

# ROTC Guard To Greet Faust

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A line of students in the military will march at University President Drew G. Faust's inauguration on Friday, a symbol that may warm Harvard's historically icy relations with the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC).

At the request of Harvard cadets, Faust agreed to allow seven students from the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force to lead the closing procession in Harvard Yard in a flag-bearing ceremony known as a color guard.

In June, Faust and then-Interim President Derek C. Bok drew fire from The Wall Street Journal for not attending the annual ROTC commissioning ceremony. Both Faust and Bok said they were unable to attend the event due to prior commitments.

Faust was not available for comment yesterday.

Daniel K. Bilotti '09, an Army cadet in charge of organizing color guards, said that ROTC members did not originally plan to propose the idea to Faust because they did not expect her to be interested.

"We were very pleasantly surprised, and we hope that it is a new beginning for the relationship between ROTC and Harvard," Bilotti said.

"People's conception of the military on campus is largely negative, so we want to do these events to show that we are a positive organization," he added.

Bilotti said he hopes ROTC will lead a color guard at Commencement this spring.

Harvard's relationship with ROTC, which was banned from campus in 1969 due to concerns about the military's involvement in Vietnam, has improved in recent years. Former President Lawrence H. Summers broke with precedent and spoke at the annual ROTC ceremony every year during his presidency.

Harvard and other elite universities have barred military recruiters from their campuses due to the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, which prohibits gay individuals from serving openly in the military. A federal law mandates that universities allow the military access to their campuses in order to receive federal funds.

ROTC has chosen not to open an office at Harvard, and Harvard cadets participate in the program at MIT.

In an interview last month, Faust called ROTC a “complex issue,” but said that she would consider attending next year’s commissioning ceremony if she were invited.

David M. Gowel, the captain in charge of the Harvard Army cadets, said that Faust was “keen” on including a color guard, but that, because of the last-minute planning, the color guard would only be able to lead the recession and not the procession, as they would usually do.

Shawna L. Sinnott ’10, a Marine midshipman, also said that Faust’s decision to include the color guard is “extremely significant.”

“We see it as an honor to represent both Harvard and the military at such an event as both institutions are very important in all our lives,” Sinnott said.

The five women and two men marching in the color guard will carry two rifles and an American flag, as well as flags representing the four services of the military.

In addition to Sinnott, David F. Boswell ’10, Talya C. Havice ’10, Lisa A. Miranda ’11, Katherine E. O’Donnell ’10, Jason M. Scherer ’08, and J. Danielle Williams ’08 will participate in tomorrow’s color guard.

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