

# Lavender Ceremony hails gay students

■ Graduating LGBT students will be recognized for their accomplishments at the seventh annual observance

By Danielle Gillespie  
Oregon Daily Emerald

On June 13, the University's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Educational and Support Services Program will host its seventh annual Lavender Ceremony in honor of gay students graduating from the University this spring.

The ceremony, to be held at 5 p.m. in the Knight Library Browning Room, will honor about eight students who will receive a certificate and a rainbow tassel. LGBT Educational and Support Services Program Director Chicora Martin said the ceremony is a celebration that recognizes gay students for their accomplishments at the University and is meant to encourage them to continue to achieve in life.

Senior Crystal Middlestadt said she looks forward to walking in the ceremony and has been helping to organize the event.

"I think that it's important to recognize the accomplishments of LGBT students in the community and on campus," she said.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Alliance Issues Coordinator Kristina Armenakis said she thinks the ceremony is a place where gay students can be part of their own community and have the freedom to celebrate.

"It's a place where I could bring my girlfriend, and we could kiss and take pictures, and I would not feel uncomfortable with who I am,"

she said. "At a regular graduation, people would expect that my boyfriend would come and that I would be getting married after this."

At the ceremony, the Women's Studies Program will announce the winners of its Bruce M. Abrams Award, which is given to two students, one undergraduate and one graduate, for the best projects in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Studies. The project can take many forms, such as music, visual art, drama or creative writing, accompanied by an essay explaining the aim of the project. The winners will receive a certificate and a \$500 scholarship.

"This award is really important because it contributes to the heightening and elevating of issues around social equality," Women's Studies Professor Lynn Fujiwara said. "The purpose of this essay is to support the students."

In addition, the LGBT will also be giving plaques to faculty, staff and students for commitment to the community and furthering gay rights issues.

"I think it's always fun to get together with other LGBT students," Armenakis said. "This is a great way to recognize them for their leadership on this campus."

Martin said the ceremonies will be a casual event and there will be cake and hors d'oeuvres for people to enjoy. She said anyone who would like to participate in the ceremony can still sign up. In addition, if a gay student can't attend the ceremony and still wants a tassel and certificate, he or she can contact Martin at 346-1134.

E-mail reporter Danielle Gillespie at daniellegillespie@dailyemerald.com.

## Fairmount

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The new child care center will combine five current facilities into one location and also house administrative offices. Child Care Coordinator Dennis Reynolds said the new facility, slated to open in January 2004, will see about 160 children per week.

"This is an improvement that we've been waiting for for a long time," he said.

Reynolds said the new site will be beneficial for a number of reasons. Vehicular access to current facilities in the EMU is difficult and moving the facility to a location other than the center of campus would be safer for children, he said. With many organizations vying for space in the EMU, the move could benefit those without child care needs, he added.

The University has already submitted and had its preliminary conditional-use permit returned, and hopes to propose a finalized version for city approval by the end of the month.

The Fairmount Neighborhood Association will use all available

means, including legal action, to stop the project, Fairmount Neighborhood Association spokesman Jeff Osanka said.

"We're not opposed to the child care center," he said. "We're opposed to the site."

The group thinks the University should work equally with it to find a suitable location in the neighborhood, Osanka said.

University spokeswoman Jan Oliver said the policy needs to be "re-examined."

"They chose to make the agreement," Osanka said. "The neighborhood has the right to insist they live up to that agreement."

Osanka said many in the group think the University should use land designated as institutional property before taking over already-existing housing.

"This one is a kind of lightning rod for controversy because it's the first significant project," Reynolds said. "We're not in the housing business. We're in the University business."

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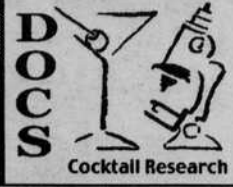
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