Anti-Gay Assault Sparks Outrage

by BROCK MCCORMACK
Observer Editorial Board

Police are trying to obtain an arrest warrant against the alleged perpetrator of an anti-homosexual assault on two Tufts students Saturday night, announced Detective Chuck Lorenzo of the Tufts University Police Department.

In response to what police are calling a hate crime, over 300 students attended a rally condemning hate crimes and reaffirming Tufts' status as a safe campus held yesterday on the campus center patio. The rally was organized and publicized by members of the Tufts Transgendered, Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Collective.

The two students were leaving an off-campus party Saturday night when their exit was blocked by a third individual. After repeatedly calling them "faggots," he punched one of the students in the face, breaking his nose, and then kicked him once he had fallen to the ground.

"I was purely disgusted that this could happen to a member of our community," said TTLGBGC Co-Coordinator Elizabeth Garcia at yesterday's rally. "Too often on this campus we turn the cheek to violence that makes us uncomfortable, but we must stop doing that," she said.

In the days following the incident, TTLGBGC members manned booths in the dining halls and in the campus center, distributing free pink triangle pins and fact sheets answering questions about the condition of the victims.

President John Dillaggio, in a statement released Monday, condemned the incident and called for cooperation in order to prevent future crimes of this sort.

"We take all acts of violence like this against our students extremely seriously, and pursue every means available to us to see that justice is served," he said.

Students listened to moving speeches made by students, faculty, and staff members. Speakers recounted personal experiences with sexuality-related hate crimes, and urged the community to unite in dealing with Saturday's incident.

Brown Brown, director of the LGTBQ Resource Center, commended the TUPD and the administration on their handling of the incident. "Tufts police have been really fabulous. I feel really good about the response of the administration as well," she said.

Brown said, "I want to extend an invitation to all those present here, and indeed all members of our community, to come to the rest of the Rally on the Patio in Support of Hate Crime Victims, Gay Rights.

ASSAULT

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down to the LGTBQ resource center."
The Ears for Peers telephone counseling service also chalked messages around campus urging students to use its service if they experience difficulty in dealing with the events surrounding Saturday's incident.

At the rally, History professor Howard Solomon addressed the larger societal issues surrounding hate crimes, quoting from the book "Love in the Time of Cholera." He then provided a list of the hate crimes.

Solomon spoke passionately and was often interrupted by applause as he urged the crowd to carry the message of the rally home with them.

TTLGBGC member Jay Harris added humor to the rally, noting, "I've never seen so many people show up for a Tufts event before!"

The rally was just short of two hours long, and included speakers such as English professor Jonathan Strong, and emotional testimonies by campus leaders and students like Coalition for Social Justice and Non-Violence President Sasha Balfour, TCU Treasurer Laura Harris and Tufts Feminist Alliance member Jen Dodge.

Dean Reitman commended the TUPD for its quick response to the crime.

"I think the important thing is to get people to talk. We're working on getting a forum next week so that everyone can continue the dialogue. There's been a lot of talk recently about diversity on this campus, and sometimes in the discussion homophobia is pressed down and not addressed," he said.