

April 19, 2000

Dear Members of the Dartmouth Community,

We are pleased to share a statement from the Board of Trustees that outlines plans for enhancing student residential and social life. This culminates the first phase of the Student Life Initiative launched in February 1999. The Board is confident that these actions will lead to a significant improvement in the lives of our undergraduate and graduate students. From the outset, the Board's desire has been to make the social and residential experience more reflective of Dartmouth's dynamic, diverse, coeducational community. The out-of-classroom experience must be consistent with the traditions of academic excellence and leadership development that have characterized Dartmouth and have made it one of the nation's leading institutions of higher learning. The plans we are announcing at this time represent a very significant step toward that goal.

The Board commends the members of the Committee on the Student Life Initiative, whose recommendations provided the framework for fruitful discussion in recent months, a discussion that helped us all reflect on the sort of community we aspire to be. Trustees participated in weekly campus "Fireside Chats," attended faculty meetings, and met with student organizations, alumni, parents, and friends of the College. We studied many reports, including those submitted by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Student Response Task Force, the Student Assembly, and the Alumni Council.

The Board thanks the hundreds of individuals and groups who have participated in this process. Their thoughtful comments challenged us to think about issues differently, inspired us with their originality and range of ideas, and made us proud that the Dartmouth community cares so deeply about the future of this College.

Our plans build upon Dartmouth's historic strengths as we strive to attain ever higher levels of excellence in our social and residential environment. We invite all members of the Dartmouth community to join us as we continue this exciting process; the College depends upon your voices, your vision, and your enthusiasm.

Sincerely,

William H. King, Jr.  
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

James Wright  
President

## DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

### STATEMENT BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

APRIL 15, 2000

For more than 230 years, Dartmouth College has been by both design and tradition a residential academic community. Dartmouth provides an outstanding educational experience to its students with stimulating and diverse opportunities for learning. As Trustees of the College, we are committed to preserving and enriching this legacy of excellence.

A Dartmouth education is centered upon the life of the mind, but it is not confined to classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and studios. It occurs in student residential and social space, at athletic and recreational venues, over meals, or through chance encounters on the Green. Our responsibility as Trustees is to ensure a residential and social environment that complements and reinforces the high quality of our academic offerings. This is a community that fosters a sense of belonging, one that celebrates our pluralism and our common purposes, and incorporates such fundamental principles as honesty, respect, responsibility, trust, and fairness.

While student life at Dartmouth currently has many enviable features, we face several challenges. Over the last 30 years, there have been periodic studies and efforts aimed at improving the quality of our social and residential facilities. We need to affirm the importance of inclusiveness and positive gender relations; encourage greater continuity in the residential experience; develop more residential, social, and recreational options; reduce the dominance of selective, residential, single-sex organizations; provide greater support for graduate students; and work to eliminate the abuse of alcohol and other drugs. We also need to promote greater out-of-classroom interaction between faculty and students. Dartmouth must continue to improve as we aspire to make a superb institution even better.

To this end, the Board in February 1999 initiated a process to enhance student life and established the Committee on the Student Life Initiative with a charge to study the issues and recommend actions to achieve our objectives. We are grateful to the committee members for the comprehensive and thoughtful work that led to the publication of their recommendations in January 2000. We also acknowledge with thanks the contributions of Dartmouth students, faculty, alumni, parents, and administrators who participated in the fruitful and wide-ranging discussions on student life. Our work has been greatly informed by these conversations.

It is now time for the Board to move this initiative to a new phase and to approve new capital projects and programs that advance these objectives. We have reached the following decisions as we address the challenges and opportunities before us:

1. The Board enthusiastically supports the concept of cultivating a stronger sense of belonging and continuity within the residential environment and of providing greater opportunity for social interaction among students and between students and faculty. We charge the administration to move forward with plans to group selected residence halls to form clusters or centers, while also affirming that Dartmouth must remain a campus that functions as a single community. The Dartmouth campus will continue to accommodate choice and a variety of housing models—including residential clusters or centers, as well as single residential halls and houses. Residence halls should have sufficient social spaces within or associated with them, perhaps including the Common House proposal as suggested by the Committee on the Student Life Initiative.

