



# **DARTMOUTH**

**2010-2011**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

ALUMNI LIAISON COMMITTEE  
TO

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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## Introduction

Dartmouth College is renowned for her devoted and energetic alumni. The Dartmouth Alumni Council has served for more than a century as a body of informed alumni representatives, convening twice a year to address alumni issues; to meet with students, faculty and College officials; and to nominate candidates for election to the Board of Trustees. As the College has changed with the times, the council has continued to rise to the challenges, making significant and positive contributions. In 2007, the council amended its constitution to increase representation of and improve communication with alumni, and to ensure that representatives meet regularly with each other and with the Board of Trustees and College administration. The Dartmouth Alumni Council continues in its mission:

**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.**

In 2007, the Alumni Liaison Committee (ALC) was also formed by the council to coordinate the efforts of the leadership of the Alumni Council, the Association of Alumni (AoA) Executive Committee, and at-large members of the alumni body. (Please refer to the following flow charts for a description of the various alumni groups and their responsibilities.) The ALC has been referred to as the “hub,” where all communications from alumni are reviewed, summarized, and then presented to and discussed with the College, in particular, the Board of Trustees.

This is the ALC’s fourth annual report (2010-11) to the Dartmouth College Board of Trustees. The report summarizes Alumni Council activities, ALC/trustee interactions, and alumni communications to the ALC by category. This past year, council representatives sent 200 written messages to their constituents, reporting on the issues affecting the College and asking for feedback. Alumni responded with more than 700 emails (and a few letters) offering a wide variety of opinions and inquiries, and often thanking their peer council representatives for reaching out to them and allowing their voices to be heard. This report summarizes these expressions of alumni sentiment.

The year 2010-11 was a time of progression for the College. In President Jim Yong Kim’s second year in office, he oversaw the closing of an almost \$100 million budget gap, broke new ground with his student life initiatives to reduce alcohol harm and sexual assault, and established the Center for Health Care Delivery Science. The alumni responded with overwhelming approval of his work. Alumni also expressed considerable interest in changes within the administration, including excitement over the hiring of the new director of athletics and recreation and questions about policies of minority faculty/staff retention. Two new Board of Trustees candidates were nominated by the council for two open seats, affirmed in a trustee election, and seated by the Board of Trustees. At the same time, some alumni questioned why the candidates ran uncontested. With the dismissal of the lawsuit against the College on the issue of board parity, the alumni expressed far more interest in how the College is handling issues surrounding the global financial crisis and its effect on academics and student life. Simply put, alumni are increasingly taking an interest in the College and also asking, “What can I do to help?”

The Board of Trustees has consistently expressed appreciation for the Alumni Council’s efforts in informing, representing, and increasing communication among alumni. The Alumni Relations Committee (ARC) of the board continues to actively support and work closely with the ALC to enhance alumni relations in carrying forward the mission of the College.

Great appreciation goes out to the members of the ALC for contributing to this report, the representatives of the Alumni Council for their substantive communications to constituents, the hard-working Office of Alumni Relations for facilitating volunteers’ activities, and the administration, staff, and Board of Trustees for proactively advancing alumni relations with the College.

After discussing this report with members of the Board of Trustees this fall, we plan to post it on the Alumni Council website, accessible to all alumni. We thank alumni in advance for your comments and suggestions; please write to your Alumni Council representative or email the Alumni Liaison Committee directly at [ALC@alum.dartmouth.edu](mailto:ALC@alum.dartmouth.edu).

