

## New policy released Dal committed to . . .

by Lyssa McKee

The protection of the rights of people with AIDS (PWAs) and the promotion of a widespread AIDS awareness program are the major objectives of a new Dalhousie University policy on acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

The policy, released September 7th, was put together by a special president's advisory committee. It stresses that faculty, staff, and students who are HIV-positive will not be in any way restricted in their employment or attendance at the university.

Dr. Rosemary Gill, the Director of Dalhousie University

Health Services, chaired the committee. She says the new policy means that any PWA "who is not a public health menace, ie. who does not go about wilfully spreading the disease, is guaranteed access to all university services including residential and recreational facilities." Absolute confidentiality is assured to any

and all AIDS sufferers at Dalhousie.

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It took some time for the committee, composed of members of the school's medical, educational, religious, administrative and student committees, to work out the policy. "We were very concerned with ensuring that what we said would be backed up. I am very pleased that we have come to a policy, and I have every confidence that we'll stand behind it," says Gill.

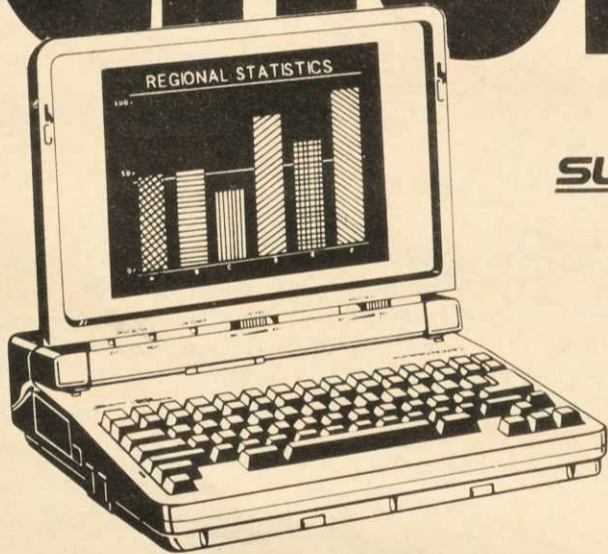
Gill says if there is going to be any opposition to this policy, it is likely to come from those working in health-related services. However, she says, if health professionals follow the federal guidelines set out in the policy, they have no cause for worry.

The policy makes it clear that widespread AIDS testing is not anticipated at Dalhousie: "the University is opposed in principle and in practice to mandatory screening and testing for HIV infection."

Gill says present AIDS tests are not reliable and cannot be used early enough to be of use as a preventative measure against the spread of the disease. She says money would be better spent on education programs, rather than on extensive testing.

Dalhousie has already begun its AIDS awareness campaign. Students were given AIDS information leaflets and condoms with their orientation packages, and posters promoting safer sex practices are already visible on campus. With the institution of this policy, the AIDS Education Committee hopes to encourage healthy practices and attitudes regarding AIDS and its prevention.

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