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ROTC Ban mulled again

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ROTC ban ^{5/10/94} mulled again

Faculty Senate to vote Thurs.

By MICHELLE BEAUDREAU

SOUTH KINGSTOWN— Though the U.S. Department of Defense now allows homosexuals to serve in the military, the University of Rhode Island still may ban ROTC.

The school's Faculty Senate will debate whether to go forward with its plan to eliminate the program tomorrow afternoon at 3 in White Hall.

The Faculty Senate determined three years ago that the government's policy toward gays, lesbians and bisexuals violated the school's anti-discrimination policy.

The school was to notify the Department of Defense this month that the program would be discontinued and that admissions to the program would end in the fall of 1995.

The Faculty Senate's executive committee revisited the issue last month, and concluded that the school should go forward with its

plan to eliminate the program. But President Robert L. Carothers is not so sure.

The Faculty Senate's executive committee concluded that the government's policy does not go far enough because, according to its report, the policy "continues to restrict homosexual 'intentions' and 'conduct' in ways that do not apply to heterosexual 'intentions' or 'conduct'."

"Regrettably, this change in the Department of Defense and ROTC policy is not sufficient to bring the ROTC program into compliance with the university's policy of non-discrimination," it continues.

Barbara Luebke, chairwoman of the Faculty Senate, said the policy would be sufficient "if the policy were such that gays and lesbians were treated the same as heterosexuals."

The policy, adopted last year, considers a person's sexual orientation a personal matter and not a bar to entry or continued service in the military. But a person can be dismissed or denied entry if he or

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she engages in homosexual conduct or states that he or she has engaged in homosexual conduct.

Carothers, when asked last month by the Faculty Senate's executive committee to contact the Department of Defense with the school's intentions, said the issue needs further debate in light of the recent changes.

"I believe that we cannot simply proceed as if the national debate on the status of gays and lesbians in the military, recent judicial determinations, or the changes in practice within the Department of Defense have not occurred," Carothers wrote in a letter to Luebke. "We owe all parties a full discussion and debate on the subject, as it stands in 1994."

Carothers said he has not yet decided whether he feels the program should be eliminated. "I am not going to make that decision until I hear that discussion and listen to the pros and cons of it," Carothers said. "There has been change and some of the most egregious offenses against equal opportunity have been reduced. The question is how far and how fast is change coming."

Robert G. McGowan, who teaches military science at the school, has sent a letter to all of the school's faculty members, urging them to support the continuation of ROTC.

"The rationale is not whether we've gone far enough," said McGowan. "It is by definition a compromise, and the military will make it work."

McGowan, who said several cadets will speak at the meeting, said the school's ROTC program helps lead to a more diverse military. And, he said, the military provides an invaluable service for the country and the world.

"The larger issue is do we want ROTC on campus or not," McGowan said. "You shouldn't reject them to score some transient political point."

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