

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Editorials](#) | [Arts & Entertainment](#) | [Features](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Past Issue](#)

## News

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## SGA delays TRUTH resolution vote

by Elizabeth Hendler  
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**Rob Hoffman / THE SETONIAN** - Clockwise from upper right: Student Government Association Treasurer Santino Certo addresses the Student Senate while At-large Senator David Hartley waits to speak. At-large Senator Stephanie Devita and SGA Communication Director Brian O'Malley listen on Monday at the Senate meeting. The SGA debated for more than four hours on a TRUTH resolution before postponing the vote.

A Student Senate resolution supporting and funding a campus gay-straight alliance was debated for four hours Monday night until not enough senators remained to conduct a vote. The issue will be reopened at next week's meeting.

Twenty students came to represent Trust, Respect and Unity at the Hall in support of the Student Government Association's resolution. Two students unaffiliated with a specific group came to oppose it.

The resolution, written by Senate Speaker Sheena Collum, a junior, seeks to recognize TRUTH, support and promote equality for TRUTH students and create a TRUTH Task Force. It also outlines a process to fund

Task Force initiatives including a publicity campaign, petitions and formal protests with the help of the SGA.

A member of each Senate committee would be appointed to work on the Task Force with TRUTH students if the resolution passes.

Senators discussed whether or not the issue required outreach polls to constituents before it could be voted on.

"Student leaders are elected for a reason," SGA Communication Director Brian O'Malley said. "You're here to make decisions not based on what a poll says."

But Matthew Steele, an Arts and Sciences senator, said the turnout Monday night did not represent the student body.

"I personally agree with this resolution. I would cast a favorable vote, but I have no idea what (my constituents) are thinking," Steele said. "No one has asked everyone on campus how they feel."

Resident Senator Benjamin Zipf argued if students felt strongly about the issue, they should have come to the Senate meeting or contacted their senators.

• [XAVIER HALL DOWN](#)

• [South Orange Curves pose d student driver](#)

• [SGA delays TR resolution vote](#)

• [Investigation o bias incident](#)

• [Walking for a](#)

• [Festival celebr diversity](#)

• [Blood drive co pints](#)

• [Course to covr liberties next s](#)

• [Student petitio free weekend pass](#)

• [Caro: LBJ a gr](#)

• [Political Show](#)

• [Retired profes dies at 68](#)

• [Finance and E clubs 'Light th leukemia](#)

• [Business Scho closing bell on](#)

• [Children Toget hope to abuse](#)

At-large Senator Stephanie Devita said she spoke to several constituents about the issue of the Catholic mission on Monday.

"Earlier this morning, I spoke to a seminary student whose personal opinion is that it is within the mission," Devita said. "(He said) as Catholics, we're called not to judge other people."

Another widely discussed aspect of the resolution was its tone and the standard it would set. Collum read a statement about the resolution from Dawn Williams, dean of Community Development, who could not attend the meeting.

"My read of the resolution is that it is an aggressive action plan," Williams wrote. "The resolution reads like a set of demands. It sets a precedent you may not wish to follow."

Senate Secretary Ann Armbrust said the resolution found a loophole, and passing it would make TRUTH the SGA's "baby."

"It creates a special interest group," Armbrust said.

Collum countered, "This committee's job would not be to be a part of TRUTH but to serve a liaison between the SGA and administrators without making TRUTH agree to the Memorandum of Understanding."

Collum referred to an offer from Student Affairs last year giving TRUTH special status as a group without formal recognition. The document also specified what the group could or could not do and specified it would not fall under the SGA. TRUTH had been approved for full recognition by the Student Organization Activities Council, a body that approves student groups before Student Affairs gives the final approval stamp.

While some TRUTH students initially supported the idea, none have moved forward. Several other students, including TRUTH's former leader and junior Anthony Romeo, took the issue to court and await a civil trial. Romeo is taking the semester off.

