

Dartmouth Puts ROTC on Notice

Fred Pond

The Board of Trustees of Dartmouth College has formally notified the U.S. Department of Defense of its intention to discontinue its participation in the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) for students admitted after the class to matriculate in September 1993.

President James Freedman clearly reaffirmed—with the board's full support—Dartmouth's strong commitment to the principle of equal opportunity for all its students, faculty, employees, and applicants for admission and employment. This policy expressly confirms that Dartmouth will not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in its programs.

It appears that Dartmouth has indeed taken several measures to urge the Defense Department to reassess its position on barring homosexuals. Freedman has written Defense Secretary Richard Cheney twice in the past year to request changes. The Board of Trustees concluded the defense department has failed to provide a rational basis for its discrimination against homosexuals.

Dartmouth will continue working with other colleges and universities in urging the administration and Congress to ease the current ban on gays; their viewpoint also includes concern for the long-term harm to U.S. military that would result from cancelling ROTC programs.

Other universities considering a 1997 campus ban include the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University. CMU is said to have the largest Navy ROTC program in the nation, while Pittsburgh shares its Army and Air Force ROTC programs jointly with CMU. ▼

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By Alison Bechdel



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