The Purpose of Blue Jeans Day

To the Tufts Community:

Today, Monday, April 24, 1989, is the 13th Annual Blue Jeans Day. By now people should already have noticed signs hanging around campus stating, "If You Are Wearing Blue Jeans Today, You Are Gay." In the past many people have been confused as to TLGBC's reasoning behind such an event. The purpose of Blue Jeans Day is to start a dialogue among students, staff, and faculty on campus surrounding the oppressive stereotypes attributed to gay, lesbian, and bisexual people. Are you frightened that someone might think you're gay? What if someone does, even though you know you're not? How does that affect you? What if your best friend is wearing jeans? What if you wear your jeans anyway and someone calls you a "fag" or a "dyke"? Are you going to profess your heterosexual credentials or report that homophobic attack to the Dean of Students Office?

On past Blue Jeans Days, students have returned to their rooms and changed their clothes in an effort to avoid being labelled as gay. However, this is not something unique to Jeans Day. Many people who are gay act the same way on a daily basis, to discern what is gay or straight about their clothing, hairstyle, mannerisms, and even their attitude simply to avoid the possible consequences of being labelled "gay." So those people who purposely avoid Jeans Day and fear the consequences are experiencing a small portion of how paranoid and frightening the reality of "the closet" is.

Also, in the past, straights who were secure enough with their own sexuality have continued to wear their jeans without being afraid that people might wonder if they are gay or even ask them why they are wearing jeans. If that should happen to you, remember that you can always say that you didn't know it was Jeans Day, you don't care, or you're just not gay. Unfortunately gays, lesbians, and bisexuals have those same excuses at their disposal and often use them to excuse or justify their sexuality, because it is often not safe to say "Yes, I am gay."

Every year that we hold Blue Jeans Day, at least one individual has written a letter to the editor decrying Jeans Day because he is straight, and wanted to wear jeans, and TLGBC is therefore denying his civil rights. In an effort to preempt such a letter, let us say that even if one could construe Blue Jeans Day as a denial of the civil rights of straight people it hardly compares to the intense homophobia throughout history that has caused gay men and lesbians to be executed, beaten, imprisoned, and denied their civil rights in present day U.S.A. 365 days a year.

In summary, Blue Jeans Day is an educational exercise. We are trying to give the Tufts community a tiny taste of all the fear, hatred, paranoia, and dangerous stereotyping that still exists surrounding the word "gay." For all those students who realize it is Blue Jeans Day and race back to their dorms to purposely put on their jeans we applaud you. In effect, you are helping to show the Tufts campus how important it is to "come out" whether you are gay or straight and in support of gay rights. If you're a radical and you're outspoken, you want to explain your jeans to anyone. Tell them that you're wearing them for a reason, and then don't tell them what that reason is. Wearing blue jeans means you're gay, which is still illegal in 25 states including Massachusetts. Wear your Jeans with pride. And remember, Everyone Wearing Blue Jeans Today Is Gay.

Tufts Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Community