

Walking the Talk

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continued. Olson said that students report that they are a little uncomfortable at first with the presentation and discussion, but describe the session as "valuable".

How has this affected Olson and his work with Vermont CARES? Although he describes his initial reaction to the ban as "shellshock", he can see the good to come out of this incident. "We were able to raise the issue in a public forum." He has also received total support from his colleagues, Hill, and the board of Vermont CARES. Although "we all have the same goals - to keep our kids healthy," he continued, "I think we are always going to find people who want to hide behind ignorance and fear...but this must stop." He said that we must get over our "squeamishness" with the subject because "people's lives are at stake."

Although Hill praises Harwood for the implementation of its new condom distribution policy calling it "an absolutely wonderful job...very democratic...very inclusive of community", she was disappointed with the decision concerning Vermont CARES which played to what she referred to as a "small vocal minority". Vermont CARES, however, will continue its work with other schools and community organizations. "If we don't provide this information to young people," she said, "we ought to be in jail. It's that important!" ▼

"while access to education is important, the greater good is liberty and freedom". Barfield adds "as the military ban becomes less and less defensible, UVM taking a position on ROTC could influence the DOD policy".

UVM's nondiscrimination policy says, in part, "The University of Vermont does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, handicap, color, religion, age, national origin, or Vietnam Veteran status in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities." Nicholas Marro, UVM Director of Public Relations, noted that there is a clear conflict between the DOD and UVM policies. However, according to Marro "UVM does not discriminate, the federal government does". Marro indicated that UVM is working with other colleges to convince the Pentagon to lift the ban. UVM Professor of

Military Science Lieutenant Colonel George J. Kuk does not see the policy inconsistency as a problem as any UVM student, including openly gay and lesbian students, can take courses in UVM's Department of Military Affairs. However, Kuk noted that under the DOD policy he'd be prohibited from contracting an openly gay student into the ROTC officer commissioning program. UVM President Thomas Salmon did not return phone calls regarding this issue.

The future of ROTC programs on college campuses remains unknown. President Clinton's failure to fulfill his campaign promise succeeded in highlighting the military's ongoing oppression of gay men and lesbians. As a state institution, UVM and the State of Vermont are faced with deciding whether they should "walk the talk" when it comes to nondiscrimination. ▼

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