

UR is homophobic, complacent

The other day, someone wrote "Jim is a Lambda" on my message board, presumably as an insult. In class, people start chuckling whenever the Lambda Coalition is discussed. People talk about how there aren't enough "fags" at UR to make a group for "them." It's time to speak out.

I am not a homosexual or a bisexual, nor am I a member of the Lambda Coalition. I support the Lambda Coalition, and have nothing against homosexuality in itself.

People assume that gay or bisexual people are nothing BUT gay or bisexual. Gay or bisexual people are "they" or "them," moral degenerates who live only to rape their own gender and transmit AIDS. Wrong. People who are gay or bisexual are PEOPLE, not just characteristics. Gay or bisexual people go to classes, enjoy things like drinking, movies, or whatever in their spare time, eat at the dining hall or Pier, join groups like the fraternities and sororities, BSU, student government, etc., date, fall in love, and have sex. If you haven't gotten the point by now, gay and bisexual people are people, often like you and me apart from sexual preference. I don't automatically like all gay people. I'm sure that there are gay and bisexual jerks just like there are "straight" jerks. To judge someone solely on the basis of sexual preference is to reduce someone to a trait, not a person. As educated people, we should be above that.

Now homophobia. People are afraid of catching AIDS from homosexuals. Millions, perhaps billions, of dollars have gone into AIDS research. The United States may have never researched a disease as thoroughly as AIDS. If there was ANY degree of risk, America wanted to know. The result: AIDS is transmitted by sexual activity, blood transfusion and sharing intravenous needles. That's it, folks. Shaking hands with a gay or bisexual person will not give you AIDS; neither will being in the same room with such a person. And who says all homosexuals or bisexuals have AIDS? Do all "straight" people have STDs?

Many people on campus, especially men, seem afraid that gay people will make a pass at them (at best) or try to rape them (at worst). My response:

get real. This assumption is as true as the assumption that all "straight" men, because they are heterosexual, will make a pass at or rape all women we can. This idea is ridiculous because "straight" men have morals, respect for people, and obey laws. Like most homosexual or bisexual people.

But isn't being gay or bisexual unnatural? This is another reason given against gay or bisexual people. First of all, since when do humans obey what is "natural"? No other animal in the world apart from humans manufactures weapons or has technology or records history. Should we reject all of these things because they are unnatural. Second, look at two things considered unnatural in the past: women doing anything other than getting pregnant, black people being equal to white people. Again, I hope

that no one seriously believes that these are true, yet they were once considered facts. People would swear women were inferior to men and blacks were inferior to whites, just as people are swearing now that gay or bisexual people are morally inferior to heterosexual people.

Finally, religion. Many people have religious beliefs which say that being gay or bisexual is a sin or unnatural. I respect the right of any person to believe in the religion of their choice. But religions have been wrong. Many religions have supported the inferiority of women, rejected the benefits of technology and censored other ideas because they went against the basic beliefs of that religion. Please, do not reject gay or bisexual people simply because your religion tells you to. THINK, then make a decision. Albert Einstein once said, "religion without science is lame." Religion without thought is blind.

Now, this campus is currently stressing diversity. There are many organizations for women and many projects for black history month. But this campus is basically homophobic. People in the Collegian articles were afraid to give their real names, and I cannot blame them. What fraternity would accept someone who is gay? How many people would be afraid to eat with someone who is gay, out of fear of being labeled? And how many "righteous" people would decide to use intimidation or force to show gay or bisexual people their view of "what's what"? Being gay or bisexual at UR is still a stigma, and our current diversity is far from complete.

So let's change things. I'm sick of hearing people talking about how they like the ideas of the Lambda Coalition and letting it rest at that. I'm tired of people laughing at the idea, making cracks about "fags" with their friends. It's time to take a stand. If you have an opinion, one way or the other, make it public. Do something to show where you stand. Write to The Collegian, post signs, argue with the guy making "fag" jokes with his buddies. It's easy enough to express an opinion with friends; it's time to stand behind your beliefs. If anything I said upsets you, write and complain. Tell me why you think I'm wrong, criticize what I said. If you agree

with me, do the same. But DO IT. Make your stand.

If you're reading this, so are people who think I'm a "fag" or "faggot-lover." I'll get comments, good and bad. I'll get a lot of flak from jerks, and disagreement from smarter people. But I said what I believe. I fully support the Lambda Coalition. I feel the University of Richmond is homophobic. I hope people will speak out and wipe out the stereotypes about gay and bisexual people.

If this campus is going to be fully diverse, we need to speak out against ALL stereotypes and prejudices. I've said my piece. Now it's your turn.

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