New gay organization posters campus

by JANINE BILLY
Daily Editorial Board

A group calling themselves Queer United Enlightened Erotic Radicals posted the campus last week with signs criticizing the Tufts Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Community.

There were several signs that attacked the TLGBC directly, while others concentrated on the purpose of QUEER. One of the signs said that QUEER is "sick of the TLGBC's mid-ass shit," while another proclaimed "we are an inclusive group open to all Queers. We are here to promote Queerness. We do what we want. We are fabulous."

Donna Penn, advisor to the TLGBC, said that the posters are "not a TLGBC action." However, she said she does believe that the signs are the product of members of the Tufts gay community.

TLGBC has not released a statement regarding the posters. TLGBC member Brian Egleston believes that QUEER is most likely "a radical splinter group of the TLGBC" and "a purely political organization."

"I think it's really great," he said last night, adding that he would be interested in joining the group. While Egleston stressed the importance of the TLGBC, a support group whose membership has grown substantially in the past year, he added that there is also a need for a gay organization on campus that could take a stand on issues and take responsibility for political actions.

Wayne Hoffman, another TLGBC member, said he doubts that the posters are a product of a splinter group of TLGBC, but he agreed that there is a need for a more political gay organization on campus and that the group may have formed to fill that need.

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TLGBC not political

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"TLGBC generally does not make decisive political stands... The temptation is certainly there to join an organization that's more political" than TLGBC, Hoffman said.

According to Penn, the message in the signs on campus is consistent with that of numerous gay and lesbian organizations forming around the country. Penn said that these new groups seem to follow the format of Queer Nation, a national gay and lesbian activist group focusing on direct action and "queer visibility."

One method of "queer visibility" is visiting straight bars and behaving in manners not customary to that bar, Penn said. Queer Nation has also been known to use sexually explicit posters, she said. Penn called these publicity stunts "in your face" methods.

Senior Ellen Wong, a member of Queer Nation, said she believes the group is doing a lot to "promote queer visibility, fight queer bashing," promote education, and to protect homosexuals. Wong, who served on the TLGBC executive board before the board was eliminated, said she did not know anything about the flyers.

Junior Sharon Wachslar, a TLGBC member, said that she was "wondering what the whole deal is" but agreed that the posters are similar in style to Queer Nation.

Penn believes members of QUEER are "tired of politics and... going through the proper channels." She assumes that the motivation behind the recent action was outrage of people who want the system to act upon problems such as harassment of gays and lesbians and lack of AIDS research.

Penn believes that QUEER will continue to post the campus and that organizations such as this one will grow until there is a "genuine commitment [by the government] to address the concerns of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals."

According to Penn, these methods can be productive. "The world needs political organizations on all different levels."

Penn said that although TLGBC had not claimed responsibility for the signs, she feels it is significant that they have not disclaimed responsibility. After last year's incident in Goddard Chapel when gay and lesbian students protested the Catholic Church's position on AIDS, the TLGBC was quick to make a distinction between itself and those involved in the protest, she said. Penn said that many members were uncomfortable with the signs but had so far failed to say anything about them publicly.

Penn said that she received phone calls late last week from members of the Tufts community concerned that the signs were "directly insulting the TLGBC and therefore harassing homosexuals."