The SGA resolution calls Student Affairs' offer "inherently and fundamentally unequal."

At-large Senator David Hartley questioned the students' move to not accept the offer.

"A lot could be done to get your name out there and educate people instead of arguing about it for the next year," he said.

Freshman Senator Radim Dragamoca said he'd like to see the issue play out in court instead of before the SGA.

"These rash decisions would eliminate funds and alienate administrators," he said. "While we should give a world of support, it should not be this aggressive."

Junior and TRUTH member Matthew Rivers countered remarks about the Memorandum of Understanding by saying, "It's my job to promote equality, and I can't do that while at the same time I'm being discriminated against (by the offer)."

- [THE VOICE: Response help: Setonian grow](#)

- [Let's Talk About: should support](#)

- [Reader's Forum](#)

## This I Believe: Chalk erasure discouraging to GLBT students' efforts

by Kara Kurczeski  
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I am disappointed. These past two years and counting, I have made Seton Hall my home.

To me, home is wherever love is. Home is wherever you're not afraid to be yourself, knowing no one will think any differently of you.

My home did not show any love on Monday. For National Coming Out Day, the still unrecognized student organization, Trust, Respect, Unity at The Hall, or TRUTH, carried out the tradition of chalking positive messages, a tradition carried out on campuses nationwide.

The messages were to promote a positive identity for all students, but in particular, the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students. Even though there is no recognized student group to support them, we wanted students to know they don't have to be afraid of who they are. There are students here who will embrace and support them no matter what.

Those 20-plus students came together Sunday night with one common and simple goal: equality. We had laid our hearts on the pavement in the form of chalk.

Those same messages that promoted a positive diversity were washed away. By the time I reached the Green at 8:15 a.m. Monday, all the beautiful things we had written were almost completely gone.

Moreover, a lot of people came up to me in disgust, not even realizing that I was very much a part of the chalking, physically and emotionally. The university did not even have to wash away those messages of love and understanding because I saw students doing it themselves.

All that was left of those messages were wet bricks and broken hearts.

Do you know what it feels like to wake up the next morning to find out that your home does not care about your heart or your equality?

Surely some of you do. It was not too long ago when other groups in our nation were fighting for equality, not just on college campuses, but in city streets nationwide. Why can't we rally behind our brothers and sisters and not argue about our differences but accept one another because of our differences?

Maybe seeing, "1,000 Seton Hall students are gay," on the sidewalk Monday made you uncomfortable. Well, that was the point. The messages were not just for GLBT pride.

They were meant for everyone else to realize the plight of this community on our campus and to recognize how damaging prejudice can be.

We live in a world today where cookie-cutter Americans are becoming hard to come by.

It's about time we all accepted that.

"The world is a dangerous place not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing." - Albert Einstein



[News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Editorials](#) | [Arts & Entertainment](#)  
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He said he couldn't operate under the deal because he wouldn't be passionate about it.

Commuter Senator Christopher LoSapio said the students want to jump into the water while the administration is asking them to stick their toes in.

"I don't feel like we should meet resistance with resistance," LoSapio said. "Our job is to serve as a bridge, and I don't want to burn any bridges down."

Diplomacy Senator Jennifer Ko said she doubted the resolution would be effective even if passed.

"I don't think the university will allow us to exploit that loophole," Ko said.

Collum said she did not believe the resolution used a loophole.

Ko went on to question if Community Development would cut off funds to all SGA groups if the SGA approved this resolution.

However, Kevin Clark, associate dean of Community Development, said that was very unlikely.

TRUTH students present at the meeting stressed the group would uphold the Catholic mission statement and passed out copies of the official Catholic teaching on homosexuality.

They also passed out a proposed constitution and proposed events, including a Matthew Shepard vigil, a national day of silence, a showing of the HBO series "Angels in America" and a discussion on being gay and Catholic.

The students defended the recent chalking for National Coming Out Day, something several senators described as offensive.

