

COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

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AIDS group may set up individual review policy

By JOHN A. OSWALD

The University's AIDS policy will likely mandate that the University deal with AIDS victims on a case-by-case basis rather than setting forth a proper list of procedures to follow, according to Senior Vice President Joseph Mullinix.

But even as the committee moves toward completing the report, some members are complaining that the group has taken an unreasonably long time to formulate its policy.

According to Mullinix, the report was held up by delays in the General Counsel's office review of the

document.

While Mullinix said in mid-October he expected the report to be released by the end of October, he said yesterday the report will not be released until sometime in December. Further delay may occur if the committee is severely divided over the language of the report.

Mullinix conceded that some committee members may be upset with the changes in the language.

“ ‘Soon’ is the word we keep hearing,” from Mullinix’s office about the report, Pinsky complained.

Paul Douglas, a committee member and GHAP coordinator, added, “I’ve been asking for quite some time” about when we were going to meet to discuss the report.

The revised policy statement, which has been under review by administrators in the Health Services and General Counsel’s office since the University AIDS committee last met in July, will be distributed to members of the AIDS committee this week, Mullinix said.

Mullinix rewrote the report to incorporate comments from committee members not present at the July

meeting, as well as results of a review by the University Associate General Counsel Howard Jacobson, and Director of Health Services Richard Carlson.

The administrators have been reviewing the agreed-upon report over the past semester for what Mullinix described as potentially dangerous legal language.

“It’s not just a question of substance but of language,” he said.

According to Laura Pinsky, an advisor to the campus Gay Health Advocacy Project (GHAP), the tentative policy set last July stated that the University does not permit discrimination against people with AIDS or those who have tested positive for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus).

“We want a report that states what our general policy will be: that these people [with AIDS] will be treated according to their individual problems. We won’t treat AIDS as the ‘bad’ disease,” she said.

Pinsky and other members of the AIDS committee would not comment further on the contents of the tentative report, or on any possible revisions of it, until they receive the revised version from Mullinix.

Mullinix has maintained that the report will keep with the spirit of the July tentative policy,

but despite his assurances, some committee members are worried that they may not recognize the revised report when they receive it.

Douglas said he is concerned the University lawyers may have severely weakened the committee's sentiments.

"I'm afraid the lawyers have gutted it—taken out all the strong language."

Committee members also said they have not received any updates on the status of the report over the semester.

Columbia College Dean of Students Roger Lehecka, also a member of the committee, said that the only thing he has heard about the University committee since the July meeting was the distribution of an AIDS information pamphlet last month by the University Health Service.

The pamphlet was a product of the work of the AIDS committee which includes faculty, staff, students, and administrators.

The AIDS committee will meet in early December, Mullinix said, and at that time will work out whatever remaining differences members may have with the final draft.

Committee members are not bound to sign the report if they disagree with its contents.

Kali Zivitz helped report this article.



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Joseph Mullinix