

Columbia Daily Spectator, 29 October 1990 — CU AIDS policy prohibits discrimination [ARTICLE+ILLUSTRATION]

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CU AIDS policy prohibits discrimination

By Jessica Shaw
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The University's anti-AIDS discrimination policy, released in 1988, states that there are no prohibitions at Columbia against people who are HIV-positive in living areas, work areas, eating areas, or in the gymnasium, according to Director of Columbia Health Services Dr. Richard Carlson.

"The AIDS Policy is centered around the belief that it's not a casually contagious illness," Carlson said. "Students who are HIV positive are not considered dangerous to colleagues or fellow students."

According to the policy, a student or faculty member infected with HIV is not required to notify health services nor is anyone required to be tested, Carlson said.

"As long as they're behaving in a normal way, as people behave on campus, they're fine," he said.

People who are HIV-positive will not be discriminated against, in terms of hiring or admissions, but "may have difficulties if they're ill," Carlson said.

The report of the AIDS Task Force, which was the basis of the University's policy, calls for students and employees

policy, calls for students and employees who are infected to seek help from Health Services and to be careful not to transmit the disease.

“The Committee believes individuals at Columbia who have AIDS, ARC (AIDS-related complexes), or who know they have been infected by the virus may derive considerable benefit from the confidential counseling and medical help available at the Health Service, and urges such individuals to seek that help. In addition, the Committee feels it is imperative for members of the Columbia community who have HIV infection, ARC, or AIDS to take appropriate precautions to avoid transmission of the infection,” the report states.

In addition, the report said Columbia should keep the campus updated on all the latest information concerning HIV.

“The Committee recommends that Columbia continue to make available to students and employees accurate, understandable and current information concerning HIV infection and its medical and social implications. This program should be available to the entire Columbia community, both students and employees. It is only through such a broad sharing of information and view that the University as a group of individuals can respond to the AIDS epidemic in a knowledgeable, fair and healthy way,” the report says.

Drafting Columbia's policy took nearly

a year of discussion by the AIDS Task Force, which was comprised of health services personnel, gay and lesbian students, and University lawyers. The discussions of the task force were prompted by the acknowledgement that the University should be committed to fighting AIDS discrimination, according to Dr. Carlson.

Before the report was released, a tacit policy prevented discrimination against Columbia employees and students on the basis of HIV infection, Carlson said when the policy was released.

Although at the time of the report's release it was criticized for being overdue,

Carlson said there was no delay in the policy's release, saying it was a complicated issue that had to be read and approved by many people.

"We were churning along for months and everyone critiqued it. It went along pretty quickly for that kind of document," he said.

Since the policy was implemented almost three years ago, there have been no problems with discrimination against those infected with HIV, according to the Carlson.

"I am not aware of any student who has experienced discrimination," he said.

However, Director of the Columbia Gay Health Advocacy Project Laura Pinsky and Co-Director Paul Douglas said many cases of discrimination go unreported and others are settled quietly.

The Columbia AIDS Policy is very similar to those of other universities, Douglas said.

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The American College Health Association (ACHA) issued a similar statement saying people who are HIV positive are not a danger to peers, Carlson said.

Barnard College considered establishing an AIDS policy but decided it would defeat the purpose of an anti-discriminatory policy to discriminate by making a policy, according to Vice President and General Counsel Kathryn Rodgers.

“We discussed [having an AIDS policy] some years ago. Our policy is not to have a separate policy about AIDS. We treat all

students and faculty the same,” she said. “We decided a formal statement is redundant.”

“We considered the need for a separate policy on AIDS and we determined that it was better to treat disabilities arising from AIDS the same as any other disability which means everyone has the same rights and privileges as everyone else. This is consistent with the recommendations of the American College Health Association,” she said.

Director of Barnard Health Services Dr. Harriet Mogul agreed.

“We have a policy on disabilities that includes AIDS. The status at Barnard as a student or resident won’t be affected by any disease,” she said.

Some students at Barnard are disappointed Barnard has not taken a firm stand on this anti-discriminatory issue.

