

COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

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[ARTICLE]

Barnes reappointed to run Law School AIDS clinic

By Gerson Rothschild

Columbia Law School's AIDS Clinic Advisor Mark Barnes has been reappointed and promoted to the rank of Assistant Clinical Professor of Law by the faculty of the school, according to Barnes, who said the faculty vote took place at the end of May.

However, the faculty has only approved the continuation of the program for the fall semester, he added.

"I'm gratified that the clinic will continue for an additional semester, but the challenge for the Law School is going to be the continuation of the clinic after the fall semester," he said.

The possibility that Barnes would not be reappointed caused over 200 students to hold a study protest on Apr. 13 outside the office of Law School Dean Barbara Black.

The clinic, which opened last September, enables upperclass law students to provide free legal services in discrimination cases involving people infected with the AIDS virus.

Barnes' absence would have threatened the existence of the clinic, according to a statement issued by Concerned Students for a Responsible Columbia [CRSC], an organization of students who work in the clinic.

“Mark Barnes is what this clinic is all about. He has knowledge and connections with city agencies that you can’t get from most other people,” said University Senator Russell Paul, a third-year law student, at the time of the protest.

Barnes said the clinic is important both because of its location and the experience it gives students.

“Columbia is uniquely situated to be a legal service provider during the AIDS crisis because Columbia is located in the epicenter of the AIDS epidemic. Twenty-five percent, one quarter of all reported AIDS cases nationwide, are in New York,” he said.

About 20 students, taken from more than 40 applicants, will work at the clinic in the fall, Barnes said.

Upper-class law students are allowed to act as legal representatives in New York State courts and agencies under the supervision of a faculty member, according to Barnes. In addition to Barnes’ reappointment, organizers of the April protest sought more student input in faculty appointments, greater gender diversity in the law school faculty and committees, and more commitment to client-based clinics like the AIDS clinic.

There are no plans expand the clinics during the fall semester because to do so would require more faculty hirings, according to Professor of Law and Director of the Law School’s Clinical Education Program Harriet S. Rabb.

In related news, Dean of the Law School Barbara Black sent a letter, co-signed by the deans of four other law schools, to President George Bush asking him to appoint new directors to the Legal Service Corporation. The current directors of the corporation, a federal organization which assists the poor, were appointed by Ronald Reagan, and, according to the letter, are not fulfilling the responsibilities of the organization.