

LSE Rosebery Hall
90 Rosebery Avenue
London, EC1R 4TY
March 2, 2010

To the Dartmouth Community,

I met Joe Asch in the fall of 2006, at an open meeting with representatives of the search committee to replace former Dean of Admissions Karl Furstenberg. As a freshman columnist, I was always on the hunt for column fodder less banal than the myriad failings of Dartmouth Dining Services, so given the then-recent controversy over Dean Furstenberg's disparaging views of collegiate athletics, I thought this meeting might reveal a bit of juicy political intrigue. With luck, I'd get a column out of it.

As I remember it, there were maybe four students at the meeting, of whom three were reporters. The fourth was me. It was embarrassing, really—the room was awkwardly large for such a poorly attended event, the time was too late in the evening, and everyone wore the same weary expression of feigned interest. I was the sole person there by choice. The sole person, that is, until a few minutes after the meeting began, when a silver-haired man strode in with great urgency.

Everyone wondered: who was this man? Introducing himself only as "Joe, an alum," he took a seat and proceeded to launch question after question at the committee representatives. In light of the Furstenberg scandal, was the committee looking for someone with a particular view on college athletics? Would there be a litmus-test question? A flare-up over diversity was swirling at the time; where the student reporters saw dangerous waters, Joe jumped right in. Would the committee consider candidates' race or gender?

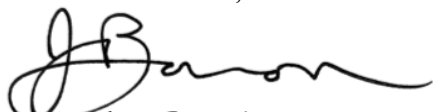
Joe introduced himself to me personally after the meeting, saying he liked my questions (which weren't half as bold as his). Since then we've met numerous times around town and at Joe's home to discuss College policy, often triggered by something one of us had written in a column. I also saw him frequently at open forums similar to the one where we met. Of course the history of my friendship with Joe won't sway anyone's vote in the upcoming trustee race. Nonetheless, I couldn't resist opening with these anecdotes because they are such a perfect demonstration of everything that will make Joe such an extraordinary trustee.

From the instant Joe entered that first meeting, one thing was clear: the man's devotion to Dartmouth is unparalleled. You can imagine the scene—four students tossing softball questions to fill the time, interrupted by an alum, nearly 30 years out, whose intensity was palpable. These days, that enthusiasm for Dartmouth finds an outlet on Dartblog, as it has in Joe's 30 columns in *The Dartmouth*, in the 30 courses he has audited, in his frequent dinners with students, and in the lauded Departmental Editing Program he founded and funded.

The search committee meeting was also my first introduction to Joe's unwavering insistence on data-driven analysis. When the committee members evaded his questions, he chased them doggedly, never moving on without an answer. This insistence will be familiar to anyone who has spent a few minutes on Dartblog, where he makes heavy use of statistics and always lets the data drive his conclusions. Political correctness doesn't get in the way. It's not just a natural inclination, either—as an entrepreneur and former strategy consultant, he makes data-driven decisions for a living.

Governing a multibillion-dollar organization is hard work. Who can we trust to help govern Dartmouth? Clearly the person must be utterly devoted to the College, in order to be motivated to do the work properly. The person should know the College intimately. And crucially, the person must go beyond the president's briefing books to get the best data available, and let the data—not groupthink, political correctness or PR—drive conclusions. I didn't see it when I first met him as a freshman, but I should have: Joe Asch will make an extraordinary trustee.

For Dartmouth,



Jacob D. Baron '10