ROTC program facing local, national changes

University to study homosexual discrimination in military programs

'A committee has been appointed to examine the University of Richmond's position toward the Department of Defense policy barring homosexuals from the Reserve Officers' Training Corps.

The Department of Defense policy states that "homosexuality is incompatible with military service" and "separation is mandatory" if someone in the armed forces is found to be a homosexual. ROTC cadets must sign a form stating that they are not homosexual when they become contracted by the program. Lt. Col. Walter Sullivan said a cadet is contracted junior year or when benefits from a scholarship are first received.

The committee was selected by David Leary, dean of the faculty of arts and sciences, after a motion was made by members of the faculty. The motion requested the dean "to appoint a committee to explore the possible violations of our students' rights that may occur as a result of Department of Defense policy."

The motion at the faculty meeting was stimlated by a recent newspaper article, said Martin Ryle, a history professor who submitted the motion. The other two sponsors were Robert Alley, chairman of area studies, and Frank Eakin, chairman of the religion department. The article, by the New York Times news service, quoted an admiral as saying that lesbians were among the Navy's best performers, but that they must go anyway.

The committee has been asked to find out more information about the policy, its effects on students and the University policy towards discrimination, Leary said. There is apparently no University policy regarding such issues at present, according to Michael Spear, the chairman of the committee and a journalism professor.

The chairmen of the committee are Ryle, Sullivan, Jean Gurney, a sociology professor, and Warren Hopkins, director of psychological services. The committee will meet for the first time Oct. 9, Spear said, and its final report is due at the faculty meeting Dec. 6. The committee was set up to include representatives from all sides of the issue according to Leary.

Similar actions have been taken at other universities across the nation, according to Paul Hendley, a representative of the national office of the American Civil Liberties Union. Hendley said the following was occurring at other universities:

- The strongest actions in opposition to the policy have come from Washington University in St Louis. James Holubaugh, was disenrolled from ROTC when he made his homosexuality public. The service not only forced Holubaugh out of the program, it demanded that he return the money he received as a scholarship. The military claimed that Holubaugh had falsely represented himself when he was enrolled into the ROTC program.

- The provost of the university wrote a letter to the ROTC program to protest the treatment of Holubaugh because of his sexual preference. The military has since dropped its demand for the return of the money because of the public pressure. A student referendum failed in opposition to the ROTC program, but the students did pass a measure to lobby against the policy in the future.

- Fifty-two students were arrested at the University of Wisconsin at Madison after they held a sit-in at the Chancellor's office. The protest was held because the Chancellor refused to put a disclaimer against the policy on university literature. Faculty at the school voted to discontinue the program unless the policy is changed by 1993. The Regents of the school, who have more power over the university, want to lobby for change instead of cutting ties with the program.

- There is no move to review the policy at present according to Sullivan, but there is a procedure by which Department of Defense policies are changed. That involves the use of congressional and departmental reviews. The actions of the University of Richmond