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[ARTICLE+ILLUSTRATION]

Peer educators continue work in spite of ban

By Rachel Hall

The Barnard AIDS Peer Educators will continue to hold informational workshops at the Columbia College Women's Center despite a recent moratorium on their activities imposed by Barnard administrators.

The group held a workshop Wednesday night entitled "What Barnard College Doesn't Want You to Know About AIDS."

"We had this [information session] planned with the Women's Center one and a half months ago, and since it's not at Barnard, we're not breaking the moratorium," said Elizabeth Clement, CC '89.

Last month, Kathryn Rodgers, general counsel and vice president of Barnard College, ordered the group to cancel its AIDS workshops until it agrees to supervision by Barnard Health Services.

Rodgers said that while students are a critical component in the process of educating others about AIDS,

doctors must determine the manner in which information is presented.

The AIDS Peer Educators assert that they gather their information from an extensive network of qualified professionals including Laura Pinsky, director of Columbia's Gay Health Advocacy Project and author of **The Essential AIDS Fact Book**, and Marc Osfield, M.S.,

a health educator at New York University and member of the American College Health Association Task Force on AIDS.

While the group was originally affiliated with Barnard Health Services, members said they decided to become an independent student group this September when they "realized we were spending more time negotiating with them [Barnard Health Services] on curriculum than actually providing information—the service we had set out to provide," Pamela Mund, BC '89, said.

Mund said she met with Rodgers, Giselle Harrington, a Barnard Health Services therapist, two representatives from Columbia's AIDS Law Clinic, and Peer Educator Thalia Comninellis on Wednesday to discuss the possibility of negotiating an agreement with Barnard Health Services over supervision. The group will meet this Tuesday to decide whether to become completely independent of the school or to agree to the negotiations.

"Our interest was having the moratorium

lifted, but they said they wouldn't do that until we agreed to negotiate with them," Mund said. "It leaves us with two alternatives that we're not too happy about - either to completely break away from the school, which means we wouldn't be able to present our workshops on the Barnard campus, or to agree to negotiate."

However, Rodgers said she does not believe there are any issues that cannot be resolved. "We're having ongoing conversations, but I'm not going to discuss them," Rodgers said.

Mund added, "I don't foresee us having any workshops [on the Barnard campus] for at least the remainder of this term with the time resolving the situation will take."

Osfield said that of the many groups he has worked with across the nation, Barnard AIDS Peer Educators is "by far the best group."

"Educating people about AIDS is more than just getting up there and spewing out a bunch of medical studies," Osfield said. "They're providing exactly what's needed."



SPECTATOR/HEATHER D'ADAMO
Kathryn Rodgers