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PUBLIC STATEMENT

TO: Joseph Asch

FROM: Roger Masters

I'm pleased to learn that you are going to run for the position of an elected Trustee of Dartmouth College.

In my years on the Dartmouth faculty (since 1967), I've enjoyed teaching in Alumni college, participating in several reunions and many informal interactions with alumni of various classes. On this basis, I've concluded that those who fear all forms of alumni activity in the governance of Dartmouth are reacting to an obsolete stereotype.

One advantage of my participation in alumni programs has been the pleasure of discussing current issues at the College to get the perspective of some of our former students who have had successful careers and maintain a healthy interest in communicating across generations on the issues underlying education. Among these discussions, the several occasions on which you and I have talked stand out as especially thoughtful and useful.

In particular, I recall a conversation on the traditional controversies concerning "teaching versus research" in which you spelled out a sensible view: many of the charges on either side of this so-called controversy arise from a few individuals who have focused their energies on either teaching or research. Overall, you pointed out, this does not tend to be a problem with truly outstanding members of the faculty. On the one hand, Dartmouth has a long history of outstanding Professors who have excelled both in the classroom and in the professional attainments of their scholarship (I think of Arthur M. Wilson, my predecessor teaching courses in the history of political theory, a wonderful teacher who was also perhaps the world's leading authority on the biography and thought of Denis Diderot). On the other hand, some of our most valuable faculty members -- while having shown ability in both teaching and research -- have made a lasting impact by cultivating extraordinary excellence in the domain of their greatest skill. My former colleague Vincent Starzinger, the truly legendary teacher of courses in constitutional law, shaped the careers of over a generation of Dartmouth graduates with his brilliant lectures that conveyed detailed legal issues with extraordinary clarity and precision. While Vince wrote an important book on the issue of compromise, his contribution in the classroom (to other faculty in

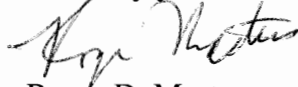
a team taught course like Government 5, "Political Ideas," as well as to students) was without peer. It was a pleasure and a privilege to work with him and learn from him.

As you pointed out in our conversation, what counts is excellence. Rather than seek some mystical formula for the selection of faculty members for tenure, any major institution of higher learning needs to focus on outstanding knowledge, talent for communication, and commitment to the goals of learning and scholarship. Stressing excellence in this way has the benefit of producing a faculty in which different members will make outstanding contributions through diverse aspects of our institution.

This example indicates why I am pleased by your candidacy for the Board of Trustees. Dartmouth College needs Trustees who have direct contact with many faculty members (as you do), providing direct sources of information about current activities and problems on our campus. It's been a matter of concern that bureaucratic interests have frequently blocked innovation and criticism of shortcomings in our curriculum and recruitment policies (which tend to be dominated by existing departmental self-interest that often limits interdisciplinary teaching or research on such topics as the links between behavioral genetics, neuroscience, and public policy which have been the focus of my own recent research and publications).

Your interest in such innovative interdisciplinary subjects thus contrasts sharply with the administrative attitudes under the Wright administration, which were apparently fully supported by the members of the Board of Trustees at the time. In coming years, for a member of the Board of Trustees, I can't imagine a clearer and more desirable perspective than those you've articulated.

Sincerely yours,



Roger D. Masters

Research Professor & Nelson A. Rockefeller Professor Emeritus