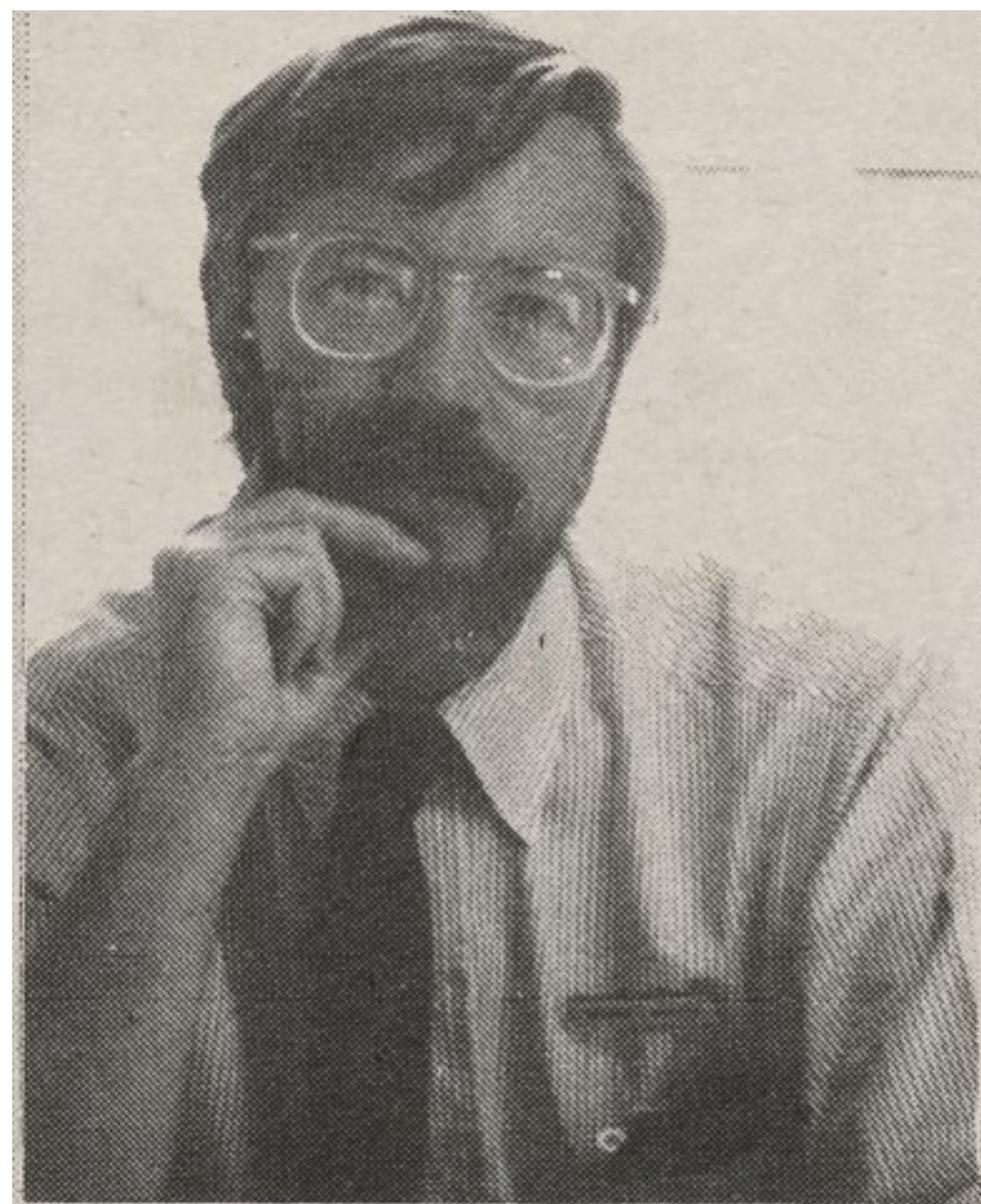
President of Barnard’s Student Govern-

ment Association Jennifer Cowan, BC '91 said although it seems as if AIDS is covered in the Race, Religion, and Ethnic Harassment Policy, AIDS should be mentioned by name.

"I don't think it does any harm to have another statement against discrimination of people with HIV," she said.

"AIDS is a new form of discrimination and not one as recognized as racial discrimination, but it's just as deplorable and just as important to fight it," she said.

Anke Ehrhardt, who is the director of the



SPECTATOR PHOTO FILE

Dr. Richard Carlson

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