

# Allied Faces

by Tommy Rimbach

*It is exciting to introduce the University community to the newly elected secretary and board member of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender - Straight Alliance. Jessica Danielle Stewart is a junior biology and spanish major from Wilson, N.C. Jessica maintains a busy life at the University as an active member of the GLBT-SA, the Black Student Movement, and the Minority Association of Pre-Health Students, General Alumni Association, and Carolina Fever. She also is a volunteer at UNC Hospitals and is a member of the service/honors organization Sigma Alpha Lambda.*

**So tell our readers about Jessica Stewart, stuff that we don't know already.**

I'm an AOL Instant Messenger addict, and it's so sad. One of my favorite things to do, other than to go running and to read a good, long book, is to put quotes from my friends on my AIM or Thefacebook profile. In fact, I want people to facebook me and look at my AIM profile. Outside of schoolwork, it is my life - ha.

**Why did you decide to become involved with GLBT-SA?**

I actually didn't know much about GLBT-SA until the forum during the fall semester hosted by the Black Student Movement and GLBT-SA. Personally, it affected me because I knew that I couldn't just be passive about my commitment to equality for all minority groups. I really have to thank one particular person who I talked to after the meeting because he actually invited me to my first GLBT-SA meeting. He didn't know me, but he really reached out to me, and I'm very grateful for that.

**So I hear you've just been elected as GLBT-SA's new secretary! What are your hopes for next year while serving on the board of GLBT-SA?**

I hope that I can work to make GLBT-SA a more accepting place. This year, there was a lot of discussion about the inclusiveness of GLBT-SA or lack thereof. I think that a lot of valid arguments were brought up. I also believe that there is a real desire to change this image.



**How do you feel about the climate on the University's campus for LGBTIQ and allied students, professors, administrators, etc?**

Overall, the University is accepting of the LGBTIQ and their allies. I think part of the reason people choose to come to this school is because it is seen as an accepting place which encourages diversity of all kinds. However, I think that the hate crime this year shows that we cannot become complacent because of the image others have of us. I think it is important, especially as an ally, that I be proactive in my commitments to the LGBTIQ community.

**There has been much discussion and debate over inclusion, racism, and sexism within the organization. How do you envision the organization adequately involving the entire LGBTIQ and allied community in 2005-2006?**

As I said, the first step has already been taken. In order to fix a problem, you have to admit that it exists, and I think this has been done. I think the formation of new groups such as U.N.I.T.E.D, WLW, and Gender Mutiny is very important as well because it gives a voice to people who may or may not be comfortable in the GLBT-SA. I think that if GLBT-SA wants to send a strong message, then we need to work with all of these groups to achieve our common goals.

**It mentions on your profile on the Web site <http://www.thefacebook.com> something about fag hags. Can you explain what that means?**

Well, I only recently learned what a fag hag was, but a fag hag is a female who identifies as straight and who has a lot of gay male friends. My comment on Thefacebook was said by my good friend Bernard in reference to the "magical powers" we hags seem to possess.

**Any plans to be an activist after college?**

In a perfect world, I will go straight from undergrad to medical school, preferably in New York or Washington, D.C. But I do plan to continue to be active, not just in the LGBTIQ community, but also in the black and Latino communities while I serve as a doctor.