Dartmouth

2014-15
ANNUAL REPORT

ALUMNI LIAISON COMMITTEE
TO
DARTMOUTH COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
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Introduction

The Alumni Liaison Committee (ALC) of the Dartmouth Alumni Council is pleased to submit this annual report to the Board of Trustees, the eighth such report since the ALC was founded in 2007. This year marks the 101st anniversary of the Alumni Council, founded by Ernest Martin Hopkins “to be the clearinghouse for alumni sentiment and interchange of alumni ideas.” While the council has grown from 25 members in 1913 to 126 today, the core mission of the Alumni Council has remained unchanged: “to sustain a fully informed, representative, and engaged exchange of information and sentiment between alumni and their College, and to enhance and inspire alumni involvement that furthers the mission of the College.”

The ALC serves to coordinate and enhance the work of the Alumni Council, and brings the leadership of the council and the Association of Alumni (AoA) together with members of the alumni body in one forum. The core mission of the ALC is to collect and synthesize alumni sentiment for College audiences, including the Board of Trustees. The Alumni Council and ALC have remained steadfast in our commitment to continually improve the ways that we engage and communicate with alumni, and we believe that over the past year we have done this better than ever before. The Executive Summary of this report highlights many of these changes and speaks to the progress made on the communications front by the Alumni Council and the ALC this year. The ALC received more than 1,350 emails from alumni this year, significantly more than in any prior year. We also reached out to alumni through two surveys, on Facebook, and on Twitter, and received in total more than 3,000 responses from alumni. Alumni email volumes by topic category are outlined on page 8 of this report and the substance of those communications is summarized on page 9, as well as in more comprehensive detail in Appendix A.

We hope the Board of Trustees, College leadership, and all alumni will find this report informative in describing major elements of alumni sentiment during the past year. We thank all those whose tireless work on behalf of our alma mater has made this possible. In particular, we would like to thank Lynne Gaudet ’81 and Meg Ramsden ’87 of the College’s Office of Alumni Relations for their many contributions in support of the Alumni Council, the ALC, and this report.

This report will be posted on the Alumni Council’s website, where alumni are encouraged to review it, and a link will be sent out to all alumni. All comments and questions are welcome and should be addressed to the ALC at ALC@dartmouth.edu. 

Respectfully submitted,

The 2014-15 Alumni Liaison Committee

Mark Davis ’81, ’84Tu, chair and past president of the Alumni Council
Lou Spelios ’95, president of the Alumni Council
Jennifer Avellino ’89, president-elect of the Alumni Council
Pete Bleyler ’61, second vice president of the Association of Alumni
Zack Chestnut ’08, member of the Association of Alumni
Cuong Do ’88, ’89Tu, alumni councilor
Susan Finegan ’85, president of the Association of Alumni
Michelle Fortier ’94, ’95Th, member of the Association of Alumni
Gray Horan ’82, alumni councilor
Gary Love ’76, first vice president of the Association of Alumni
Jacques Steinberg ’88, alumni councilor
Executive Summary

Over the past year, the Alumni Council and the Alumni Liaison Committee (ALC) have continued to look for ways to improve how we communicate with alumni. As the year began, we set two specific goals to achieve this. The first goal was to focus on ways to improve our email dialogue with alumni. Historically this has been the sole form of ALC communications, and so we always want to ensure that we make the emails as interactive and accessible as possible. Alumni Council emails have a 50 percent open rate, which is extremely high, and lets us know that we really are reaching a very large portion of our alumni body. We decided this year to send alumni more targeted emails than we had sent in the past, with the goal of continuing to sharpen the focus on our mission of sustaining a fully informed exchange of information between alumni and the College. We also tried to make the emails more topical and easy to respond to. For example, we employed a prompt in fall 2014 to get a sense of alumni views on the creation of Living/Learning Communities, and received 150 thoughtful comments back from alumni. In January 2015 we sent an email to all alumni following President Hanlon’s announcement of his final plan for his initiative “Moving Dartmouth Forward.” In response to that email, we received more than 100 thoughtful responses and comments. As a result of additions like these to our typical Alumni Council post-meeting summaries of what is happening at Dartmouth, we received more than 1,350 emails from alumni. That is 37 percent higher than last year’s record amount of emails received.

