

February 1, 2016

Dear Chairman Helman, President Hanlon, Provost Dever, Dean Biron, Faculty, Staff, and Members of the Dartmouth Community,

We write in support of and in solidarity with Dartmouth students, especially students of color, who are pushing for the immediate institutionalization of Asian American Studies. For several decades, generations of Dartmouth students have petitioned the College for this request. Their numerous attempts include campus community discussions, circulated petitions (which, in 2004, garnered over 1200 signatures), and meetings with supportive faculty and administrators. However, despite continued student interest, these efforts have been largely fruitless.

We, as alumni, are deeply disappointed with the lack of progress that the College has made towards this goal. Peer institutions across the country, including Cornell, University of Pennsylvania, Columbia, Brown, and Harvard, have long offered a cohesive and continuous program for Asian American Studies. Dartmouth, in contrast, has not taken any action to become a leader in ethnic studies and diversity research and pedagogy.

The absence of an Asian American Studies program exposes the false promise of Dartmouth's commitment to diversity. Community values on diversity state, "At Dartmouth, differences are embraced and ideas are challenged. Our diverse community of students, faculty, and staff come together to share perspectives, learn, and grow" (1). But, how can we as a community seriously promote a

rigorous understanding of diversity without offering diverse academic disciplines?

One year ago, President Hanlon shared his vision for Moving Dartmouth Forward, including his hope for students to be “24/7/365-day learners” (2). Dartmouth students need the opportunity to learn about Asian American history, issues, and identity inside of the classroom, rather than relying on campus organizations and one another to fulfill their intellectual passions and curiosities. It is irresponsible to place the burden of teaching diversity and inclusion on Dartmouth students and student organizations. If the College is genuinely interested in its students fulfilling 24/7/365 learning, then it must institutionalize support for a deeper level of thoroughness and academic rigor on this content.

As alumni, we are not interested in touting “diversity” as a buzzword. We are eager to see Dartmouth become a leader of inclusivity in higher education and a space where *all* students can choose and learn from a truly diverse curriculum. By institutionalizing Asian American studies, the College will take a sincere step towards “Moving Dartmouth Forward” and becoming “a place where every experience contributes to building leaders with the wisdom for a complex world.”

Signed,

Concerned Alumni