

## News

### Editing program extended for one yr.

By Marina Agapakis, The Dartmouth Staff

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Students taking classes in the art history, religion and math departments who have come to rely on the Departmental Editing Program will not lose this writing resource at the end of the academic year as originally expected.

Joseph Asch '79, the program's founder and financier, announced last Friday that he would continue to fund DEP for an additional year, reversing his prior announcement in January 2005 that the program would end in June 2006.

"I hope that during this time, the Dartmouth Administration will come to see that DEP is a uniquely effective innovation in the teaching of writing -- one that the College should adopt as its own and spread throughout the institution as quickly as is feasible," Asch wrote in a letter to the three department chairs announcing his decision to continue funding the program.

All three in-house writing editors for the respective departments have agreed to stay in their positions for another year. The departmental editors, all of whom have taught high school English in the past, each see an average of 65 to 70 students per term and are paid up to \$40,000 a year.

DEP was developed in 1997 by Asch, a businessman and Hanover resident who has regularly audited Dartmouth courses since 1990. Asch said he established the program after hearing complaints from professors about the weak writing skills of many undergraduates in the classes he audited.

Many have praised DEP for its department-centered services, as compared to the more generalized Research, Writing and Information Technology center where student editors help with writing in any field.

Asch, who has contributed \$500,000 to the program since its inception, said he had hoped that his January 2005 announcement would allow the College time to recognize the value of the program and mobilize funds to continue and potentially expand the program to other departments. As of now, however, the College has expressed no interest in continuing the program.

But Associate Dean of Humanities Lenore Grenoble and other members of the administration have praised DEP.

In the midst of competing priorities, the faculty have identified working on the first-year writing

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sequence as its most pressing priority, Dean Grenoble said.

According to Asch, following his initial announcement, scores of students and faculty members requested that DEP continue, convincing him of the valuable effects that DEP editors have had on student writing, the academic life of the three departments and the individual teaching of many faculty members.

"The writing program is an integral part of our department's offerings and a great benefit to our students and faculty," art history department Chairwoman Ada Cohen wrote in her final evaluation of the program.


Chairwoman of the religion department Susan Ackerman and Chair of the mathematics department Thomas Shemanske also spoke highly of the program and its positive effect on their departments.

After Asch's initial announcement, Emily Salas '06, Megan Peck '06 and Cary Telander '06, who have all worked with the art history department's writing editor, met with students to express their concerns about the dissolution of the program and to coordinate a letter-writing campaign to the administration.

"Hopefully with this extra year we can help the Dartmouth community appreciate this program and encourage Dartmouth to find a means for its maintenance," Salas said.

In a response to a letter from an art history student praising the program, Dean of the Faculty Carol Folt discussed the costs of continuing to fund the program. According to Folt, it would cost about \$1.2 million a year to make DEP available to all students, which would mean eliminating 50 to 80 courses or reducing faculty size by 10 or 12 people.

While Asch recognizes that the sum necessary to fund DEP in every department that wants a writing editor seems like a lot of money, it is not as significant when compared to the amounts of money the College spends in other areas.

"In the last five years the College has added over \$2 million dollars to the annual budget for Alumni Relations," Asch said, adding that the College might not have to spend as much on Alumni affairs if they were funding programs that would make alumni proud of Dartmouth. "Certainly the Administration can find an equivalent sum to expand this writing program; or failing that, they can find \$100,000 to keep DEP going in its present form," he said. 

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