



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

April 28, 2008

Dear fellow Dartmouth alumni,

Last month, the Trustees launched a search for the next president of Dartmouth—a search that is critically important to maintaining the unique character of Dartmouth and ensuring that our students continue to receive an outstanding education. As we embark on that search, the College has become ensnarled in yet another divisive campaign—this time around the Association of Alumni (AoA) election. As Trustees of the College, we were reluctant to enter this debate, but we feel an obligation to respond to a recent letter by four trustees to alumni containing inaccurate claims and endorsing like-minded petition candidates for the AoA.

This group has wrapped itself in the rhetoric of “democracy at Dartmouth” but they are working with national groups that have a clear ideological agenda for the College. The Upper Valley’s local newspaper, the *Valley News*, wrote in a recent editorial that this group wants to “turn back the clock” at the College. They believe they can manipulate Dartmouth’s unique process of electing alumni nominees for the Board of Trustees and are now waging an aggressive campaign to maintain control of the AoA, which administers those elections.

A Well-Organized, Well-Funded Group’s Campaign Against the College

Critics of the College—long championed by *The Dartmouth Review* and supported by outside groups like the Hanover Institute—are well organized and well funded. They have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on full-page newspaper ads, glossy mailings, and web sites to elect their allies to the Board and now the AoA. They are supporting a costly lawsuit against the College. This will force Dartmouth to divert some \$2 million away from critical priorities like financial aid and faculty in order to protect the independence of the College that Daniel Webster so ably defended in 1819. The plaintiffs have repeatedly refused to reveal who is really paying for their suit or their campaign, although an ideological special interest group—The Center for Excellence in Higher Education—with no connection to Dartmouth is raising money to support their lawsuit.

They have politicized Dartmouth elections and have brought Washington-style politics to trusteeship. And, this week, *The Dartmouth Review* launched a reprehensible and baseless personal attack on Chair of the Board Ed Haldeman—unabashedly timed to coincide with the AoA elections. Members of this group even encouraged their political allies in the New Hampshire Legislature to promote a bill that would allow the Legislature to insert itself into the affairs of the College—a misguided effort that failed by an overwhelming majority.

What Is This Group’s Real Agenda?

Amidst the many emails and letters you’ve received, we’re sure you have asked yourself—what is this group’s real agenda? Trustee Todd Zywicki provided an unintended glimpse of that agenda in a speech last October where he attacked Dartmouth and its peer schools, saying those “who control the university today[,] they don’t believe in God and they don’t believe in country.” He discouraged people from contributing money to support the College and told his supporters that it would be a “long and vicious trench warfare I think if we are serious about taking the academy back.”

This group's political agenda is also at the heart of their opposition to the expansion of the College's Board of Trustees. We recognize that alumni have many different views on the governance issue, but after a thorough review of Dartmouth's needs, a majority of the Board determined that it was in the College's best interests to add eight new members who could bring additional skills and talent to the College—leaders who could help ensure Dartmouth remains a world-class institution. Four of our trustee colleagues filed an amicus brief against the College to try to achieve through the courts what they could not achieve in the boardroom through normal Board processes.

We sent a copy of the report explaining this decision to all alumni. We also voted for a more open election process to ensure the winning candidate received a majority of votes. This group opposed the changes because they reduced their ability to game the system. They want you to believe that the Board is looking to "marginalize" alumni. The fact is that every member of the Board (except the Governor and the President) is a Dartmouth alum. Alumni will continue to nominate a higher percentage of trustees than at virtually any other institution in the country and will remain central to the College's governance.

What Is At Stake For Dartmouth and Its Students?

This group has publicly vilified the leadership of the College in newspaper interviews and letters. And, while the College is in the midst of a critical capital campaign—the largest in its history—they have done little to advance it and, in some cases, actively urged alumni to divert resources from Dartmouth to institutions that are more ideologically in tune with their own agenda. They have lost sight of Dartmouth's purpose. The College exists to provide a superb education to its students, not to advance the personal politics of its alumni. And now they are putting Dartmouth's future in jeopardy. They would push the College far outside the mainstream of higher education. As *The Dartmouth* wrote in a recent editorial aimed at this faction of alumni, "If you truly love it, you should be able to cherish the College without controlling it."

What Does All This Mean For You, Our Fellow Alumni?

By every significant measure, Dartmouth has become a stronger institution over the past decade. That progress has come despite the harmful efforts of this group—not because of them, as they have claimed. As Dartmouth looks to build on that strength, we want to encourage all of you to stay engaged with the College—and to read the election materials carefully and to let your voice be heard in the upcoming AoA elections.

We need individuals representing Dartmouth alumni who bring no political agenda to the table—except what is in the best interests of Dartmouth. We need individuals who can fairly and effectively represent the views of all alumni and work with the leadership of the College to carry forward the business of Dartmouth. And we need individuals capable of unifying the College's alumni to help Dartmouth remain the finest College in the world.

Please join us in putting Dartmouth's interests first.

Trustees of Dartmouth

Leon Black '73
Christine Bucklin '84
Russ Carson '65
Michael Chu '68
John Donahoe '82
Brad Evans '64

Jose Fernandez '77
Karen Francis '84
Ed Haldeman '70, Chair
Pam Joyner '79
Steve Mandel '78
Al Mulley '70