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To: Committee on Student Life Initiative

From: The Pan Asian Council

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Pan Asian Council Proposal

First and foremost, the Pan Asian Council would like to thank the Committee on the Student Life Initiative for taking the time to consider our proposal at this late date. We would also like to thank the Committee for the opportunities to voice our concerns at the Committee meeting on October 29, 1999, as well as the forum that was held on October 27, 1999, by the Korean-American Students Association and the Afro-American Society.

The Pan Asian Council is a non-COSO organization that is comprised of a diverse group of Asian/Asian-American students, including representatives from the various Asian organizations such as the Dartmouth Asian Organization, Korean-American Students Association, Dartmouth Japan Society, Dartmouth China Society, Vietnamese Southeast-Asian Students Association, Asian Christian Fellowship, and Milan. The Pan Asian Council works to assess and address the needs of Asian/Asian American students on campus and strives to build connections with all students at Dartmouth College as well as within the Asian community.

The Asian/Asian-American population at Dartmouth consists of a diverse group of students who come from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds, ranging from all parts of the United States as well as Asia: American students of Asian descent to international students from India to Japan. Over the years, this population at Dartmouth has grown considerably. While this growth has brought new and exciting changes to the college, it has also created challenges and obstacles that need to be addressed by all members of the Dartmouth community, students, faculty and administration.

I. Multicultural Center to provide opportunities for greater interaction

Principle Three states that "The system should be substantially coeducational and provide opportunities for greater interaction among all Dartmouth students." The Pan Asian Council believes that if this principle is to be fully achieved, it is imperative that a multicultural center be established to facilitate greater understanding and interaction among all Dartmouth students. The Pan Asian Council supports the idea of a multicultural center already outlined in proposals submitted by various students. The Multicultural Center would bridge gaps by fostering more communication between different student organizations, faculty, administration, staff, and the larger community. This center would be accessible to the entire community, whether they are alumni, undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, staff, or

administration. Ultimately, the center would help create a necessary dialogue among community members from different backgrounds, leading to a decrease in isolation and fostering a stronger sense of community.

Specifically, the Multicultural Center needs to incorporate the following aspects:

- A. The center should be housed in a separate building that is centrally located on campus. The great need for such a center and the incorporation of a large number of students are causes for establishment in a separate building. Too often, cultural organizations are given small offices that are located in remote areas of campus. A permanent building would demonstrate the College's commitment to multiculturalism. The central location will allow for a more influential presence on campus, increasing visibility for students of color.
- B. A **full time** staff is needed to run the center. A **director** would be responsible for making sure that multiculturalism is integrated into all facets of the Dartmouth experience. The director should have his or her own support staff to help oversee the Multicultural Center. The director would work with this staff and the different advisors to organizations of students of color.
- C. The advisors to organizations of students of color should have **full time** positions with the sole responsibility of functioning as resources for the students. They cannot and should not have to also be responsible for programming for the entire community. The full time staff at the Multicultural Center is needed to do this kind of programming, as well as to provide support for students when they want to organize an event for the campus. The burden of educating the community about multiculturalism too often falls on students of color. This is an unfair responsibility that students of color must bear, and it is a draining one especially because students do not have adequate support.
- D. A fund needs to be created to enable organizations to have a budget. Students should not have to spend time advocating the importance of multiculturalism to different sources in order to attain enough funding to sponsor an event. The Multicultural Center should have a budget for student organizations to promote multiculturalism. Cultural events held in the past have had an immeasurable impact on this campus. They not only hold entertainment value, but are educational as well. These events need to be supported by the institution on a regular basis without the constant pleading of the organizations.
- E. Within the Multicultural Center, there should be a common social space (as outlined in Principle 2) that would provide greater integration among all Dartmouth students (as outlined in Principle 3) in the form of a student lounge. This space can be shared by the different student of color organizations to meet informally, to hold meetings, and for use in putting up events that are open to Dartmouth and the larger community. For example, the Korean American Students Association (KASA) held their weekly meetings in the Zimmerman

Lounge of the Blunt Alumni Center before renovation plans forced them to meet in various spaces. This situation is not unique to KASA. This student lounge should reflect the different cultures.

