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Homosexual studies will not expand

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Despite a \$200,000 gift received last month to support Columbia College students interested in homosexual rights and studies, administrators are not currently planning to create a more solid academic program regarding those issues.

Several weeks ago, Andrew Lanyi established the George R. Lanyi Memorial Foundation Endowment in memory of his son who died of AIDS. Neither Lanyi nor his son attended Columbia College.

The gift is the first of its kind at the college.

The endowment will generate income to support financial aid for a needy student selected by the dean of Columbia College, according to Peter Pazzaglini, Columbia College director of development and alumni relations. The full gift will be received by the end of this fiscal year,

and the school has already received \$50,000.

The scholarship should be in place to be awarded by the 1993-94 academic year, according to Pazzaglini.

The dean of Columbia College will award the grant on an annual rotating basis to a student active in gay rights. This does not necessarily mean that the recipient must pursue courses in homosexual studies, although such classwork would probably play a role in the selection process, according to Pazzaglini, who added Columbia has an active gay community, although the University offers only a few courses specifically on homosexual issues.

"There are no plans to create a homosexual studies program or department," said Associate Dean of Columbia College Kathryn Yatrakis.

The grant received and the status of homosexual studies at Columbia pertain to the same subject, but there is no direct correlation, according to Dean of Columbia College Jack Greenberg.

Greenberg said there is no direct correlation between the college's development of homosexual studies courses and the cultivation of such grants. Columbia College also offers ample opportunity to pursue a course of independent study of gay issues. Also, the field overlaps significantly with others.

"We won't create a department on that, but there may be some interdepartmental programming," Greenberg said.

Several courses are offered in various departments that are related to gay and lesbian studies, according to Pazzaglini.

The criteria for selecting a student to receive the Lanyi scholarship will be flexible, dependent not

only on the courses he or she follows in homosexual studies.

In addition to the Lanyi grant, Columbia College development officers are currently courting other grants that deal with homosexual studies.

Dawn Adelson, development officer for young alumni programs, said she is currently ironing out details for a donation from Jean Baker, of Tuscon, Arizona. She said the grant in memory of her son, Gary Baker, CC '84, would support a student interested in issues concerning the gay community, and will probably be in the amount of \$50,000.

"It looks like it will be awarded to a student who has demonstrated strong writing skills and has interest in the gay community and gay studies," Adelson said.

The criteria for the grant have not yet been determined, although the terms, including whether the scholarship will be offered both to men and women, rather only for a male student, will probably be finalized next week.

"I would think that it could be both through academics and also through community work and campus activity," she said.

Professor of History Eugene Rice, who teaches "History of homosexuality in the West," said it would be a good idea to offer more courses on homosexual issues, particularly in light of the recent donations.

"It is sort of paradoxical to have fellowships for people interested in gay and lesbian studies, and then not have much gay and lesbian studies," he said.

Kevin Cassidy, CC '93, a student in Rice's course, said he would like Columbia College to offer more than that one course, which is offered only every other year.

"I think it's a good idea, especially because the University is taking money to offer scholarships in the area," he said.

"To a great extent, being in New York is a resource to the gay community, but still we should have something academic on campus that deals with the issue," he added.

Rice said the college needs a stronger academic program on homosexual studies. He said he has participated in discussion with various administrators in the past, but they have not been able to raise money to establish a program.

"We had for some years the idea for some kind of institute that would be similar to the women's studies and gender institute," he said.

Such an institute, he added, would serve as an umbrella organization, producing a bulletin and creating a core group of homosexual studies courses. The institution could then work in conjunction with students to establish programs such as a film or lecture series.

Because the history of homosexuality is a subset of sexual history, which, in turn is a subset of history, students are best off being trained in traditional history, and later pursuing a particular interest in gay studies, according to Rice.

Although Rice said the creation of a major in homosexual studies would not be appropriate, he said a concentration would be effective.

He said he does not know exactly what courses in gay studies are currently offered at Columbia, but many of the University's faculty members have both the competence and interest in teaching courses on gay issues.

"It's something that's perfectly possible in the near future with the resources we have and the people we have," Rice said.