DaRosa reveals homosexuality after two years at UR

By Jessica Ronky
Staff Writer

"Many people believe that Richmond is a happily clien-
eted, homogeneous, asupportive kind of place — my experience to far has been anything but." —John DaRosa, Richmond College area coordinator.

Last week, at a parent-staff mtain, John DaRosa, Richmond College area coordinator, made one of the biggest personal and professional deci-
sions of his life — DaRosa publicly revealed that he is gay.

DaRosa, who has been at the University for the past two years, is relieved that he no longer has to live a lie. "It's great not to stop acting. People aren't asking me what woman I'm with this week because they know I'm not gay," he said.

Before he came out, DaRosa said he had to blantly lie to his RA's, to pretend that he was hetrosexual when he wasn't.

"I personally wanted to be hetrosexual and up front with them [RA's]," DaRosa said about his decision to come out. He also wanted people to realize that it's possible to have a professional relationship with someone who is gay.

"Not one of them has come up and told me that they have worked closely with a gay, and I want them to know that it can be done," DaRosa said.

He believes that in the future, the RAs he first came out to, and everybody else for that matter, will have friends and family come out to them. DaRosa hopes he can be the one to prepare people for this experience by having them deal with their feelings about homosexuality through him.

"Some people don't understand why I want to do this," DaRosa said. He is bothered by the fact that people can talk to him all they want about their girlfriends, but those same people don't want to hear he is gay.

You must trust someone before you can come out to them, DaRosa said. "People should view it as a wonderfully flattering thing that somebody would have the trust and faith in you to tell you something like this," he said.

DaRosa was nervous about coming out at the University of Richmond because he didn't know what kind of reaction to expect. So far, he has been pleasantly surprised.

Last July, DaRosa first came out to his bosses, Richmond College Dean Richard Minder. "I didn't know if I would lose my job," he said. "But the Dean said something so on that I'll never forget. He said, 'John, I'm 51 years old; I was born and raised in East Kentucky where you wouldn't be in the same room with someone who was gay — I'm somewhere between that and where I should be and you're going to help me get there.' We talked for two hours, and he was wonder-

DaRosa had a gut feeling that most of the RAs would be supportive of him because he has a good relationship with them.

Then he was asked to talk about his experiences. He said he was shocked to learn that DaRosa is gay. "I don't think anyone really sus-

DaRosa said, "When people find out that I'm gay they seem to forget everything else about me." —John DaRosa

This made his decision to come out a lot easier than it would be if he were staying here. "If I were staying here, I don't know if I would do this," he said. "Well, knowing me, it probably would — just to make waves."

Stew said DaRosa told the RAs that he thought it would be unfair and a cope-out to come out at the end of the year and then leave Richmond.

DaRosa hopes his decision to come out will influence other gay and lesbian family members to come out in the same way.

"I know there are people out there and I challenge them to come out. I challenge straight people to become active allies and support that to happen."