

# Wagner will train teachers of retarded

Although a college could be small intellectual islands divorced from concerns of the outside world, very few colleges in this decade choose to be so isolated. For as no man is an island, neither is any institution an island unto itself.

Wagner College has crossed its boundaries to provide training and certification for the teaching of mentally retarded children. Although the courses for the project began and 50 students enrolled last September, formal approval for the program from the New York State Department of Education came just last week. It is the first program of its kind on Staten Island.

Students entering the program must take nine required courses for teaching the mentally retarded and spend one-half their teaching time with mentally retarded pupils. At

the completion of both requirements, on an undergraduate level, provisional certification is granted from the state.

Permanent certification is granted graduate students who are required to take seven specialized courses geared to the teaching of the mentally retarded.

Field work and student teaching for undergraduates will take place at the Willowbrook State School and the Staten Island Aid for the Mentally Retarded, West Brighton.

Coordinator of the program will be David Spelkoman, Clifton, N.J., who was appointed by Dr. Arthur O. Davidson, college president, after the formal approval was received. Spelkoman served the past five years as a teacher to mentally retarded and neurologically impaired children at a New Jersey institution. He is currently finishing his doctoral work in this special teaching area at Fordham University.

Dr. Norbert Leeseberg, chairman of the education department, predicted that if the new department appears to fill the need for certified teachers of the mentally retarded, the education department should explore new products geared toward the education of the neurologically impaired and the physically handicapped.