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Housing

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In 1999, the University considered creating a separate hall for gay students, but the proposal was vetoed out of fear the hall would segregate residents. The housing department developed a "neighborhood" option instead, allowing gay students to request rooms next to each other within a hall, but Housing Director Mike Eyster said few students have expressed interest in the program.

Although the idea of a separate residence hall hasn't been discussed lately, LGBT Director Chiora Martin said the LGBT and University Housing already educates resident assistants about gay issues, and they have talked about having workshops to inform residents about homosexuality.

Martin said they also hope to create a safe zone for gay students to go to for support, possibly with stickers or magnets students could place on their doors indicating their rooms are gay-friendly.

Residents who are having problems with their roommates can submit an application to move to another room, but Hasche said he doesn't want to move because it would send the message that he is trying to hide his sexuality.

"My roommate is the one with the problem, and he should be the one to move out," he said.

Hasche said he believes one way to make the residence halls friendlier would be to add a question to the housing contract asking whether a student would feel comfortable living with a gay student.

Freshman Austin Shaw-Phillips said she already knew her roommate from high school and has a comfortable roommate situation. She said living in the residence

halls can be a scary, hostile environment; she believes adding a question about how comfortable students feel about homosexuality to the housing contract could potentially help gay students living in the halls.

"I know when I am in my room that it is a safe place, and that is a start."

Austin Shaw-Phillips
freshman

"I know when I am in my room that it is a safe place, and that is a start," she said.

Matt Strickland, also a freshman, said he believes the housing department tries to create a friendly environment, but the residents ultimately make the living situation positive or negative. However, he said he does not think adding a question related to sexual orientation would solve the problem.

"The question would not prevent a person from getting a gay student if his or her roommate had not come out," he said. "I think we should focus on creating awareness, and how to get along with people who have different ideas."

Martin said LGBT and the housing department have no plans of adding a question about sexual orientation to the housing contract, and she does not believe such a question would create a friendlier living environment.

"We need to educate the whole community, and checking a box is not going to make things better," she said.

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