"The reason why it was done was that we have nowhere to go on campus," senior Vincent Moschetta said. "The school has turned its back to us. They offer us some things, but why should we have to compromise and settle down? There should be no compromise of civil rights."

Opposing students included senior Lynne Seborowski spoke against the chalking.

"To write about upcoming campus events or to chalk messages about voting in an upcoming election or for certain candidates is certainly and obviously not the same as writing, and I quote, 'Is this guy gay?' with an arrow pointing to an unknowing person sitting on a bench or writing, and I quote, 'gay parking' on an administrator's parking space in front of Mooney Hall," she said.

She called the chalking a "blatant disrespect for Catholic morals" and a defacement mocking the discrimination of gay people.

She also said, "It was a very poor attempt by juvenile, more inexperienced members of the student body to try to gain notoriety on a campus in which the student population, as a whole, does not support them."

Seborowski left after reading her statement.

Arts and Sciences Senator Gregory Demers agreed with some criticisms of the chalking.

"I sympathize for the students who want gay rights, but they blatantly displayed gay pride across our campus," Demers said. "It walks a fine line."

He agreed the students should move forward with Student Affairs' offer.

Business Senator Sebastien Charles also disagreed with the chalking.

"They need to have a better approach," Charles said. "They didn't do it the right way, and that's why students get upset and do hate crimes."

However, Treasurer Santino Certo countered by saying the SGA could control TRUTH's activities and prevent future problems because the resolution allowed for the SGA to approve or deny TRUTH activities and funding.

"Just look at this resolution," Certo said. "It prevents discrimination, upholds the mission and celebrates identity. In my opinion, by voting this resolution down, you are against creating a safe campus."

Student Marc Schwartz came to speak out against the resolution but admitted he had only learned of the issue 30 minutes before the meeting.

"This goes directly against the church," he said. "By their definition, this group does not discriminate against any sexual preference. That would include necrophilia."

He also said it is a person's civil right to be wrong but not to do wrong.

Of the opposition's comment, freshman and gallery member Chris Ostros said, "I'm surprised there are people our age that are closed-minded and ignorant to the fact that all people, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, have basic human rights and an intrinsic dignity by being created in God's image."

A major point of contention was the SGA's role in funding TRUTH. The group agreed to an amendment to the resolution setting a cap on the funding. An amendment was not formally added, and no monetary cap has been set yet. Rivers said the students currently pay for all expenses themselves.

Dragamoca suggested the resolution would pass if it were broken into smaller, more manageable terms that could easily be agreed on.

If the resolution is passed next Monday, it must be approved by the SGA Executive Board. Should the board veto the resolution, the Senate requires a three-fourths vote to over-rule the veto.

Senators voted \_\_\_ to \_\_\_ against a roll call vote, which would officially record each senator's vote on the resolution and give the senators an option to give a statement about the vote.

Interested students can come to the Senate's meeting Monday at 8:30 p.m. in Kozlowski Hall Room 112 to express opinions on the issue.

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1 4 3 6

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## The Voice: Violations of student rights must stop

by The Voice

• [THE VOICE: Response helps Setonian grow](#)

• [Let's Talk About what should support](#)

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When did the university become so unconcerned with the rights of its students? Housing and Residence Life thinks it is OK to search students' backpacks as they enter dorms. What happened to a student's right to privacy?

The university insists that searching bags for alcohol when entering dorms is a policy they will enforce, saying it is for our safety, going so far as to compare the practice to searching a person's luggage before he or she gets on a plane.

The Setonian doesn't support underage drinking, but just because a few students may be drinking in freshman dorms shouldn't mean that every student, even those students returning from night classes, should be searched before they are allowed to enter the building.

Maybe the university took that No. 18 party school ranking a little too seriously.

The most outrageous part of the practice is that it isn't a university officer, as is stated in the HRL alcohol policy and the student handbook, conducting the searches.

