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APRIL 13, 2008

NEWS
FEATURES
ARTS
SPORTS
OPINION

SEARCH

Go

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ABOUT US
CONTACT

News

ARCHIVES > NOVEMBER 2, 2004 > NEWS > Article View

Outweek

Raising Awareness of Gay Issues

By Jesse Lee

STAFF WRITER




Students at Haverford were greeted this week by sidewalks and pathways covered with messages like "What about Poland? Who's your ally?" and "Barclay Barclay better than sex (any kind)," encouraging students to challenge their views of sexuality and to promote awareness of SAGA-sponsored Outweek.

Outweek, a week-long series of events designed to raise student awareness about SAGA and gay issues on campus, began last Sunday and culminated in Drag Ball, an annual dance in which students are supposed to dress up as members of the opposite gender. "The main push this year was visibility. Recently, SAGA has lacked visibility on campus," said Sarah Jones '05, co-head of SAGA. As part of their campaign to maintain a greater presence on campus, SAGA successfully sold over 100 T-shirts this week to students and faculty. Other events included movie showings, panel discussions on homophobia and heterosexism, and performances of the play "The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?"

SAGA held many events throughout the week that promoted discussion and dialogue among students about issues of homosexuality. The intent of these discussions was to promote tolerance and acceptance on campus. "Overall it was very satisfying with regards to the kinds of events that were held for Outweek, especially the panel discussion held on Tuesday," said panel discussion leader Nick Jones '05.

One of Outweek's successes was the high degree of participation in scheduled events. "I've been really pleased with all the attendance at the events this week. Outtalk in particular was by far the best Outtalk we've ever had," said Katy Gentry '05, SAGA co-head. Nick Jones '05 remarked, "Sarah and Katy did a good job of making Outweek known on campus."

This year, SAGA has made efforts to maintain this continued awareness and dialogue past Outweek. The movie series that SAGA has begun showing will continue throughout the year, and preliminary plans are in place to establish a full day when students dress in drag. Earlier this year, SAGA challenged students to hold hands with a member of the same gender. "We want to try to keep momentum and stay visible after Outweek ends," said Jones.

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