- F. In addition, there should be a large performance space that would allow cultural and ethnic organizations to provide educational and social events. A space such as Collis Commonground is insufficient because of the high competition for the space, and its inability to accommodate large groups of people. Current policies and restrictions prevent students from easily accessing spaces in the Hopkins Center. It is our vision that this performance space would allow us to reach larger number of people.
- G. There are many adopted children of Asian descent who live in the Upper valley area. Various student organizations such as Korean American Students Association and the Dartmouth Asian Organization have programs that allow students to interact with these children and expose them to their native cultures. The Dartmouth Alliance for Children of Color is a group that specifically plans events and programs for adopted children of color in the Upper Valley area. A space is needed to allow these different organizations to hold programs for the children and their families.
- H. The center should have a library of literature, films and music in addition to what is available at Baker Library. The collection of literature available on Asian American topics is extremely limited at Dartmouth. This library would be a resource available to the whole community.
- I. Each individual student organization should have an office as well as storage space. The need for separate offices cannot be overlooked for it would be to deny the diversity that exists among us.

II. Asian and Asian American resources for an inclusive educational experience

Principle Three also states that “All facets of the Dartmouth experience need to be coeducational and inclusive.” The focus of the Dartmouth experience is academics. Generally speaking, there is a lack of Asian and Asian-American academic resources.

- A. Dartmouth is the only Ivy League school that does not offer Korean language courses. Currently, students have taken it upon themselves to organize Korean classes taught by fellow students. There should be formal instruction of the language by professors. The Pan Asian Council supports the Japan/Korea Affinity House proposal submitted and believes this affinity housing will greatly assist all Dartmouth students interested in learning the Korean and Japanese languages.

- B. Dartmouth has no Asian-American department or program. The institution needs to recognize the clear distinction between Asian Studies and Asian-American Studies. Without the inclusion of Asian-American Studies, there are no avenues for Dartmouth students to learn about the history and understand the issues of Asian-Americans. Currently, there are only two courses focused on Asian-American Studies, both being taught by the same professor. Dartmouth needs to provide a more inclusive academic experience by hiring more professors who teach Asian-American courses and by establishing an Asian-American Studies program.
- C. The courses currently offered in the Asian Studies Program are very limited. Most of the courses are borrowed from other departments and courses that are specific to Asian Studies are offered irregularly. The Japan/Korea House purposes to house a Resident Fellow who could teach courses in Asian Studies. The Asian Studies Program needs to be further enriched with greater courses and permanent professors specifically for Asian Studies.
- D. The emphasis on permanent faculty for both Asian Studies and Asian-American Studies cannot be stressed enough. It is incredibly hard for visiting faculty to invest in a community that is not their own. The students need stable figures to look towards when furthering their academic careers.
- E. Professors and scholars whose academic field focuses on multicultural topics are needed. There are few professors that a student can go to when he or she wants to pursue a topic that deals with multicultural issues.
- F. There is insufficient Asian and Asian-American literature in Baker Library. Many students have voiced the necessity for more material. There should be sufficient resources for the students wishing to take courses in a field related to Asian or Asian-American Studies. Books as well as periodicals about Asian/Asian-American issues and/or written by Asian/Asian-American authors need to be readily available to the Dartmouth community.

We feel that the College needs to restate the Principle of Community so that is not merely a plaque on the wall, but something that all Dartmouth students are aware of and respect. The Principle of Community needs to be as pervasive as the Academic Honor Principle.

Principle Three states that the goal of the Five Principles and the College is to provide an environment that will “better prepare students to live and exercise leadership in the 21st century.” In order to achieve this goal, the College needs to make a sincere commitment to multiculturalism. It needs to be recognized that this undertaking is an ongoing process of dialogue, that multiculturalism cannot appear as a result of one isolated change. This commitment needs to be apparent in the actions of the institution and not simply the words. In order to draw a more diverse group of students to apply to this school, our reputation as a closed-minded campus needs to change.

Finally, we must stress that the answer to creating a more open-minded and diverse campus does not simply lie in the recruiting of more students of color. The culture of Dartmouth must change with improvements on what exists today. To change the reputation of Dartmouth, the College needs to be committed to not only recruiting a diverse group of students, but also improving the lives of the students who are attending at present. With increasing globalization, it becomes more and more apparent that one of the key issues of future leadership is multiculturalism. We believe that creating a multicultural center and improving academic options for students interested in Asian/Asian-American Studies would be steps towards achieving the goal of instilling the ideal of multiculturalism over the entire campus.