

## THE DARTMOUTH FORTRESS.

Summer 2002: My father rented a car for a trip along the East Coast of the US. Before my family was heading back for Vietnam, we wanted to venture out on an exploration. Besides enjoying my last few days in America, I also made this my rather early college visit (at the time, I just graduated junior high).

Yale, Princeton, Harvard, and Dartmouth, the four prestigious Ivy League members, made my list. Despite their academic excellence and reputation, none of the first three schools on my trail succeeded in impassionating me. I didn't find an air of warmth when I was visiting those schools since some students were not being very helpful to my questions. After two days long on the road, I could safely assume that Dartmouth would be the same experience, or even worse, given that I even mispronounced its name- "Dartmouse".

The road to Dartmouth was full of trees lined up on both sides of the road. Looking out of the 1980 Ford's window, New Hampshire seemed like a quiet, and peaceful New England town. A change of pace might be nice, I thought, as my 14 years had been related to city life. "Wow", I cried out. Love at first sight, I later recalled.

"Is this Dartmouse, dad?"

"This is the famous Hanover school, son. Anyway, it's Dartmouth."

As we approached Dartmouth, the college campus breathed a spark of hope into my idea of

a “dream school”. The campus green, and the numerous red and white buildings, wrapped in a classical architecture, yet still maintaining a modern touch, offered a breathtaking view to visitors. The college went beyond captivating my vision. It captured my heart. It was the friendliness and enthusiasm of Dartmouth students that transformed my initial intimidation into affection. While testing out the grass of the green, I tripped over an object. Out of nowhere, an arm reached out. It was a boy of 6 feet tall in a green T-shirt. I was taken aback by how students here treat stranger, completely different from the previous three schools. By that time, it was clear to me that this was where I wanted to go to school. Leaving Dartmouth that day, I couldn’t help but envision a day I’ll be lying on that college green reading my favorite book, marveling at the stunning sight of the Baker Library and chatting with my friends about current affairs.

Over the following three years, Dartmouth has become my ultimate goal .My room is painted green and my pets have on Dartmouth T-shirt that I designed. Just a week ago, I learned that Dartmouth’s financial aid for international students is limited. Thus, my chance of securing a seat at Dartmouth was shaking since my parents can not afford to pay 40,000 dollars a year for my education. This agitated my confidence. I was disappointed. But as I turned my head around, and looked at my green room, and my two pals also dressed in green, “Wow”, again I said. How could I let something like this get into my way. I’m not going to give up. I love the town of New Hampshire; I love the color green; I love the college green; I love the beautiful campus; I love the students there, displaying a warmth of feeling for people; I love the community spirit; and I love Dartmouth. I believe my passion for Dartmouth will surpass any obstacle so that when December comes, if anyone asks me where I’m going to college, I can proudly say: “DARTMOUTH! with perfect pronunciation.

I eventually was awarded a 47000 financial aid package-not that limited right. So this is one tip for rising high school seniors, dont allow fin aid to discourage you from applying to the school you like. Once you are accepted, they will do anything in their power to ensure your matriculation. I shouldn't have worried, right..