Our second goal for the ALC this year was to explore other ways beyond email to communicate with our alumni. With that in mind, we conducted two outreach programs. The first used the Moosilauke Forum survey designed by Dartmouth’s director of market research. The Moosilauke Forum was created to systematically conduct regular surveys among approximately 2,000 randomly selected Dartmouth alumni. The ALC worked with Alumni Relations to develop two surveys that we thought would be particularly relevant to alumni, and to their connection with the College. For our first survey topic we focused on professional development, in collaboration with the Center for Professional Development and the Dartmouth For Life staff. Insights from this survey will help guide the College’s staff and volunteer leadership as they develop new programs and services to support the professional growth of Dartmouth students and alumni. More than 800 alumni participated. For our second survey topic, we chose to look at the role of alumni in the admissions process. The goals of this survey were to examine general perceptions about the admissions interview program; recruit new volunteers, especially younger alumni; and determine how to improve the experience for alumni volunteers. More than 500 alumni took this survey.

The second outreach program was called “Alumni Council Asks.” Using the social media platforms managed by the Office of Alumni Relations, the Alumni Council posed questions to the alumni body on three topics: professional development, the Women in Science Project, and community service. These posts received 320 likes, comments, and shares on Facebook. The effort represented a very small first step on social media, but we were pleased to find a receptive audience and we look forward to a more dynamic future communicating with alumni on social media.
As a result of everything mentioned above – the renewed email focus and the new programs involving surveys and social media – the ALC heard from alumni more than 3,000 times this past year. This is a four-fold increase over any previous year. We were delighted to hear from so many of you, and look forward to hearing from more of you!

Highlights of communications received from alumni:

**Surveys:**

- **Professional Development:** Alumni value their professional Dartmouth connections very highly; alumni interactions in the business world are viewed as very desirable, and there is a strong interest in engaging with students for career-related purposes. However, the Dartmouth platforms (Dartmouth Career Network, Alumni Directory, and Dartboard) are not being marketed to alumni or used by alumni as efficiently, positively or often as they need to be. (820 responses)

- **Alumni Role in Admissions:** Alumni generally believe their interviews have an important role in the admissions process. They believe interviews give applicants a more positive impression of Dartmouth, and that the interview is an important part of the admissions process. Alumni who do not interview cite lack of time or lack of strong ties to the College as their main reasons, but generally alumni indicate a desire to get more involved with the interview process. A very high percentage of respondents asked for a better understanding of how Admissions uses the interviews in the decision process. (512 responses)

**Emails:**

- **Administration:** The Moving Dartmouth Forward initiative and administrative approach to addressing high-risk behaviors; concern over cost of tuition; divestment from fossil fuels; Class of ‘65’s effort towards reinstatement of NROTC. (338 emails)

- **Student Life:** Advocacy for social change; implementation of new College policies (e.g. hard-alcohol ban); both support for and opposition of the Greek system; concern regarding de-recognition of Alpha Delta. (220 emails)

- **Living/Learning Communities:** Feedback largely negative; concern of risk of more fragmented community; positives of living with a wide range of students also noted. (151 emails)

- **Academics:** Future of graduate education at Dartmouth; balanced approach to liberal-arts education; technological innovations in the classroom; enthusiasm for the Dartmouth Entrepreneurial Network. (102 emails)

- **Admissions:** Office of Admissions’ effort to recruit and train new alumni interviewers; partnership with Alumni Relations; legacy admissions. (81 emails)

Further summary of these communications will be detailed later in this report.

