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Acting Dean of the College

To: Dartmouth Undergraduates

From: Dan Nelson

Date: October 3, 2007

Subj: Review of Student Disciplinary System

Dartmouth's undergraduate disciplinary system has benefited from periodic review and revision. A comprehensive review of the entire system was completed in 1993, and its recommendations were adopted by the Committee on Standards (COS) and the Dean of the College in 1994. Since then, the disciplinary system has been used by a number of other schools as an exemplary model of fairness and effectiveness, and it has been noted nationally as one that represents "best practices" for colleges and universities.

Nonetheless, neither the system's effectiveness nor the community's confidence in it can be taken for granted. From time to time, members of the Dartmouth community who are concerned about particular cases or issues have criticized the system's process or its outcomes. Last year, the Student Assembly commissioned a student task force to examine the work of the COS and recommended that I initiate a review. As the report noted, "The Student Assembly recognizes that the COS is an important instrument of adjudication, and...that the COS model has been both effective and fair in the past." The report went on to recommend, however, "that the current rules and regulations of the Committee on Standards warrant further review and analysis by a committee of students, faculty members, and administrators under the auspices of the Dean of the College."

I share the SA task force's commitment to the goal of making sure that the disciplinary system for Dartmouth undergraduates is as fair, transparent, educationally appropriate, and effective as possible, and I agree that a review would be useful. With the appointment of Tom Crady as the new Dean of the College (effective this coming January), this fall is an appropriate time to begin the review so that Dean Crady can receive and review its findings and recommendations later in the year.

I have asked Dean Katherine Burke who has worked with the disciplinary system for many years, to chair the review committee and to work with me and others to identify its members, including students, faculty and administrators. I am also asking that the committee forward its recommendations to the Dean of the College early in the spring term of this year. A copy of the charge to the committee is attached.

The members of the review committee, which will be composed of three faculty members, three administrators and three students, will be identified in the next few weeks. Student members will be selected from a pool of nominees from the Student Assembly, and from those who choose to apply directly through the Judicial Affairs website at <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~uja/news.html>. Students interested in serving must be in residence fall and winter terms of this year. Nominations and applications should be made no later than Tuesday, October 16th. I am asking April Thompson, Director of Judicial Affairs and Ellen Arnold, Associate General Counsel, to serve ex officio in order to assist in providing the committee with information about current practices and legal standards for disciplinary processes at private undergraduate institutions.

In the meantime, I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the system by reading the "Green Pages" of the Student Handbook or on the Web at www.dartmouth.edu/~deancoll/documents/handbook/conduct/index.html, and the COS Annual reports posted at <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~uja/index.html>. Feedback and recommendations about the process may be submitted in writing this fall by blitz to "Committee on Standards Review" or in hard copy to COS Review, Hinman Box 6003. Opportunities to share recommendations in person will also be provided later this term on a schedule to be determined by the committee.