What started as random searches by security has become a standard procedure. While before it was conducted based on suspicious duffle bags students were carrying, everyone is now subject to searches.

Not only does it waste students' time, but it degrades us. Does HRL have to assume the worst about everyone because a few students got smart and stopped hauling duffle bags in?

We don't pay thousands of dollars to live here and have our rights trampled on and HRL treat us like criminals before we even do anything wrong.

Now, instead of security doing searches, desk assistants are. This is beyond ridiculous. While security is trained about the legal can and cannots, students have relatively little authority and no training as to the rights of others.

And we've all seen DAs let their friends into dorms without IDs. Can they really be trusted for such a serious job?

Moreover, resident assistants, who almost never have to swipe into their buildings, are also given free passes from the searches. This allows RAs, even those in the "dry" freshman dorms, to bring in any alcoholic substances they want.



If HRL wants everyone searched, that should mean RAs too. Why don't we start searching hall directors and program coordinators, too?

The university needs to wake up and realize who they are here for: the students. Give us back our rights.



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# the setonian

MON, OCTOBER 25, 2004

Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey

Vol. 81

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Editorials](#) | [Arts & Entertainment](#) | [Features](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Past Issues](#)

News Archive 2004-05 NO. 07

More News &gt;&gt;

## University administrators: Pro-gay sidewalk chalking mistakenly washed away

### Students question the school's explanation

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Pro-gay messages written in chalk across campus early Monday morning were washed away in what administrators are now calling a mistake. Students, faculty and other administrators had expressed concern over the incident to Student Affairs. Some students are now doubting the response that it was a mistake.

A misunderstanding led to the messages being washed away, according to Dennis Garbini, vice president for finance and technology. No university department has an official policy on chalking.

The chalking was done late Sunday night into Monday morning by about 20 students, some representing Trust, Respect and Unity at the Hall, a gay-straight alliance suing the university for official recognition.

The messages were in support of National Coming Out Day, which commemorates the 1987 march in Washington, D.C., for gay rights.

By the time Laura Wankel, vice president for Student Affairs, contacted Facilities Engineering, chalk in front of Boland Hall, Aquinas Hall, Kozlowski Hall, the university chapel, the seminary and the Green had been removed. Chalk on the walkways from Xavier Hall down toward the Complex remained intact.

Some of the chalkings read "An injustice to one is an injustice to all," "1 in 10 is gay," "1,000 Seton Hall students are gay" and "2, 4, 6, 8! Don't assume your friends are straight!"

In front of the university chapel, "Jesus was an activist" was written. Across campus were written links telling students to E-mail TRUTHshu@hotmail.com.

Additionally, some locations including the center of the Green were heavily chalked with rainbow-colored bricks and the word "gay" written on every tenth brick.

Before being told of the misunderstanding, W. King Mott, associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences and faculty adviser to TRUTH, and sociology professor Philip Kayal wrote a letter to Student Affairs saying a precedent had been set with

- [XAVIER HALL 'DOWN](#)
- [South Orange Curves pose d student driver](#)
- [SGA delays TR resolution vote](#)
- [Investigation c bias incident](#)
- [Walking for a c](#)
- [Festival celebr diversity](#)
- [Blood drive co pints](#)
- [Course to covr liberties next s](#)
- [Student petiti free weekend pass](#)
- [Caro: LBJ a gr](#)
- [Political Showc](#)
- [Retired profes dies at 68](#)
- [Finance and E clubs 'Light th leukemia](#)
- [Business Scho closing bell on](#)
- [Children Toget hope to abuse](#)

other student groups using chalk and calling the removal of the chalk "tacit," "sanctioned" discrimination.

"The dissimilar treatment afforded these students communicates a continuing bias against (gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender) students," Mott and Kayal wrote.

They asked if an announcement would be made to the campus about the "prejudicial acts."

