

# COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

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## Long awaited AIDS policy promises no discrimination

By Asha Badrinath

The long-delayed University AIDS policy report, expected to be released at the end of the semester, will recommend that the school take no special precautions and treat Columbia affiliates with AIDS "the way everybody else is," according to committee member Paul Douglas.

of the campus Gay Health Advocacy "Most of the specifics (of the report) are like 'you don't need to do anything special.' The report in no place says things that are different or contrary from general medical opinion," Douglas, who is also a member of the campus Gay Health Advocacy Project (GHAP), said.

The report will also suggest that University AIDS policy insure that affiliates who have or are perceived to have Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), AIDS Related Complex (ARC) or AIDS are protected from discrimination.

"These kinds of protection are partly already law. We have to be very careful to insure that the report does not conflict with these laws," Douglas said.

He emphasized that the report does not suggest separating affiliated people from the rest of the community.

“No one ever even suggested asking people who apply to the college to take a blood test. We just want some assurance that the University has committed itself that people who have or are perceived to have HIV, ARC or AIDS will be treated in the same manner as other people,” Douglas said.

Douglas stressed that the written policy will be legally effective in guarding against any future attempts at discriminating against affiliates with AIDS.

“We just want a piece of paper,” he said.

Concerns that the report be consistent with current laws regarding non-discrimination are causing delays in the release of the report, committee members also confirmed.

Last spring, Senior Vice President Joseph Mullinix, chair of the committee, said the report would include an overview of the AIDS issue and its relationship to Columbia as well as a policy statement prohibiting discrimination against people who have AIDS or are tested positive for HIV, the infectious agent associated with AIDS.

Despite charges by members of Columbia’s gay and lesbian community that the University is purposefully delaying the report in order to avoid being held accountable to a specific policy, Carlson said the delays are not deliberate.

“The committee report is not being held up deliberately by anyone. I think everybody’s anxious to get it done. I think Columbia has already put itself out front with its brochure,” he said.

“I don’t think they (the general counsel’s office) are dragging their feet,” Douglas

agreed.

Last fall the committee distributed a glossy, 32-page pamphlet entitled "Information About AIDS for the Columbia Community." The pamphlet discussed general information about the disease but did not mention a University policy towards afflicted Columbia affiliates.

Conflicts over the scope of the report, whether or not it should make recommendations, and how specific or general those recommendations should be are some of the issues that have delayed the report, Carlson said. But he added that despite the delays he still expects the report to be completed by the end of the semester.

"This will certainly be out by the end of the semester. It may take another meeting or two," he said.

In October, Carlson told *Spectator* that the completion of the report was just a matter of "dotting some i's and crossing some t's"

However, committee member Laura Pinsky, an advisor to the GHAP, said she is not sure when the report will be ready.

"I just don't know. I think we just need to wait and see," she said.

Pinsky said she was not happy with the delays, and that she thinks they put the committee in an unfavorable light.

"I think it reflects badly on us. But we're working on it with all the hard work and the good will that we can muster. I think this is worth taking a long time over. It's not anybody's fault," she said.

The committee, established in October of 1985, is now reviewing the third version of the report.

The committee met last week, and is making progress, according to committee members. The committee has another meeting scheduled for next week.