

# YES: WE WANT TO PRESERVE DEMOCRACY AT DARTMOUTH

Dear alumni,

We are current Dartmouth students from diverse corners of campus. Some of us are record-holding athletes; others presidents of Greek houses; still others of us are academic leaders. We have written and circulated this short letter in the hope of expressing our view that debate, dissent, and discussion at Dartmouth is *good*, and that the recent attempt, called “the Board-packing plan,” to reduce the importance of democracy at Dartmouth is wrong.

We want to offer a simple quote. “*Such a notion offends the obligation of good faith and fair dealing implicit in any contract.*” This is a precise quote from a New Hampshire Superior Court in an order handed down this past February. (Page 13, Paragraph 2.) The Judge was reacting to one of the trustees’ arguments in favor of the Board-packing plan, which would permit Dartmouth’s Board to pack itself with appointees, diluting the influence of fairly elected trustees.

Now that the Board is being forced to rationalize its plan to a judge, it is finding that it simply cannot.

As the current generation of Dartmouth students, we are disappointed that our administration and trustees would embark upon any course of action that “offends the obligation of good faith and fair dealing,” let alone one which substantially involves disenfranchising us.

So while our views on the issues facing Dartmouth differ widely, we all agree that the Board-packing plan is wrong. We advocate its reversal. Because changing the rules is never a fair way to win the game. Because depriving the Classes of 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011 of the right to vote for half of Dartmouth’s trustees is not just insulting to us: it is insulting to the tens of thousands of alumni who give generously to the College every year in the expectation that their *voices*, not just their dollars, count for something.

Most of all, the idea of packing Dartmouth’s Board with appointees violates the principles Dartmouth has taught us. Among them is democratic rule. If the trustees’ plan goes forward, oversight of our College will be transferred—transferred from the whole body of 69,000 alumni, who know and love our College, to a “Governance Committee” made up of five self-appointed people. That may be how the Harvard Corporation runs things. But it is not right for the Dartmouth Community.

We therefore respectfully ask that, since we cannot yet vote, you consider our plea: **please do not allow the Class of 2008 to be the first in 117 years deprived of the power to elect half of Dartmouth’s trustees.** Please oppose the Board-packing plan. With open and civil debate inspired by open and fair elections, the Dartmouth Community can come together to work toward an even better College.

*Please turn over for a list of signatures*