

COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

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Barnard conference will address student activism

By Saara Lickley

Spectator Staff Writer

Representatives from 25 northeast colleges will discuss current problems facing college students at a conference to be held at Barnard College this weekend.

The student government associations of Barnard, Bryn Mawr College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, Vassar College, and Wellesley College will sponsor the conference titled “Students Tackling Issues of the New Generation (STING).”

The purpose of the conference is to address what students can do on their campuses in order to gain greater media attention and to affect public policy, said Leigh Fairchild, BC '92, president of Barnard's

Student Government Association. Fairchild said she hopes that through shared resources and increased communication, students can make a greater difference on campuses and in the national agenda.

“Most campuses are dealing with certain issues, such as AIDS and sexual harassment. Those types of issues, when addressed on a larger, intercollegiate level, will make more of a difference in the larger community,” Fairchild said.

The conference will include a workshop dealing with financial aid issues, a topic Fairchild said is ideal for STING to address.

Simultaneous action by students on 25 campuses will get more media attention and will effect administrators more, Fairchild said.

The conference workshops will also include discussion on such issues as AIDS, race relations, and sexual harassment.

Coordinators hope to develop suggestions on how to raise funds for AIDS education and research, as well as develop methods of raising awareness about the disease, according to Jeanne Rhee, BC '92, who will run the workshop along with

Students Providing Education and Counseling on HIV.

“We want to show students are aware and interested in this issue through working together to cooperate and coordinate actions,” Rhee said.

The conference will also include a panel discussion on student activism.

Both the level of student activism and the amount of media coverage of student action has decreased in comparison to the '60s, according to Barnard Assistant Professor of Political Science Michael Delli Carpini, who will speak on the panel.

Delli Carpini said he believes STING is a good idea because it can be an effective means of communication on political issues.

“All citizens have a civic responsibility for civic action. Students, especially from the schools involved in this organization, have a greater responsibility, since they are the greatest hope for the country,” he said.

Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger will also speak at the conference about the need for students to be active in dealing with national and social issues.