

# Editorial

## Drexel comment needed

When supportive residents of Powelton Village made the decision to stand in solidarity with a gay neighbor who had been experiencing harassment, it was a good day for the community.

After it was reported that someone or some group had stolen rainbow flags from the home of openly gay resident Kurt Conklin, as well as called him anti-gay slurs and urinated on his home neighbors — gay and straight — began displaying rainbow flags.

But despite this show of support, ignorance and intolerance continue to flourish under the cover of darkness and, allegedly, the influence of alcohol. Since Conklin went public about his harassment in October, more rainbow flags are still stolen, epithets are still being hurled, and property is continuing to be vandalized.

Most recently, during the early morning hours of Feb. 10, the viciousness of the attacks' anti-gay sentiment escalated when someone burned a rainbow flag and another had been ravaged and covered with the words: "Kill gays," and "Dykes and fag-gots burn in hell."

Although it can't be proved — police have no suspects yet — neighbors claim the perpetrators are students from nearby Drexel University who live in the neighborhood or pass through. These perpetrators hurl anti-gay slurs and anti-gay violence.

Powelton Village residents have renewed pleas for a response from Constantine Papadakis, Drexel University president, to address the issue.

Regardless of whether Drexel students are to blame for these displays of hate, this is an opportunity for Papadakis to take a stand on issues of acceptance and tolerance. If this is not the sort of thing Drexel students do, or are taught to do, why not say so? If Drexel would not stand for this kind of behavior and strives to teach tolerance, why not say so?

Papadakis' silence is helping no one. Speaking out against hate would not be an indictment of his students; it would show what kind of strong leadership they can find at Drexel. And if it happens the perpetrators are Drexel students, speaking out against these hateful acts may prompt them to stop and think before they act again.

Speaking up and taking a stand won't hurt anyone, but silence often does. ▼