Finally, we note that 42 alumni councilors completed their terms, and we appreciate their thoughtful engagement and devotion to the College and our alumni. Planning for the upcoming council meetings is already under way, and Alumni Council President Jennifer Avellino ‘89 and the Executive Committee look forward to welcoming the new councilors in October in Hanover.
**Emails received from Alumni**

- 2010-11: 700
- 2011-12: 738
- 2012-13: 657
- 2013-14: 980
- 2014-15: 1352

**Emails and Other Communications received from Alumni**

- 2010-11: 700
- 2011-12: 738
- 2012-13: 657
- 2013-14: 980
- 2014-15: 3000+
Summary of Alumni Council and Alumni Liaison Committee Activities

In its 101st year, the 126-member Dartmouth Alumni Council was fully engaged in its primary task of enhancing communication and involvement between alumni and the College, and handled a number of exciting projects throughout its term. Our most notable achievements included organizing the first Alumni Day of Service through our newly created Alumni Service Committee; fostering career mentorship and interaction between alumni and students through our newly created Professional Development Committee; honoring winners of the Alumni Award and the Young Alumni Distinguished Service Award (each of whom are selected by a committee of the Alumni Council composed of former recipients of each award); and engaging in significantly more alumni dialogue than ever before.

During our semi-annual meetings in Hanover, described in further detail below, councilors met with President Hanlon, members of the Board of Trustees, senior administrators, faculty, and students. Councilors then conveyed what they learned to their constituents for the purpose of educating alumni, and eliciting opinions, perspectives, and questions. Driving this two-way communication is our most important responsibility, and this year it was a great success. Councilors sent approximately 320 messages to their constituents, which generated approximately 1350 responses. These responses are reviewed, tabulated, and summarized for consideration by the Board of Trustees, and the entire alumni body, in this report.

The Alumni Council held its 209th session from October 23-25, 2014, and its 210th session from May 14-16, 2015, in Hanover. Both meetings were hands-on, interactive sessions for all involved. The October meeting engendered much discussion about the pending Moving Dartmouth Forward proposals, the cluster initiative (interdisciplinary faculty teams who collaborate on complex problems, emerging issues, and future societal challenges), and the incoming Society of Fellows (scholars who have recently received their Ph.D. degrees, who pursue their research while gaining mentored experience as teachers and members of the departments and/or programs in which they are housed). Meanwhile the May meeting was designed to spotlight Dartmouth’s unique academic offerings, and the opportunities for undergraduates in the three graduate schools.

During the October meeting, President Hanlon outlined his academic vision, describing the importance of experiential learning in shaping students who will be prepared to lead and solve the world’s problems, and fielded a wide-range of questions from Councilors. Councilors also heard from:

- Jamie Coughlin, director of New Venture Incubator Programs and the Dartmouth Regional Technology Center, who discussed the projects sponsored by the New Venture Incubator;
- Provost Carolyn Dever, who addressed further investment in the diversity of our faculty, and the need to use enterprise and innovation, combined with capital, to provide students and faculty the tools they need to succeed;
- Theresa Ellis ‘97, interim dean of the Tucker Foundation, who described the restructuring of the Foundation;
- Interim Dean of the College Inge-Lise Ameer, who outlined new orientation efforts with the first-year class, the opening of the Triangle House, and ongoing student safety initiatives;
- Senior Vice President for Advancement Bob Lasher ’88, who elaborated on recent fundraising successes;
- Trustees Emily Bakemeier ’82 and Bill Helman ’80, who provided an update from the Board of Trustees, and answered numerous questions from Councilors; and
- Professor F. Jon Kull ’88, dean of Graduate Studies, and Josh Kim, director of digital learning programs, who explored the digital learning initiatives being utilized at Dartmouth.

