gay & lesbian students union minutes & commentary
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the following is a record of the events of the 1989-90 school year. it was not decided until the end of the year to record the happenings, so some of the details may not be exact.

**FIRST SEMESTER**

there was no official intern this semester. the only organized ASIS event was a private party (alcohol) on November 10 in Hallowell basement. this party was given as an alternative to the fall formal. attendance was good, but money was lost nevertheless.

Sager brought one speaker to campus this semester: Olga Broumas, the poet. she spoke on November 14.

**SECOND SEMESTER**

the interns were David Papanikolas and Jennifer Koosed ('93). on February 3, ASIS took a field trip to Giovanni’s room in Philadelphia to buy books and records. the books cost approximately $170. this money came from our book fund, the records were for our radio show. Radio ASIS aired every other Sunday from 4:00 to 5:30 pm.

we played music written by known gay/lesbian/bisexual artists, those rumored to be so, or any artist that challenged sexual stereotypes. our events were announced, as well as public service messages relevant to gay/lesbian/bisexuals.

on February 17 we hosted another private party. once more it was in Hallowell basement, attendance was very good, and we made money (admission was $2.00).

our next event was an open forum on gay/lesbian/bisexual issues at Swarthmore and on a personal level. also, there were a number of ASIS people speaking as well as ASIS people in the audience. attendance was surprisingly good—about 40-50 people from the general student body. a mailing list was compiled at this meeting; reaction was very enthusiastic and it was decided to repeat the open forum later in the semester.

on February 28 at 7:30 pm in Kirby lecture hall a movie was shown. it was Desert Hearts and it was rented from West Coast Video on Baltimore Pike. attendance was fair.

Sager weekend began on March 22 with the showing of Harvey Milk at 7:30 pm in Kirby. attendance was good; the movie was rented from Swarthmore College Library. later that night pink triangles were put up over campus that read “Gay men use the library”—and such like messages. the messages were to emphasize that homos/bisexuals are everywhere and that we are average people. the general response to those signs was good, there was some negative responses. some people were not
sure if the signs were meant to be derogatory or not.

Friday was the day when students wore jeans and pink or lavender ribbons to show their support of gay/lesbian/bisexual rights. There was also a table set-up in parish parlors that had relevant literature about alternative sexualities available.

Sager 8 lectures started Saturday with the musicalologist Phillip Brett. Julie Abrams also spoke Saturday about lesbian literature. Saturday night there was a party co-sponsored by ASIS and the Womyn's Center to commemorate womyn's herstory month and Sager weekend. It was held in the Old Club. This party was immensely successful, both sponsors are interested in starting a tradition of the co-sponsored March party. On Sunday Vido Russo spoke about gays in the movies.

Our next event was on April 13 (?). ASIS and the Womyn's Center had a get-together in ML lounge. Movies were rented.

Another ASIS party was thrown to counter Spring Formal. Again, it was in the Old Club. Attendance was very good and money was raised. Another open meeting was also given. Attendance was very good - about the same as the 1st meeting. There were new ASIS speakers.

Our last all-camp event was an all-campus study break on April 26 (?). The food was bought using our funds and it was held in the social center. There were many people - very successful.

In May there was another small ASIS/Womyn's Center party in ML lounge. We rented movies and ate pizza using the money we earned from our co-sponsored party.

On the afternoon of May 13, ASIS had a picnic for its members. Because of rain, the picnic moved from the Crum to the ASIS room. Throughout 2nd semester, ASIS was also active in the attempt to get an Intercultural Center established at Swarthmore.
The following is an account of the actions taken by ASIS during the fall '90 semester:

The first few meetings were very well-attended with between 15 to 20 students at every meeting. Jennifer koosed and David Papanikolas called the first meeting together. Both were willing to stay on as co-interns unless somebody else wanted to do it. Alex Joseph decided that he would like to be a co-intern, so Jennifer and David discussed among themselves who would stay. It was decided that David would leave, Sandro e Weiss, and Pat Egan volunteered to be new student appointments to the Super Committee.

The third meeting of the semester was held in the Video Classroom in McCabe. We showed “DiAna’s Hair Ego: AIDS Info Upfront,” a short film about a woman who distributes AIDS information from her beauty salon in a small southern town. The video was provided by Jon Wald. About fifteen students from Temple University attended the meeting. There were between 30 to 40 students in attendance.

Around the same time in the semester, Bill Bullock from Psych Services contacted Jennifer and David about offering his services to the g/l/b/q community at Swarthmore. Bill is a gay grad student from Widener, getting a Ph.D. in clinical psychology and doing an internship at Worth Health Center. He came to an ASIS meeting and gave a rather long-winded presentation of what he has to offer the community.

Also at the beginning of the semester, Pat Egan organized an all-campus “To Hell with Helms” party to raise money for homophobic senator Jesse Helms’s opponent’s campaign. The party was a huge success. However, not very
much money was raised. Unfortunately, Helms was reelected.
In early October, ASIS organized an Open Meeting to coincide with National Coming Out Day. The meeting was held in DuPont 190 for lack of better available space. There were only about 30 people in attendance, most of whom were already lesbian/bisexual/gay. Therefore, the meeting was not terribly effective in reaching the Swarthmore community at large.

Rather than host a party that would be an alternative to the Fall Formal, ASIS decided to host the Formal itself. Elaborate plans were made to create a theme which would incorporate heterosexual and homosexual couples alike. However, the Student Affairs Committee (SAC) rejected our bid and instead appointed the women of Parrish East to host the affair. This was simply the beginning of several problems with SAC throughout the year. ASIS hosted its alternative party in the Old Club on the night of the Formal. Ohos did the music. The turnout was fair. We barely broke even.

