in the Lion's Den. The round-table discussion was in regard to homosexuality in America.

The discussion opened with a pair of internet Public Service Announcements referencing the use of the phrase "that's so gay!" The purpose of the discussion, to take a look at the treatment of the Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgendered community and analyze the use of language regarding homosexuality, was made clear from the very beginning.

Ronika Money, the Coordinator of Student Affairs, laid down the ground rules, emphasizing that there were no experts in the room and that the room was a safe place for the expression of opinions. Lastly, there was a request for honesty from all participants.

A Student Affairs intern then read from a list of True/False statements about the students' perceptions of sexuality, homosexuality,

bisexuality, and humanity in general. It quickly became clear that the list was comprised completely of stereotypes to be challenged. As a testament to the widespread disbelief of at least one of the statements by the students in attendance, giggling could be heard throughout the audience.

During the gathering, there were times when the lives of fellow Americans were offered up as examples to the sufferings of homosexuals in the United States. The tragic invasion of privacy-turned-suicide case of Tyler Clementi was among the first examples used. In addition to being timely, the case illustrated both the negative views towards gays as well as the shame felt by many closet-homosexuals.

As a continuation of the theme of disrespect and harm towards homosexuals, the students were asked about the attitudes about homosexuality in their high schools. Repeated testimonies of abuse and bullying were heard, implying that the

rumored cruelty of teenagers truly does exist. Homosexuals were reportedly called "juicy," "sissies," "muff divers," "sweet," "pillow biters," "faggots," and "dykes." Furthermore, they were said to be "light in the loafers" or "have a little sugar in their tank."

The use of blatantly offensive language was both intentional and expected. The purpose of the discussion was very much to honestly lay all of the cards onto the table, and then analyze those cards carefully.

The most common slanders of homosexuals, it was discovered, came at the expense of their gender-identity. Societal expectations, it was said, teach boys to wear blue and play with action figures, while girls wear pink and play with dolls. Most importantly of all, however, was the expectation that boys grow up to like girls and, likewise, girls grow up to like boys. Because homosexuals challenge these traditional societal expectations, they are often met with difficulties.

It was mentioned by

one student that the use of the phrase "that's so gay" is not meant to be a commentary on homosexuality, but a word-substitute for "stupid," "dumb," or "lame." That issue was subsequently addressed, and it became generally accepted that such use of language can be offensive, regardless of the intent of the speaker. It was Dr. Matthew Shupp, the Director of Student Affairs, who first raised the questions of legality regarding the rights of speakers to say harmful things.

If offensive words can cause young people to kill themselves, he wondered, was it a disservice by the framers of the constitution to protect the speakers responsible for such hatred?

Although no hard lines were drawn in reference to the freedom of speech, students seemed intrigued at the contrasting moral implications of protecting the speakers, as opposed to the listeners, of hateful speech.

It was not long thereafter when one female student inadvertently explained the

logic behind such a forum as this, remarking that a society must change its beliefs about homosexuality before the legal system can be changed.

In the closing moments of the forum, one student, Lamont Jackson (Freshman, Business Law) claimed that the forum was enjoyable, and though his thoughts on the issue remained unchanged, that it was good to hear the opinions of others. Bobbi Laprice (Sophomore, HDFS) stated that she believed that the forum was a bit short but well-organized and that it was successful in raising awareness about the hurtful nature of phrases such as "that's so gay."

The ethical round-table discussion, a platform becoming popular on campus, is planned to be utilized once more, informed Ronika Money, as a jumping off event for Multicultural Week on campus. A topic has yet to be decided upon.

## SGA Sound Off

By **Martina Delgado** - *Lion's Eye Staff Writer* - mdd5136@psu.edu

September 27th at common hour, the SGA held a sound off in the Lion's Den. After introducing themselves to the student body, the Student Affairs Chair, Jomela Dutt started the meeting off with a game. Students were asked to pick a piece of paper from a box and answer the question on the paper. The only catch was that the questions ranged from crazy to gross. President Jerry Fokas was asked whether he would get caught singing in the mirror or get caught stalking his crush. Fokas picked the option of singing in the mirror. Matthew Shupp, the Director of Student Affairs, was asked whether he wants to swim in a pool of blood for an hour or hang upside down for eight hours. Shupp picked to hang upside down for eight

hours. Ryan Ashby (freshman, Economics PolySci) was asked whether he would French kiss a dog or let a baby throw up or spit in his mouth. Ashby preferred neither. Finally, Brittney Walker (Senior, Corporate Communications) was asked whether she would prefer free college tuition or never pay for food again. Ms. Walker chose never to pay for food again.

After the game, reminders were made for upcoming events on campus. October 15th a pep rally will be held in the gymnasium at common hour. Food, games, and free giveaways will be offered for all students and faculty. October 16th is Penn State Day. Free food, games, and music will be available for students, faculty, and families on campus. Later that

day from 7pm- 11:30pm will be the Homecoming Dance. Tickets are five dollars in advance and seven dollars at the door. Tickets can be purchased at Student Affairs on the second floor of Commons. The dance will be held in the cafeteria and the Lion's Den. All are welcome.

Jerry Fokas then took the opportunity to remind the student body of the SGA's objectives for this year. The SGA hopes to improve school spirit, instill a desire to stay on campus, relocate the school store, and improve communication between the student body and SGA.

The meeting was wrapped up with questions that the student body might have for their new SGA. Justin Carrington (Senior, Corporate

Communications) asked: "Why can't we park at the Main Building?" Jerry Fokas inquired whether he was parking in the white lines or yellow. Mr. Carrington admitted that he parked between both. Fokas then informed the student body that they could go to student affairs and inquire about the do's and don'ts about on campus parking. Marqueisha Craig (sophomore, Criminal Law Justice) asked: "Can we have more than one ATM?" The IT Chair, Danice Reid answered that the SGA was actually working on making that happen.

The meeting concluded with a reminder to bring friends to the October 25th SGA Sound off.

## Career Day Prep

By **Kenny Lankford** - *Lion's Eye Staff Writer* - kg15040@psu.edu

On October 6th and 7th, career day prep meetings were held for students to help get ready for career day. The meetings covered the do's and don't's of what to do and how to act at the career day fair.

For those students who missed the meeting, have no fear - here are some helpful tips to help you succeed at the Career Day Fair. It is very important to make a good first impression because there will be very limited time for students to promote themselves

to employers. Face to face encounters at the fair hold much more value than anything that employers see on paper. So, first and foremost, dress to impress. The recommended attire is a suit for both men and woman. Dressing properly is a good way to let employers know that the candidate means business. It is also very important that students come well prepared to the fair. This includes bringing a resume and doing your homework on the companies attending. The resume should be about one

page long. Although not very long, this is important because it is a quick marketing piece for employers.

Students should come to the fair well prepared by doing research on each of the companies in attendance. By researching the companies available, students can get a good idea of whether each company would be a good fit. After doing a little research, students should narrow their top companies. The list should not contain too many, though, because companies do not

want to see applicants going to every table and showing little thought. Once the list is completed, the student should write a few questions for each company. The questions should be specific and well thought out. Employers want questions that show thought, not general questions such as, "Do you like what you do?" After doing some research on the companies, ask questions that genuinely interest you and to pertain to that company. This will not only let the employer know that the stu-

dent did his or her homework, but it will also let give the student a better idea of who their top potential employers are.

The Career Day Fair is going to be a great opportunity for students to meet potential employers and get a chance for future interviews. These opportunities can potentially lead to future internships and jobs and the Career Day Prep helped prepare students to do their best at the fair.