The Board charges the administration to work with students to develop additional residential-based programming and to empower students to create a new basis for social and residential life. The administration should proceed with hiring additional residential hall staff and strengthening the residential governance structures.

The Board charges the administration to work immediately with the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and others to develop and implement initiatives to encourage faculty, graduate student, and staff involvement in the student residential program.

The Board authorizes the administration to initiate planning for the construction of residential facilities to accommodate up to 500 undergraduates over the next five years. This will allow the College to improve the quality of the residence halls and accommodate all students who wish to live in College housing. As this plan evolves, the Board and administration will assess further housing needs and may build additional facilities to house up to 600 students over the next decade. These new facilities would provide for the possible replacement of the River Cluster and the Choate Residence.

2. The Board acknowledges hearing a range of thoughtful arguments on the issue of first-year housing and charges the administration to implement first-year housing as one of the alternatives to be offered to the Class of 2005 and to study and evaluate this option. The Board expects that no more than 50 percent of the class will be housed in this way.

A strong, positive educational and social experience for first-year students must consist of more than simply housing some of these students together.

Programming specifically aimed at the needs of the first-year class is essential and the Board thus directs the administration to develop a strengthened program for these students. The administration will review the first-year housing alternative within five years and will consult with the Board on any decision at that time to continue, expand, or discontinue this alternative.

3. Graduate students are valued members of this community and their needs must be better accommodated. The Board authorizes the administration to begin the process of planning and siting residences for approximately 110 graduate students. The Board expects to act on a specific residential proposal within a year. The Board also charges the administration to develop plans for a graduate student center, which could be either part of an existing space or of one of the newly planned facilities.
4. Diversity and internationalism have been hallmarks of the Dartmouth experience, and we affirm their importance for the College and in the lives of our students. We seek to develop a residential and social environment that encourages our students to understand difference, to learn from each other, and to recognize their own responsibilities as citizens of the world. The Board encourages the administration to work with faculty and students to pursue the development of a world cultures initiative, which could provide educational and social programming, as recommended by the Committee on the Student Life Initiative. The Board encourages broad community involvement in thinking comprehensively about the development of such an initiative. The Board requests a report by spring of 2001.
5. All students and student organizations should be treated under the same set of guiding principles and rules. The Board charges the administration to establish a single judicial system embracing all student organizations, a single set of policies and rules regarding the use of alcohol, and a common set of policies and physical standards for all components of the residential system.
6. The Board recognizes the importance of centralized dining and social spaces as critical aspects of the Dartmouth experience, while also affirming the need to offer students a greater variety of options. The Board authorizes the administration to begin planning for new and renovated campus dining, social, and recreational spaces. These will include an expanded student center, a recreational center, and a dining facility at the north end of campus, as well as a flexible flat-floor space that could be used for large events. In the short term, the Board encourages the administration to move ahead aggressively in developing social alternatives for students, such as those already undertaken in the Collis Student Center.

7. The Board acknowledges the role played by the Coed, Fraternity, and Sorority (CFS) organizations in the social and residential life of many undergraduate students. But the Board also shares concerns about these organizations—concerns underscored in the Committee on the Student Life Initiative report, in the deliberations of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and by a number of others. Some CFS organizations have encouraged behaviors that are inconsistent with Dartmouth's values and sense of community. The Board, however, recognizes that CFS organizations are not all the same. It believes that each organization deserves the opportunity to demonstrate its ability to meet a higher set of standards.

