

## Five Reasons to Vote, and Vote "Yes"

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I've spoken with a lot of alumni friends about the upcoming vote on the revised constitution for alumni organizations. Everyone has been bombarded by detailed arguments on both sides of the issue. If you get down in the weeds on the issues, it is easy to get confused. I'm also sure that most students are too busy to explore all the issues. Yet perceived student opinion can also affect alumni opinion. It is therefore very important that students come to the right conclusions too. Students will not vote, but the vote will affect their future.

I have a few very simple observations which I think make it clear that a) a vote in favor of the proposed constitution is crucial to the future of Dartmouth College, and b) it is essential that all responsible alumni cast their vote.

1) This constitution has been tirelessly crafted over a five-year period by the most devoted volunteers in the alumni body who took pains to incorporate views across the opinion spectrum. It has been endorsed by both the Alumni Council and the leadership of the Association of Dartmouth Alumni, as well as the Board of Trustees. These people are not college administrators. They are alumni, each of whom for years has sacrificed time from his or her professional and family life to make the College both stronger as an educational institution and more responsive to its alumni.

2) The revised constitution results in a streamlined, responsive organizational structure and a new fair format for trustee elections. The existing trustee election rules allow for a single petition candidate to run an active campaign against three candidates nominated by the Alumni Council who are not permitted to campaign. (The intent of the campaigning rules is to encourage candidates who have a life to be willing to run.) The existing rules thus allow dissidents to campaign for a single petition candidate while the nominated candidates' vote is split three ways and not actively solicited. This process has been patently unfair to the outstanding candidates who emerge from the Alumni Council's exhaustive nomination process. The revised constitution allows fair one-on-one elections while also making it easier to nominate by petition.

3) A minority group of radical dissidents who collectively have neither done meaningful volunteer work nor made significant financial contributions to the College is nevertheless seeking to vote down the proposed new constitution. They oppose the new constitution to advance their own selfish ideological objectives.

4) Failure to adopt the new constitution would risk dire consequences for the College. It would be a step down the road of allowing a radical minority cabal to take over the Dartmouth Board of Trustees. If this were to begin to happen, it could well lead the College into a downward death spiral. Seeing an institution at war with itself with an uncertain outcome, responsible donors might pull back from the substantial commitments that are necessary to keep the institution's facilities and programs competitive.

Over 30 percent of Dartmouth's annual operating budget and virtually all of its investments for future facilities and programs derive from contributions by alumni and friends. I am co-chair of Dartmouth's \$1.3 billion capital campaign, which is now about half complete. Look around the campus at two new dormitory complexes, a new engineering science center, a new math/academic centers facility -- they have all been built with donations from the Campaign. These facilities and more to come are crucial investments in Dartmouth's future.

I know from first-hand experience that alumni who generously support the College care about the way it is being run. The dissidents who oppose the constitution have not been meaningful contributors to Dartmouth while major contributors overwhelmingly favor the new constitution. If the constitution is voted down and contributors pull back, the College will be hard pressed to maintain its competitiveness. Sooner or later the outstanding students that Dartmouth now attracts would notice any deterioration in its competitiveness and choose to go elsewhere.

5) Adoption of the revised constitution requires positive votes from two thirds of those voting. Thus, if the usual 25 percent or so of alumni cast their votes, less than 9 percent of the alumni body can block these vital changes with the above-cited potential dire consequences. It is therefore essential that responsible alumni both cast their votes and do everything they can to make sure that all their friends and classmates do so as well.

Far more detailed analyses of the proposed changes are possible from many sources. I am confident that any reasonable person who looks at the exhaustive details will come out in the same place as the above simple thoughts: Failure to turn out and vote for the revised constitution may result in dire consequences for Dartmouth College. We must not let this happen.