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First woman to head Republicans speaks

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Raising the tolerance level of differing viewpoints on campus and promoting freedom of speech are two of the main goals of Joyel Rollow, BC '94, the new chair of the College Republicans.

Rollow, elected last semester, is the first woman in the organization's history to hold this office.

Rollow said she hopes her election will help to break the stereotypes that often surround the Republican party.

"Women often feel alienated from conservative causes because of outside pressure to be liberal," she said.

Rollow, who uses the title "chairman," said she would be pleased if her position could help more women identify with the conservative viewpoint, but added that it is not her primary goal.

"I hope my being chairman has a good effect because of who I am as a person, not because I am a woman," she said.

Rollow said one of her plans for this year is to increase tolerance of the conservative viewpoint on campus.

"There's a lot of baggage associated with being a Republican," Rollow said. "As a group we've felt

afraid to express our views in class and socially.”

College Republicans member Constantino Tobio, CC '95, said he is optimistic that Rollow's election will improve his organization's reputation on campus.

“People have accused the College Republicans of being sexist, racist, and other nasty things. Hopefully, Rollow's chairmanship will help break those myths about us,” he said.

Rollow added that these “myths” cause students to be embarrassed about being a Republican.

Rollow, as well as other members of College Republicans and College Democrats, agreed that the principle of freedom of speech needs to be respected on this campus.

“Conservatives are driven back into their rooms,” Rollow said.

President of the College Democrats Allyson Baker, CC '95, said she agrees with Rollow's standpoint on the need to respect differing viewpoints.

“People often use the guise of liberalism to suppress free speech,” she said. “We have no right to call ourselves a liberal, intellectual community without the respect for free speech.”

Rollow noted incidents last year, such as a College Republicans-sponsored barbecue that was held near several people conducting a hunger strike to protest the detainment of Haitian refugees suspected of being infected with the AIDS virus, that resulted in death threats to several members of the College Republicans. Members of the College Republicans were also spit on during the barbecue, Rollow said.

Spencer Lehv, CC '95, a member of the College Republicans, said he hopes that with Rollow's leadership, the campus will see the College Republicans in a better light.

"She offers a non-traditional point of view [in the Republican Party], that of a woman," he said.

Lehv added that members of the College Republicans see themselves as an inclusive group that hopes for more members of different races and backgrounds.

"Her being chairman is indicative of the growing importance of the voice of women in the Republican party," Baker said.

"Republicans are not just big fat guys with cigars," Rollow added, noting the rise of conservatism on campus. "People are now starting to admit openly to being Republican," she said.