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DGALA

**DARTMOUTH GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL & TRANSGENDER
ALUMNI/AE ASSOCIATION**

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May 11, 2011

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Dr. Jim Yong Kim and Board of Trustees
Office of the President, Dartmouth College
Parkhurst Hall, Room 207
Hanover, NH 03755

Dear President Kim and Trustees,

On behalf of the Dartmouth Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Alumni/ae Association (DGALA), we write to express our evolving views regarding the presence of the Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps on the Dartmouth campus, and the College's support for the program. While the Dartmouth homepage and Dartmouth Now site have recently highlighted articles about ROTC at Dartmouth, we hope that a community conversation, inclusive of alumni/ae, will take place in the very near future.

In recent months, most notably after President Barack Obama signed a bill passed by the U.S. Congress intended to repeal the military's discriminatory employment policy known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," Harvard, Columbia, Yale, and Stanford publicly announced faculty votes, agreements with military branches, or policy amendments to reinstate or begin the reinstatement process for ROTC on their campuses. However, the means by which these institutions formulated their respective positions in this regard differ (such as was reported about Harvard and Columbia in *The New York Times*¹), and importantly highlight tensions within the current public debate about ROTC and American universities. We, therefore, wish to express our views so that they may be taken into consideration as the leadership at Dartmouth continues conversations about ROTC's engagement with the College.

It has been DGALA's position for many years that the College's continued engagement with the Army ROTC conflicts with Dartmouth's own policies regarding the equal treatment of members of the Dartmouth community without regard to, among other protected classes, sexual orientation and gender identity. Through the members of the DGALA Executive Board, queer alumni/ae have stated and restated their opposition to the College's support of the Army ROTC. We strongly feel that the College should act in accordance with its own policies on the equal treatment of all the members of the College community, in order that it may affirm, by its actions, its values and, in particular, its commitment to its GLBTQA constituencies.

It is important to note that these statements of opposition were not and are not against the military in general, but are targeted at any and all employers or other organizations that may benefit from their affiliation with or support from the College while also espousing discriminatory and homophobic policies within their organizations.

As you are probably aware, the recently-passed bill does not have the immediate effect of repealing the military's discriminatory employment policy that prevents those who wish to openly identify as gay and lesbian from serving in the military. Rather, it is not until "60 days after the president, the secretary of defense, and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff certify that the Department of Defense 'has prepared the necessary policies and regulations' to carry out the change, and that the shift will not damage the ability of the military to fight or recruit [that the repeal is fully enacted]. Until then, the Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010 expressly states that the old policy 'shall remain in effect.'"²

The fact that these additional conditions to enact the repeal have not yet come to fruition months after the signing of the bill is troubling for the DGALA Board and the larger queer alumni/ae body. What this means in practical terms is that, although the law has been signed, servicemen and servicewomen today are still governed by the former discriminatory policy. Indeed, it remains possible, and legal, to discharge any gay or lesbian employee of the military if he or she discloses his or her sexual identity, albeit the likelihood of this taking place remains unknown. Therefore, until the full repeal is enacted, the Executive Board of DGALA has resolved to continue its opposition to the College providing resources to Army ROTC, including use of the College's physical plant. It is our hope, however, that in the near future, DGALA will no longer need to oppose such an arrangement, as we recognize the benefits ROTC provides participants and we wish to support those who serve our country.

We call for transparency as the College continues conversations regarding Army ROTC both within the administration, and with the involvement of the faculty, alumni/ae and students. For our part, we wish to provide some additional information about varied opinions among our members that we hope will contribute to a respectful and robust debate as policy forms over the coming weeks and months:

1. There is a difference of opinion among DGALA's Executive Board as to whether we should drop our opposition to the College's support of Army ROTC when the full repeal is enacted. Some reasons for this that also directly affect our constituency are:
 - a. Those among our community who wish to serve their country through service in the armed forces, and who identify as transgender, or who represent their gender as something other than that which would neatly align with their anatomical sex, would remain excluded from the military, if not by formal policy, then by hostile circumstance. Therefore, while full repeal would no longer cause the military's policies to be in conflict with the College's policies on the equal treatment of all members regardless of their sexuality, it could be argued that conflict would still exist between the College's and military's respective policies regarding gender or gender identity and expression.

- b. Discharged service members were made to feel shamed and dishonored, and were forcibly removed from serving their country for how they personally identified. It remains uncertain whether reparations will be offered to those who were subject to discrimination while the homophobic policies were in place. It also remains uncertain whether our constituency considers the issue of reparations - which we understand would be an issue decided well afield of the College's power - an issue which they would advocate to shape DGALA's position.
2. As we imagine is the case among the larger Dartmouth community as a whole, our members espouse different political philosophies regarding the armed services that give rise to advocating for or against any support for the presence of the Army ROTC on the College's campus.

These, and we are sure other, opinions are vital to a community-wide conversation. We look forward to respectful exchanges with all members of the administration, faculty, alumni/ae and students, as the College continues to explore its policies with regard to the ROTC in these changing times.

Sincerely,

S/ Timothy J. Stanne '03
Member, Board of Directors

S/ S. Caroline Kerr '05
President, DGALA Board of Directors

cc: David P. Spalding, Chief of Staff, President's Office
Carol L. Folt, Provost
Sylvia C. Spears, Acting Dean of the College
April Thompson, Associate Dean of the College for Campus Life
Inge-Lise Ameer, Associate Dean of the College for Student Support Services
Pamela S. Misener, Acting Director of the Office of Pluralism and Leadership

Citations

¹ Zezima, Katie. "Harvard Says it Will Allow the ROTC to Return," in *The New York Times*, 4 March 2011, Section A, p. 14; and Feuer, Alan. "Decades after Ban, Columbia Opens Door to ROTC Return," in *The New York Times*, 2 April 2011, Section A, p. 14.

² Schwartz, John. "'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Remains in Effect Months after Passage of Law to End It," in *The New York Times*, 23 February 2011, Section A, Legal Memo, p. 13.