

PVCA, Student Life speak out against intolerance

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In response to recent incidents in the Powelton Village neighborhood, the Powelton Village Civic Association, in collaboration with the Drexel Office of Student Life, arranged for a Nov. 1 meeting between PVCA members and Drexel students. The meeting, held at the Pan Hellenic House, was titled, "Speak Out: Gays on Campus and in the Community."

Jacquelyn Ford-Edwards, the associate dean of student life and director of multi-cultural affairs, led the discussion, which was centered around identifying and stopping homophobia.

The meeting began with an

overview of recent anti-homosexual harassment. According to the PVCA, a Drexel student was allegedly involved in verbal harassment and vandalism of an apartment which was flying a rainbow flag.

"I'm really convinced that our neighborhood is not some kind of playground," Powelton Village resident Joyce Miller said.

This sentiment was echoed by many in the audience.

"To remain silent in the face of that behavior is to condone it," the Reverend Patricia Pearce told the crowd.

Although some at the event saw alcohol and parties as the root of the problem, most of the audience pushed for more diver-

sity-based education on the part of the University.

"Often times, [students] don't know themselves why they think that way," Ford-Edwards said.

In order to fight these prejudices, Ford-Edwards will be working with the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI), which has been at Drexel since the spring of 1999. The institute is a "leadership training organization that trains communities to facilitate prejudice reduction workshops, as well as to mediate inter-group conflict," Ford-Edwards said.

She added that NCBI "really allows [someone] to connect with people for who they are....

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Jacquelyn Ford-Edwards of Student Life responds to intolerance Nov. 1.

Student Life to teach tolerance

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[The program] helps students recognize [people with lifestyles different from their own].”

According to John Hall, associate professor in the College of Information Science and Technology, the problem of intolerance must be addressed at a university-wide level, including faculty and administration.

“When it comes right down to it,” Hall said, “...you don’t really have direct authority. What students have to see is that [professors and administrators] are a part of [the solution] too. The idea that the President gets involved with this is perfect.”

In a Nov. 2 interview with members of Drexel University’s Straight and Gay Alliance student organization, Carolina Zuppardo, co-president, told *The Triangle* that the University Seminar course, mandatory for all freshman, should be more focused on diversity.

“[Diversity] should be one of the more important parts of the course,” she said.

Ford-Edwards told *The Triangle* that her office will continue its outreach to the Powelton Village community, as well as to the University’s students and staff. This will include the distribution of rainbow stickers to the students and faculty who wish to show support for the gay community.