

# Couples lock lips for love

By Caitlin Burnham  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Valentine's Day is for lovers, and some groups on campus want to make sure that includes non-traditional couples, too.

Today is the annual KissOut, sponsored by the LGBTQA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Allies) Student Alliance. At about noon, 20 to 30 people will lock lips with their significant other at the bottom of the steps in the HUB-Robeson Center, said Alex Yates, co-president of the LGTA Student Alliance. Yates (junior-secondary education) said the group does this to bring attention to different types of couples.

"Every couple matters, and we just want to support love for every couple out there," he said.

Ten miles away, as part of Freedom to Marry Week, several gay and lesbian couples will apply for marriage licenses at the Willowbank Building in Bellefonte — knowing that they will be refused a license, organizer Audrey Smith said.

Smith, the supervisor of shipping and receiving at the Penn State animal diagnostic lab, said the couples will walk into the



Meagan Kanagy / Collegian

Various students participate in last year's fifth annual KissOut event in the HUB to celebrate Valentine's Day and raise awareness.

building, ask to apply for a license, be refused and then walk out. She said she doesn't think it will change the minds of people already against gay marriage, but she hopes it will influence those who are uncertain.

"We're hoping for people on the fence to start to think about the message we're going to be presenting about why it's a civil right and why it should be allowed," Smith said.

Yvette Lerma, University Park Undergraduate Association director of LGBTQA affairs, will be participating in both events.

Lerma (senior-sociology) said she thinks Valentine's Day has always been an "extremely hetero-sexist holiday." By participating in the KissOut she hopes to make people aware of how showing affection isn't as accepted for gay couples as it is for heterosexual couples.

"I think a lot of the time most heterosexuals or most individuals

forget or take for granted how important affection is and how much privilege straight couples have with it," she said.

Lerma said when she walks around campus holding her girlfriend's hand, some people tend to react negatively.

"We tend to get one or two double-takes or glares depending on the situation or time of day," Lerma said.

Lerma also said she doesn't think marriage is the most important right LGBT couples are denied. But a lot of people don't realize the other rights they are denied when they are refused marriage, including hospital visitation as well as federal tax advantages, she said.

"There are more than 100 rights that come with marriage that I'll be denied with my partner when we apply to get married," she said.

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## UPUA

# 90-day plan ends

By Casey McDermott  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

After laying out a 90-day plan in December, student government officials admit much has yet to be completed — including publicizing the benchmarks they've set for themselves.

At this point, some University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA) members said they have lagged in accomplishing the initiatives outlined in the 16-page plan. And the timeline — originally intended to be available for public access — remains absent from the group's Web site.

Chief of Staff Matt Smith said the Web site is currently at capacity and has encountered difficulties adding more material to it, but he assured students that there was never an intention to withhold information.

"We probably could have put up a disclaimer saying [that] you could have requested it, but that was not considered," Smith (senior-international politics) said.

In November, President Gavin Keirans proposed formulating 90-day plans to promote greater accountability, productivity and transparency.

Each committee chairperson, along with Keirans himself and several other members of the executive board, was responsible for outlining a week-by-week plan for accomplishing their initiatives for the 2009-2010 year.

Facilities Fee Committee Chairman Nick Mance said he and his committee "admittedly have not been following it very closely," but said their work is often contingent upon factors not easily accounted for 90 days in advance.

"It's easier for Academic Affairs, Governmental Affairs, Internal Development to look at the beginning of October and say, 'This is what we should be doing in January or in February,'" Mance (senior-health policy and administration) said. "For my committee, it has been difficult."

But Governmental Affairs Chairwoman Colleen Smith gave the same excuse, saying her committee is also subject to outside factors that make some initiatives difficult to complete on time. Same with Director of Assembly Services Samantha Miller, who said her plans regarding Legal Services and the freshman handbook were not accomplished on schedule because of unforeseen legislative and administrative delays.

That said, she still supports having a public plan.

"Overall, it was a very effective way of having representatives and executive members put pen to paper to map out exactly what they wanted to accomplish within those 90 days," Miller (senior-political science) said.

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# Soles4Souls collects hundreds of shoes for Haiti

By Alyssa Sweeney  
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Every variety of shoe imaginable could be found in a heap in a racquetball room of the White Building Thursday — clogs, Crocs, cleats, spats, slippers and Nike Shocks.

Jamie Cox smiled as he held up a pair of flashy electric blue basketball shoes. "Some little kid in Haiti is going to feel like the coolest kid in town with these on," he said.

Along with two other people, Cox spent Thursday boxing 535 pairs of

shoes to be shipped to Haiti for Soles4Souls, a nonprofit organization committed to collecting unwanted shoes, sanitizing them and distributing them internationally to those who need them.

Cox (junior-management) said the effort is very important, as soil-borne illnesses are one of the leading causes of sickness in developing countries and 40 percent of the world's population is without shoes.

The project was originally intended to be a two-week community service project in mid-November, but organizers kept

extending the deadline after they saw how many people wanted to donate, said Ellis Mair, Class of 2009.

When the earthquake hit Haiti in January, the trio decided they wanted to redirect the project toward the relief effort after seeing a photo of Haitian children reaching for shoes from relief workers, Cox said.

Every shoe collected will reach Haiti within the next month, said Carly Maconaghy (junior-human development and family studies).

As they were packaging the

shoes, many students passed by and asked about the project. Several promised to run back with a few pairs of their own before the three left for the post office.

Since they got such a positive response, organizers plan on having another collection later this spring or next semester, Cox said.

Project Haiti President Alain Bonny has visited Haitian orphanages while on mission trips in the past, and he said the children there are in desperate need of shoes.

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