The Board affirms that College recognition of CFS organizations is a privilege and that Dartmouth will continue to offer each organization this privilege provided that it operates in accordance with Dartmouth's principles and standards of community. The Board considers residential CFS organizations to be parts of the larger campus residential and social system, not elements operating outside of, parallel to, or in opposition to the College's residential and social environment. The Board expects CFS organizations to meet the standards identified by the College as well as their own articulated purposes. The Board authorizes the administration to develop new standards of excellence for CFS organizational and individual behavior. The Board reiterates existing College policy that any organization that chooses to disaffiliate from the College will be immediately derecognized and will lose the benefits associated with recognition.

The Board endorses the continuation of the moratorium on the formation of any new residential, selective, single-sex organizations. The Board requires housing owned by all College-recognized organizations to meet the general physical standards and building code requirements imposed on all student residences. The Board charges the administration to move ahead expeditiously with a facilities audit of all CFS houses, to be paid for by the College. The Board accepts the Committee on the Student Life Initiative's recommendation that tap systems, mass refrigeration units, and permanent bars should be removed from CFS houses.

The Board insists that there be no hazing of new members nor any abusive or demeaning initiation rites and charges the administration to develop a hazing policy that is more stringent than current College policy. The Board endorses the recommendation that students first become eligible to rush in the winter term of their sophomore year, beginning in academic year 2001-02. The Board charges the administration to provide support services in CFS houses similar to those found in other student residences. The Board thus endorses the recommendation that each house should have an undergraduate advisor in residence.

The Committee on the Student Life Initiative made several specific recommendations regarding residency and minimum membership requirements. The Board charges the administration to consider policies with respect to these issues.

8. The Board affirms its commitment to eliminating the abuse and unsafe use of alcohol at Dartmouth and endorses the focus on alcohol education and counseling suggested by the Committee on the Student Life Initiative and the College Committee on Alcohol and Other Drugs. The Board asks the administration to develop a new set of policies and rules for the dispensing of alcohol that are consistent with the objectives defined by these committees and that apply to all residence halls and campus organizations.
9. While recognizing the many positive qualities associated with the Dartmouth Plan, the Board acknowledges the concerns that faculty, students, and alumni have expressed about the discontinuity that the plan causes. The Board notes that the Dartmouth Plan has changed a number of times since its inception in 1972 when it was adopted as a means of facilitating coeducation. The Board encourages the administration to assess the practical and financial consequences of modifying the current plan, including in the longer term moving to a regular calendar. If changing or abolishing the Dartmouth Plan would appear to be a feasible and attractive option, the Board would then ask the administration to seek the advice of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences as well as student and administrative groups regarding its modification or termination. The Board wishes to make clear that any change in the calendar must not detract from our strong off-campus study options.
10. Following the recommendation by the Committee on the Student Life Initiative, the Board directs the administration to begin a study of selective Senior Societies and other non-CFS selective organizations and their roles within the new residential and social system. The Board requests a report by the spring of 2001.
11. Following the recommendation by the Committee on the Student Life Initiative, the Board charges the administration to establish a committee to report on the organization and role of academic affinity programs. The Faculty of Arts and Sciences needs to be fully involved in these considerations. The Board requests a report on this by the spring of 2001.
12. The Board is prepared to make the necessary financial investments that this initiative calls for and charges the administration to develop a plan to finance the directives contained in this statement through a combination of fundraising, debt, endowment utilization, and other sources of revenue. The

financial, staffing, and facilities planning for this initiative must reconcile these needs with our academic priorities and the anticipated need for other campus facilities and related infrastructure. The Board also supports designating additional funding to support student programming.

13. The Board asks the administration to provide it with annual reports on the implementation of the full range of programs associated with this initiative so that we can ascertain progress toward our objectives. The Board also charges the administration to undertake a more complete assessment of progress toward these goals during the year 2006-07.

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We are confident that this initiative will lead to a significant improvement in the social and residential life of the College. We would once again like to thank the many people who participated in this process and to reiterate how important those conversations were to the development of our thinking. The process of improving and expanding our out-of-classroom activities will not end with these actions and our success in meeting these goals requires continuing community involvement.