

# COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

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## AIDS group reaffirms current disease policy

By AMY BAYER

Most members of the University Committee on AIDS think there is no need to formulate a policy for AIDS separate from the current University policy for infectious diseases, according to Les Hollo, Head Resident of John Jay and member of the AIDS committee.

“The purpose of the AIDS committee is not necessarily to create a new policy. We are reviewing the existing policy to decide if AIDS presents issues that this policy cannot solve,” said committee member Kendall Thomas, a professor at the Columbia Law School.

According to another committee member, Director of University Health Services Richard Carlson, the present policy calls for the Health Services to examine infectious diseases on a case by case basis.

The committee is also examining

how the University should monitor AIDS victims.

“We have talked about how AIDS fits into the overall health policy and what kind of monitoring is needed, if any,” Senior Vice President Joseph Mullinix, chair of the AIDS committee. “We have not reached any conclusion on the idea of monitoring and some members on the committee feel very uneasy about the idea,” he added.

Mullinix said there had been concern among committee members that a monitoring system could compromise the privacy of AIDS victims.

Although the AIDS committee may not create a separate AIDS policy, members intend to “concentrate on informing and counseling the Columbia community in regard to this issue,” Mullinix said.

“We need to educate people to be aware of the unfounded stigmatization that has been created around this disease. We need to educate people

to respond rationally," Thomas said.

One project the committee plans to support is a pamphlet containing facts about AIDS. Committee member Laura Pinsky of Health Services proposed the idea of a pamphlet at the committee's Jan. 31 meeting.

"The pamphlet will state simple facts about how people contract AIDS as well as what present facilities on campus are available for people with AIDS," Mullinix said.

A draft of the pamphlet will be presented for approval at the next meeting on Feb. 14.

According to Thomas, educating the Columbia community on how AIDS spreads is a crucial function of the group. "One of the unfortunate consequences of the AIDS health crisis has been the unwarranted anxiety about the communicability of

the disease. The pamphlet will provide information and facts to calm these fears," Thomas said.

"The most positive aspect of the AIDS committee is its commitment to providing comprehensive education for the campus. But it is important that the educational information is not only disseminated but also absorbed," said Hollo.

"Among the Columbia community, it is necessary to educate not only the gay male students, but all students about what constitutes safe sexual practice," said Thomas.

Generally, the information available to the public about AIDS has been accurate, but some people still misunderstand the facts, according to Mullinix.

At Friday's committee meeting, Columbia College Dean of Students Roger Lehecka will talk about problems that have already arisen at Columbia concerning AIDS. Additionally, the committee will review the effectiveness of AIDS policies at other universities, Mullinix said.

Before the next meeting, Mullinix said he plans to contact managers in various areas of the University, such as residence halls, dining services, security, admissions, and personnel, to see if they have had any problems with AIDS and how they have handled the concerns and fears of the Columbia community.



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Joseph Mullinix