

Dartmouth (Campus Letter of Support)

Date: May 15, 2004

To: Michael Gazzaniga, Dean of the Faculty

From: Members of the Pan Asian Council

Re: Asian American Studies at Dartmouth

Dear Dean Gazzaniga:

Based on your suggestion at our meeting this fall, the Pan Asian Council submitted an open letter (March 1, 2004) that examined the need for Asian American Studies at Dartmouth and made several recommendations. However, based on our recent meeting with you on April 7, 2004, we feel that the Deanery has not provided an adequate response to our recommendations. Your failure to address key issues set forth in this letter is detrimental not only to students, but also to the College as a whole as well as to the integrity of the Deanery. In our letter, we advocated for the establishment of an Asian American Studies minor at Dartmouth, yet were met with irrelevant responses. The Deanery has failed to provide the guidance and leadership that students deserve.

The focus that you and Dean Grenoble placed on the hiring of additional Asian faculty members in the sciences, while important, is not the issue at hand. Furthermore, while the addition of an Asian American literature course is a step forward in the right direction, this alone lacks the sustainability and structure that the establishment of an Asian American Studies minor requires.

We who place value in a full liberal arts education demand what Dartmouth has promised us through its academic mission: an education that prepares students “for life in a complex world, one in which the ability to understand and appreciate differences and similarities among all people and societies is essential.”

The Deanery can no longer afford to sit back and wait for the “right time” to address this issue. Students have diligently advocated for Asian American Studies at Dartmouth for over seven years, and while some progress has been made in individual departments, an institutional commitment has yet to be made. We understand that “change takes time,” however, this is not an excuse to delay further action.

We, the undersigned, believe that:

- The Deans and administrators must provide leadership in the pursuit of AAS at Dartmouth. We encourage the Deanery and administration to provide a formal policy statement on how AAS fits in to Dartmouth’s academic goals.

- Within the next two years, the College should conduct an open search and hire a tenured senior faculty member suited to overseeing the development of an AAS minor at Dartmouth.
- Immediately, the College should actively recruit and retain other tenure-tracked AAS professors. The Deans and administrators should work closely with departments, programs, and campus resources to ensure that these scholars reside in strong intellectual communities.

If you will not act now, then when?

Sincerely,

Pan Asian Council

-student- and -student-

Asian American Studies Initiative Coordinators

CC:

James Wright, President; Barry Scherr, Provost; Ozzie Harris, Special Assistant to President for Institutional Diversity and Equity; Michael Mastanduno, Associate Dean for the Social Sciences; Lenore Grenoble, Associate Dean for the Humanities