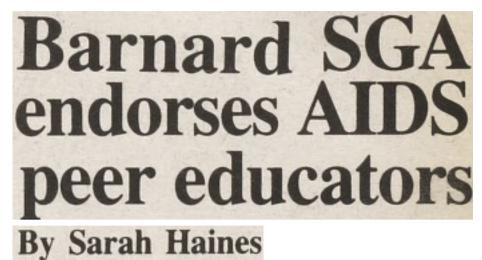
Columbia Daily Spectator, Volume CXII, Number 181, 22 November 1988 — Barnard SGA endorses AIDS peer educators [ARTICLE]



At last night's rep council meeting the Barnard Student Government Association voted to endorse the AIDS Peer Educators (APE), the AIDS education group whose workshops have been banned by the Barnard administration.

APE has been operating despite a moratorium imposed on October 20, when General Counsel and Vice President of Barnard College Kathryn Rodgers ordered the group to cancel its activities in Barnard dorms.

The administration contests that groups distributing important health information must be supervised by Barnard Health Services. APE operated under Barnard Health Services until this September, when it became an independent student group.

The Student Government Association's (SGA) formal endorsement of APE came after several weeks of silence on the issue by the student representative body.

"It took some time, but we feel we needed the time to make an intelligent decision," SGA President Christine Giordano, BC '89, said of the endorsement.

According to SGA Vice President for Student Government Leora

Joseph, BC '90, SGA's delayed response to the issue was partially due to its hesitancy to side with APE against the administration.

"That sentiment governed for awhile. We are in a very precarious position taking the side of the students," Joseph said.

"But the way [APE] exists right now, with their advisory board and panel of experts, we feel that they have a right to operate on this campus, so we are taking a stand against the administration," she added.

Joseph stressed, however, that SGA's "number one choice" is to see the conflict bet-

ween APE and the administration resolved.

"It makes me sick to see such fighting betwen administrators and students. It's just not appropriate," Joseph said.

Last night's endorsement was passed by SGA a week after the Columbia College Student Council endorsed and recognized APE, a move reported to SGA by CC Liaison Mary-Ann Matyas, BC '89.

"The AIDS Peer Educators asked for the [Columbia College] council's endorsement. The student council not only endorsed them, but recognized them as well, by offering them funding as an official group," Matyas said.

Although the SGA vote took place immediately after Matyas' report, SGA members stressed that they had not been pressured to act by the Columbia College council's endorsement.

"I want to make it very clear that the CC Council's decision in no way influenced us. To be honest, I don't understand the scope [of the endorsement] or its motives. I don't even think that any of the APE students are from Columbia College, although I'm not sure," Joseph said.

Joseph said that as far as SGA funding of APE is concerned, the AIDS education group would have to apply for funding at the beginning of next semester, as all new Barnard clubs must do.

APE member Pamela Mund, BC '89, said that while the group appreciated SGA's endorsement, they were concerned about the length of time that it took for SGA to address the issue.

"SGA said they were in a bad situation and that they couldn't endorse a group that was opposed to the administration. I don't know how they felt about it, but by not supporting us and by not taking a position, they were in fact on the side of the administration against us," Mund said.

"It's obvious that they were influenced by the position the administration took, which is really disturbing since they were elected to run things in the interest of the students, rather than the administration."

Mund added that she hoped the endorsement would be helpful.

She said the CC Student Council offered APE the option of applying for funding, but said the group has made no decisions yet.

In other business, SGA Representative Andrea Lehman, BC '89, opened the floor for discussion of the possibility of funding the Inter-fraternity Council (IFC) in order to compensate for the large number of Barnard students who are members of either sororities or coed fraternities.

"Eighty-six of the 197 women in sororities are Barnard students and so are 37 of the 65 women in coed frats. They are Barnard College students in leadership positions and we can't ignore them," Lehman said.

Lehman stressed that she is ideologically opposed to IFC and "all other discriminatory bodies," but that practically SGA needs to bear some of the financial burden for its students who are involved in the Greek system.

"I know that the CC Student Council is getting increasingly annoyed that so many Barnard students are not paying for the activities that they are participating in," she added.

No money from the Barnard student activity fees may be used for funding sororities or fraternities because of a clause in the SGA constitution stating, "No sororities, clubs involving elements of secrecy or membership on an exclucive basis shall be recognized at Barnard."

To overturn the constitution would require a two-thirds referendum by the Barnard student body, Joseph said.

Lehman stressed that no decisions were made at last night's meeting since a proposal has yet to be written.

"I opened this for discussion in order to make a more intelligent proposal, and to find a way of circumventing the problem between our ideological concerns and our need to pay for what our students are doing," she said.