"While the erasure of chalk messages may seem trivial to some, a person must have great courage to present him or herself as a GLBT individual to a culture that is homophobic," they also wrote.

Kayal now says he believes the university's statement that the chalking was erased mistakenly, but he believes there's a lot of work to be done to make GLBT students feel welcome here.

"The administration's resistance to the (gay-straight) group is a disgrace and embarrassment and stands in contradiction to what is going on in virtually every other Catholic university that can be considered academically respectable," Kayal said.

Mott received an e-mail requesting further comments but did not respond by deadline.

The Student Senate also drafted a letter to Student Affairs decrying the removal of the messages and had the letter approved by the Student Government Association on Monday night.

It was delivered to Student Affairs on Tuesday. David Jacques, a junior who is spearheading TRUTH as junior Anthony Romeo takes the semester off, spoke to the Senate to rally support.

"Someone at Seton Hall made the decision that the sidewalks needed to be washed of their message," Jacques said. "A message of tolerance, of love, of compassion, washed away by hose, by truck and by bucket."

The SGA's letter read, "As leaders elected to represent the general student body, including those who are gay, we are more than disturbed about the actions taken by the university."

The Student Senate plans to write a resolution renewing support for TRUTH to be completed and voted on at next week's meeting, according to speaker and junior Sheena Collum.

In a response from Wankel, the issue was clarified.

"Please note that there was no direct request to wash these chalkings away by any office," Wankel wrote in an e-mail to the SGA. "I assure you of my continued support and willingness to work with you, the SGA, and our GLBT community to making our university a place where all of us can live and learn in a mutually supportive and respectful environment."

Collum responded: "I was not at all surprised to find out that Student Affairs was not the department that ordered the chalk be washed. I am confident that the administration knows the students mean business when it comes to basic human rights and dignity."

Facilities employees arrive at 6:30 a.m. and begin daily rounds of cleaning campus, including the Green area, according to Garbini. They halted cleanup around 9 a.m.

Two employees of the staff of 45 were told to clean the chalk off the sidewalks by their supervisor, Garbini said, although he would not specify a name.

When a Setonian reporter asked the two employees washing away the chalk for their names and asked who had told them to wash the chalk away, they refused to provide their names and would not specify who had directed them to clean the area.

Garbini said he is responsible for giving the employees instructions to clean campus and agreed with the initial call to clean it up.

"People are making it into something with more intent than there was," Garbini said.

"The (employees) didn't know what to make of (the chalk), not realizing the significance of the day," Garbini said.

However, SGA members and students who performed the chalking wonder why this message was washed away when other mass chalkings have been left intact. Last year, the SGA chalked extensively to promote its elections and the writing was untouched.

"This is the first time I've ever heard of them washing something away the next day," Brian O'Malley, SGA communications director, said. "That's ridiculous."

Wankel and other Student Affairs administrators plan to attend an upcoming SGA meeting to address these issues.

Jacques also said he doesn't believe the removal was common procedure.

"Sidewalk chalkings have lasted on campus for weeks and are only washed away by rain, or on rare occasions, at the school's request," he said. "Our chalkings were washed away by the school before the students were even awake."

Jacques said there are "blatant inconsistencies" between the university's explanation that it was a mistake and what really occurred.

"Someone told those employees to wash those sidewalks. We want to know who," Jacques said.

TRUTH member and junior Matthew Rivers said he doesn't buy the university's insistence it was a mistake, either.

"(But) if Dr. Wankel's statement proves to be true, then these groundskeepers need to be held accountable for what they did," Rivers said. "As that water moved brick to brick, washing away positive messages of equality, many students saw that as Seton Hall spreading messages that are contrary to the Catholic mission."

Furthermore, what makes Seton Hall's message on the subject more powerful is that seeing those groundskeepers washing away those messages empowered some students to do the same with their water bottles."

Rivers said he wants to know when and how someone will be held accountable.