Finally, on Friday night, Councilors gathered with prior Alumni Award winners at the 60th annual Alumni Award Dinner at a special black-tie-optional gala to fete the lives and contributions to Dartmouth of Alumni Award winners Douglas A. Donahue Jr. ’73, Danielle A. Dyer ’81, ’89Tu, and Tracey Salmon-Smith ’87; and Young Alumni Distinguished Service Award winners Janna J. Annest ’00, Deborah Atuk ’04Tu, and Greg Chittim ’01, ’02Th, ’03Th.

The Alumni Liaison Committee (ALC) met twice during the October meeting, with the second meeting over breakfast with President Hanlon; Trustees Bill Helman ’80, Sherri Oberg ’82, ’86Tu, and Emily P. Bakemeier ’82; Vice President for Alumni Relations Martha Beattie ’76; and Senior Vice President for Advancement Bob Lasher ’88. During both meetings, the ALC discussed its focus on increasing and expanding the means of communication between alumni and the ALC, through emails, surveys, and social media. The ALC also discussed the Moosilauke Forum’s recent survey on professional development noting how important this topic is to alumni, students, and the administration. The ALC collaborated with the Alumni Council’s Professional Development Committee, the Center for Professional Development, and the Dartmouth for Life staff to produce this survey.

During the May meeting, President Hanlon provided further insight into his strategy to fulfill his academic vision, including that he envisions Dartmouth as a magnet for talent over the next century. This will be accomplished through investments in the Dartmouth Center for the Advancement of Learning to create experiential learning initiatives, the establishment of 10 faculty clusters, and through the new Society of Fellows program for postdoctoral scholars. Additional presentations and sessions were led by:

- Vice President for Alumni Relations Martha Beattie ’76 and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Maria Laskaris ’84 regarding the partnership between alumni relations and admissions to drive interviews and student yield;
- Interim Dean of the College Inge-Lise Ameer about student life, particularly the composition of the new house communities and the implementation of the Moving Dartmouth Forward initiatives;
- Ambassador Daniel Benjamin, the Norman E. McCulloch Jr. director of the Dickey Center, who led a panel of students involved in global experiential-learning activities;
- Paul Danos, Duane Compton, and Joseph Helble, the deans of the Tuck, Geisel, and Thayer schools, respectively, and F. Jon Kull ’88, the dean of Graduate Studies, each of whom discussed academic initiatives in their respective schools, and outlined opportunities for undergraduates in their graduate programs;
- Trustees Laurel Richie ’81 and Bill Helman ’80, who provided an update from the Board, and a forum for a wide range of questions;
- Senior Vice President for Advancement Bob Lasher ’88, who outlined the short-term and intermediate-term goals of the Advancement Division, including a preview of the upcoming capital campaign; and
- Professor Lisa Baldez, who provided an overview of the Dartmouth Center for Advancement of Learning, which is a resource for faculty training in evidence-based practices.

Again, the ALC met twice during the May meeting, with the second congregation held over breakfast with President Hanlon, Trustees Laurel Richie ’81 and Bill Helman ’80, and Vice President for Alumni Relations Martha Beattie ’76. The ALC spent
time discussing the results of the email sent by Alumni Council President Lou Spelios ’95 and President-Elect Jennifer Avellino ’89 to all alumni following President Hanlon’s announcement of his Moving Dartmouth Forward initiative; the social media communication efforts using Twitter and Facebook which focused on professional development, the Alumni Day of Service, and the upcoming 25th anniversary of the Women in Science Project; and the Moosilauke Forum survey pertaining to admissions that was conducted by the ALC in collaboration with the Alumni Council's Enrollment and Admissions Committee and the College’s Offices of Admissions and Alumni Relations.

