

If you're gay, wear denim—GPA

News Analysis

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"If you're not gay and all you have to wear is denim—well, it's nice weather to streak." That is a remark gay students may be making Thursday.

In an effort to obtain information on the number of gay students attending Iowa State, Gay People's Alliance (GPA) is proclaiming Thursday as Denim Day, asking all gay people to wear blue jeans.

Members of GPA will be stationed in various buildings and on walkways around campus with clipboards and cameras to record the number of students wearing blue jeans, said GPA spokesman, Steve Duhr, AA GC 4, of Clinton.

BUT ONE MAY SAY that a survey tabulating the number of students wearing "denim" on a particular day cannot accurately reflect the gay population at Iowa State, since jeans are common dress for most college students.

Steve Court, GPA secretary-treasurer, said GPA realizes this and by "announcing Denim Day as a survey, we're hoping students will look for a deeper meaning."

When asked if he thought students would be reacting from the psychological standpoint that others would consider them gay if they wore jeans, Court said he thought some students would.

Students who fear being "stigmatized as gay," but do not consider themselves homosexuals, will not wear denim Thursday. Those students

who see the Denim Day survey as a joke won't worry about it, Court said.

IN MAKING PLANS for the survey, members of GPA did not consider the possibility of some students reacting violently to the

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survey by taking physical action against students doing the tabulating. "We are acting within our rights," Court said, adding that he didn't think there would be any violence.

The idea for "Denim Day" was taken from a similar survey taken at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J., last spring.

Statistics gathered in the Kinsey sociological studies conducted in late 1940's state that 13 per cent of the men and 7 per cent of the women in any population at any one time are predominantly homosexual, Duhr said. "Thus on the ISU campus there should be approximately 2,000 gay people.

However, research on the gay population is lacking."

THE GPA has encountered opposition from many sources on campus against the recognition and funding of the group, Duhr said.

Part of the reason for opposing the group is because of its small membership, Duhr added. GPA has five paid members, with about 15 students attending each meeting, Court said.

"Factions within GSB (Government of the Student Body), have opposed GPA," said Court, "IFC (Intra Fraternity Council) spoke out against GPA when we came up before the senate finance committee for funding. I've also heard students in the dorm make comments like, \$700 for 10 members?"

"The GPA has claimed that although it may be small in regular membership, it is a service organization designed to help the total gay population of the university and the Ames community," Duhr said.

Gay students are asked to wear blue jeans or jean skirts, and no distinction will be made between brands of blue jeans. If any gay people do not have blue jeans, they should wear or carry an article made from denim, Duhr said.