The final official ASIS event of the semester was a dinner for faculty (heterosexuals included) and gay/lesbian/bisexual students. This event took place the Tuesday before Thanksgiving in the Ashton House. Kathy Skozec, Sarah Bridges, and David did most of the planning and cooking. They prepared spanikopita (spinach pie) and Greek potatoes. Faculty were asked to bring desserts. White wine and apple cider were served as beverages. There was a total of about 40 people in attendance.
the Interns this semester were aaron agne & jennifer koosed.

we had the radio show from 2-4 pm every sunday (just like last semester). along with our normal selection of current tunes by/for/about gays, lesbians & bisexuals, we had 2 classical shows & 1 jazz/blues show.

a small group of g/l/b students went to talk to Bob barr, dean of admissions, to see if we could get a pamphlet out on perspectives about gay life at swarthmore. he refused saying something like "we didn't want swarthmore to look as if it were favoring g/l/b."

he did, however, offer some suggestions such as printing our events every week in the weekly news since perspectives got a copy of it. we did start doing this.

also, the pennsylvania sodomy laws ended up in the student handbook this year under sexual abuse/assault. therefore, a group of g/l/b went to talk to pat whitman about removing them. she was suprised that they were there & agree that they should be removed. hopefully, they will be.

pat whitman also facilitated an advocacy group for g/l/b students. meet weekly to learn interpersonal skills, discuss problems of communication etc.

in february, march & april g/l/b students rented the student council van & went to the gay dances at pennsylvania. these dances occur every month on the 3rd or 4th saturday of the month (i don't remember which). student council van costs about $8 dollars & our funds pay for 1/2 of that.

we had one open meeting this semester. we attempted a new format. a topic was chosen to discuss. the topic chosen was outing. the date was 22 february. this was also the day of the collection to discuss the destroying of the welcomax portrait & some of the other racist happenings on campus. this collection was terribly emotional & upsetting for all. consequently, there were only 4 people at the open meeting & 3 were members of the g/l/b group. therefore, the meeting was cancelled.

during the 2nd week of march, it was decided to change the name of the group. people had the following problems with ASIS: "alternative sexualities" was offensive & derogatory as well as implied "choice." "integrated" was also offensive because integration often means losing one's own identity. therefore, the name was changed to Action les-b-gay. this group became the political action/educational outreach group. the discussion group that formed at the end of last semester continued every thursday. these two groups plus advocacy + sager committee all became listed under the heading of the alliance.

sager week-end was 22 march through 24 march. the theme was creative responses to AIDS. a portion of the AIDS quilt was shown
On 21 March, Action LGB-Gay showed the documentary Common Threads in KIrby. 

The event was well attended. That night we put up gay positive graffiti on most of the sidewalks on campus. However, it rained the next day erasing our chalk graffiti so it was only visible about 1/2 of the day. Friday was also a piano day to support gays/les/bisexuals. At 8 in Dupont-Leesville Hall, Douglas Crimp gave a talk entitled “Portraits of People With AIDS.” That night from 10-2am Action LGB-Gay, the Womyns Center + the Debate Society hosted a private party in the MLK Breakfast room. Old to Sun died, attendance was good—we broke even.

On Saturday, there were many events: “Complications of AIDS: the response of Law to HIV” was a talk given by Nan Hunter in the morning, at 2pm Craig Harris spoke. The talk was entitled “A is for access...or is it once?” This was followed by a dance performance by Stephen Koplowitz + Company + a reception. That night was the Sager dinner. There were more people in attendance than at any past dinners. The day ended with a musical revue: “C’est la Guerre: A wartime revue of songs from the Age of AIDS.”

There was only one lecture on Sunday given by Ann Meredith about Womyn + AIDS: “The Hidden Population of the AIDS Epidemic.” Her photographs of womyn with AIDS were on display in McCabe Library the entire month of March.

It was decided in March to have open library hours every Wednesday from 7pm-10pm. This started last March and continued through the year.

On 6 & 7 of April Samuel Delany—an African-American gay science fiction writer—gave a series of lectures. This event was hosted by Action LGB-Gay, the BCC, and Swell among others.

A movie about lesbians who choose to be mothers was shown on 25 April in the PAC. This movie—Choosing Children—was poorly attended.

A coalition of 5-6 people wrote a formal proposal for an Intercultural Center. The Action LGB-Gay representatives were Aaron Agin & Jennifer Koosed. After lots of meetings with President Fraser, Deans, Committees, etc., the proposal was finally approved. Unfortunately, only the idea of an IC was approved—none of the details. We are in the process of fighting for a proper space (we proposed old terbly), a director, and a budget. As of the end of the semester there is $25,000 for remodeling, $15,000 from the President’s discretionary fund, and $10,000 from senior class gifts. A space has not been decided upon by space committee & the college refuses to hire a new person to be the director. Much work is still needed to create an effective, active IC.

Because of the severe lack of communication + participation within the gay community this semester, a community meeting was held in Bend at 10:00pm on May 1. Joe Mason—the gay man who is dean of black minority affairs + director of the BCC—facilitated the discussion. Some complaints were aired + ideas were generated about how
to be more inclusive & get people to participate. Since it was the end of the semester, nothing concrete was planned except that another community meeting should be held at the beginning of next semester.

jk.

2 events were accidentally left out of the account of fall '90: Becky Birtha + Matthew Stadler both came to read portions of their work. Becky Birtha was primarily sponsored by Sager. Matthew Stadler came for free to read from his new book *Landscape Nemosis*. He is a friend of a piscival student here.
Sept. 13, 1991

Community mtg. to be held Wed 18, & will see what happens. This is Miranda.

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Minutes &

Commentary