Finally, the ALC met with the Advancement Committee of the Board of Trustees twice over the past year: first, in October, by conference call, and again in person in March in Hanover. The October conference call focused on the presentation of the 2013-2014 ALC annual report as well as discussions around what we are hearing from alumni. Members of the ALC, trustees, and senior Dartmouth officers attended the March meeting. The first part of the meeting focused on a discussion of the increased communication with alumni that took place during the year, through email improvements, alumni surveys, and social media posts. The second and most important part of the meeting involved discussion of exactly what we are hearing from alumni, particularly around Moving Dartmouth Forward, Living Learning Communities, student life, admissions, and other topics. Each interaction with the Board’s Advancement Committee was lively and productive.
Overview of Correspondence with Alumni Council and ALC

Representative Email “Hot Topics” in Each Category 2014-15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2014-15 Email “Hot Topics”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Response</td>
<td>Personal greetings; appreciation for council communications/service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Moving Dartmouth Forward initiative and administrative approach to addressing high risk behaviors; concern over cost of tuition; divestment from fossil fuels; Class of ’65’s effort toward reinstatement of NROTC</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous/Other</td>
<td>Response to “sense of place” prompt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions</td>
<td>Office of Admissions’ effort to recruit and train new alumni interviewers; partnership with Alumni Relations; legacy admissions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Top Alumni Communication Themes Submitted to the ALC: 2014-15

Administration/Student Life

With the release of President Hanlon’s recommendations in response to the Moving Dartmouth Forward committee – and a renewed focus by the College on curbing high-risk behaviors around alcohol, sexual assault, and intolerance – Dartmouth alumni reached out to their councilors with much that they wished to share on this initiative. As in the past, they also commented on other more general aspects of the campus experience.

- **Moving Dartmouth Forward:** The majority of correspondence from alumni – much of it in direct emails to the Council’s president and president-elect – was positive and supportive of the College’s efforts. There was, however, some “noisy dissent” running through the feedback from some alumni criticizing what they perceived as a “top-down approach” in seeking to change student behavior.

- **Living Learning Communities:** Prompted by a common question that was developed by the Council and shared by the majority of councilors with their constituents after our fall meeting, 151 alumni wrote to us with their take on the living learning communities. Most of those writing were not in favor, and expressed concern that student life would become fragmented, and opportunities to associate “with a wide range of people in the dorms” would dissipate.

- **How would you differentiate Dartmouth’s Sense of Community and Place?:** In support of work by Trustee Laurel Richie ’81 and Vice President of Communications Justin Anderson to explore how Dartmouth can differentiate itself from other institutions through its marketing, the Council also asked the alumni body for its thoughts. The Council received 57 responses, and among the most-suggested differentiators were Dartmouth’s location, physical beauty, welcoming student body, commitment to undergraduate teaching, focus on the world at-large, adventurous spirit, and close-knit alumni network.

- **De-recognition of Alpha Delta:** More than 50 emails focused on the fate of AD. Nearly all expressed disappointment in the administration’s handling of the matter, and nearly all were from AD alumni.

Cost of a Dartmouth Education

Of the 41 emails submitted regarding College administration and operations – more than double the number compared to a year ago – most were in response to the Dartmouth Alumni Magazine article on the cost of a Dartmouth degree. Alumni continue to be concerned about the continued growth in tuition and administrative costs. A number of the 81 emails submitted in the “admissions” category also touched on cost, underscoring concern about the cost of a Dartmouth education.

College or University?

While the 102 emails received by the ALC in the category of “academics” revealed no concentration of alumni sentiment on any particular aspect of the Dartmouth learning experience, there is anxiety about the “university” moniker. Some cited the College’s efforts to organize and elevate the status of Dartmouth’s disparate graduate programs as a possible indication of a shift in the institution’s undergraduate focus. That said, the administration’s emphasis on experiential learning yielded positive responses from a number of alumni.
Athletics

At least as far as alumni who write to their councilors are concerned, Dartmouth Athletics merited virtually no mention in the 2014-15 academic year. Fewer than 10 emails were received in the sports category – down about 2/3 from the average of nearly 30 in more recent years.

The Alumni Councilors Themselves

Many alumni continue to take the time to thank their councilors for the work that they do to disseminate all that they learn in their visits to Hanover.