



DARTMOUTH ALUMNI FOR

COMMON SENSE



September 5, 2006

Dear Debbie Atuk Tu '04 and fellow members of the Native American Alumni Association of Dartmouth,

We are writing as leaders of a new group, Dartmouth Alumni for Common Sense, to invite NAAAD's support and participation.

That's because we believe it's time for common sense in the relationship between Dartmouth and her alumni. And our fellow members of DACS – emeriti trustees, Board chairs, members of the Presidents' Leadership Council and many others – agree.

Our group has two goals: First, to obtain overwhelming alumni support to pass the proposed new Alumni Constitution this fall; second, to support Dartmouth Trustee nominees selected by the proposed new Alumni Assembly – in opposition to likely petition candidates -- in forthcoming Alumni Trustee elections in 2007 and beyond.

We don't know if you've been following the debate over the proposed Alumni Constitution closely. But our view is that approving the constitution is simply a matter of common sense. Here's why:

- Because it builds on Dartmouth's long tradition of active alumni involvement in college affairs by broadening and strengthening the opportunities for that involvement. These include new options for more alumni to get involved in governance; easier access to elected office; and direct all-media voting in all trustee elections
- Because it creates new avenues, through a new Alumni Liaison Board, for alumni to have better, more open, two-way communications with the Board of Trustees and administration.
- Because, despite what you may have heard, the constitution will make for fairer elections for Alumni Trustee. It provides for head-to-head trustee contests and majority victories, rather than the thin-margin victories by plurality that often prevail now. At the same time, the new constitution provides for access for a variety of candidates – making it easier, not harder, for petition candidates to get on the ballot.
- Because hundreds of alumni have worked for more than five years to write the new constitution. They listened long and hard to alumni concerns, and they wrote a document that balances divergent perspectives and creates a new platform for sound governance.
- Because Daniel Webster said it best: "It is, sir, a small college. Yet, there are those who love it." We are all committed to Dartmouth as an institution that excels in teaching a

talented and intellectually curious student body. To stay at the top, though, Dartmouth must grapple with dozens of critical issues ahead. We can't make it if we're mired in an endless battle over alumni governance, fought mainly by a small minority that bases its arguments against the constitution on flawed and faulty premises.

Indeed, opponents of the new Constitution are making false claims and sowing dissension where there should be none. They claim the new Constitution is anti-democratic – and then demand that affiliated groups should not have a role in electing members of the Alumni Assembly. They claim that new rules that ease petition candidates' access to the Alumni Trustee Ballot will somehow, perversely, produce anti-democratic results. They claim they speak for traditional Dartmouth alumni, but it appears that their real goal is to discard the product that hundreds of other loyal alumni have worked so long and hard to create.

It's now up to those who care about Dartmouth – and its future as a leading institution of higher education -- to take the final step that America's Founding Fathers took: approving a new Constitution, born of hard work and compromise, and moving forward.

Beyond the Constitution, a fight looms over election of alumni trustees next year. As you know, the official alumni nominating committee conducts a broad search for trustee candidates, and selects for the ballot those with the highest qualifications. Yet in recent years these candidates have been rejected in favor of petition candidates, who have mounted intense campaigns that violate existing rules barring active campaigning. What's more, these campaigns frequently distort the facts about Dartmouth and fan dissension. Since campaigning by all candidates will be allowed when the new Constitution is approved, we believe it will be essential that the candidates selected by the Alumni Assembly get full support in the campaign process.

We also believe it is essential to get out the facts about Dartmouth. These facts show that the College is strong, having attracted the largest applicant pool ever during the last admissions cycle, and with the highest student satisfaction rate ever recorded. Yet Dartmouth, like all institutions of higher education, has important realities to address. Prolonged fights over the proposed Constitution, or over future trustee elections, will only be unproductive sideshows, harming the College and its reputation.

Will you join us in our efforts to pass the Constitution and, next year, to support the Alumni Assembly-designated candidates for Trustee? We would like to include the name of your group – and if they agree to it, the individual names of your members – in communications we'll be sending out to Dartmouth alumni in the weeks and months ahead.

Please reply to Dick at dart1954@comcast.net and let us know if we can count on your support. And for more information on the proposed new Constitution, please consult www.alumni.dartmouth.edu. Thank you in advance for your support.

In the spirit of common sense, for Dartmouth,
 Susan Dentzer `77 Dick Page `54
 Chair of the Board President
 Dartmouth Trustees for Common Sense