Respectfully submitted,

**The 2010-11 Alumni Liaison Committee**

Janine Avner '80, chair and past-president of the Alumni Council

Veree Brown '93, first vice president of the Association of Alumni

Tom Callahan '84, alumni councilor

Danielle Dyer '81, '89Tu, president-elect of the Alumni Council

John Ferries '59, '60Tu, Association of Alumni member

Susan Hess '81, alumni councilor

Sarah Jackson-Han '88, alumni councilor

Doug Keare '56, '57Th, '57Tu, second vice president of the Association of Alumni

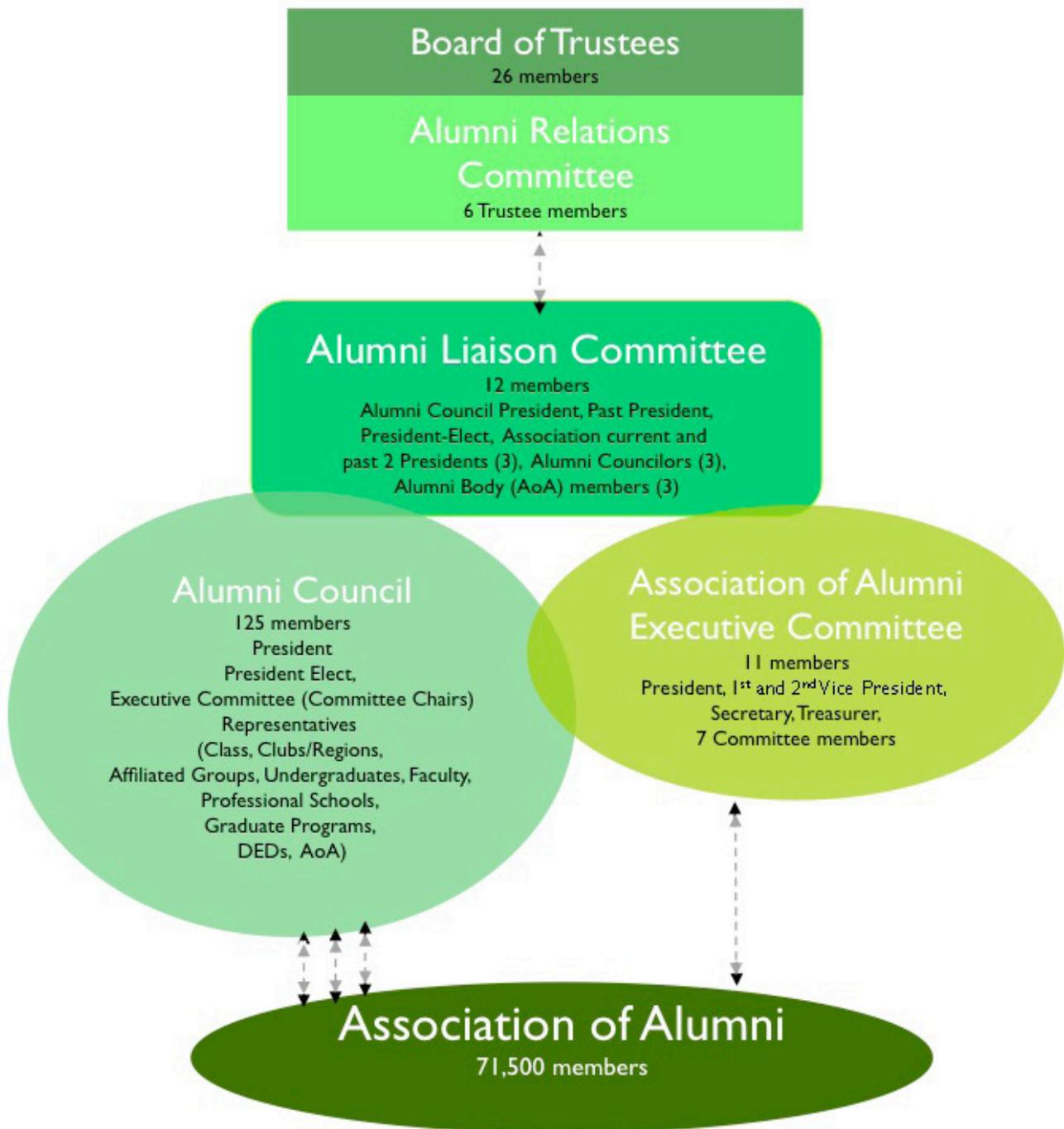
John Mathias '69, president of the Association of Alumni

John Osborn '88, Association of Alumni member

Tom Peisch '70, president of the Alumni Council

Samantha Truex '92, '93Th, '95Tu, Association of Alumni member

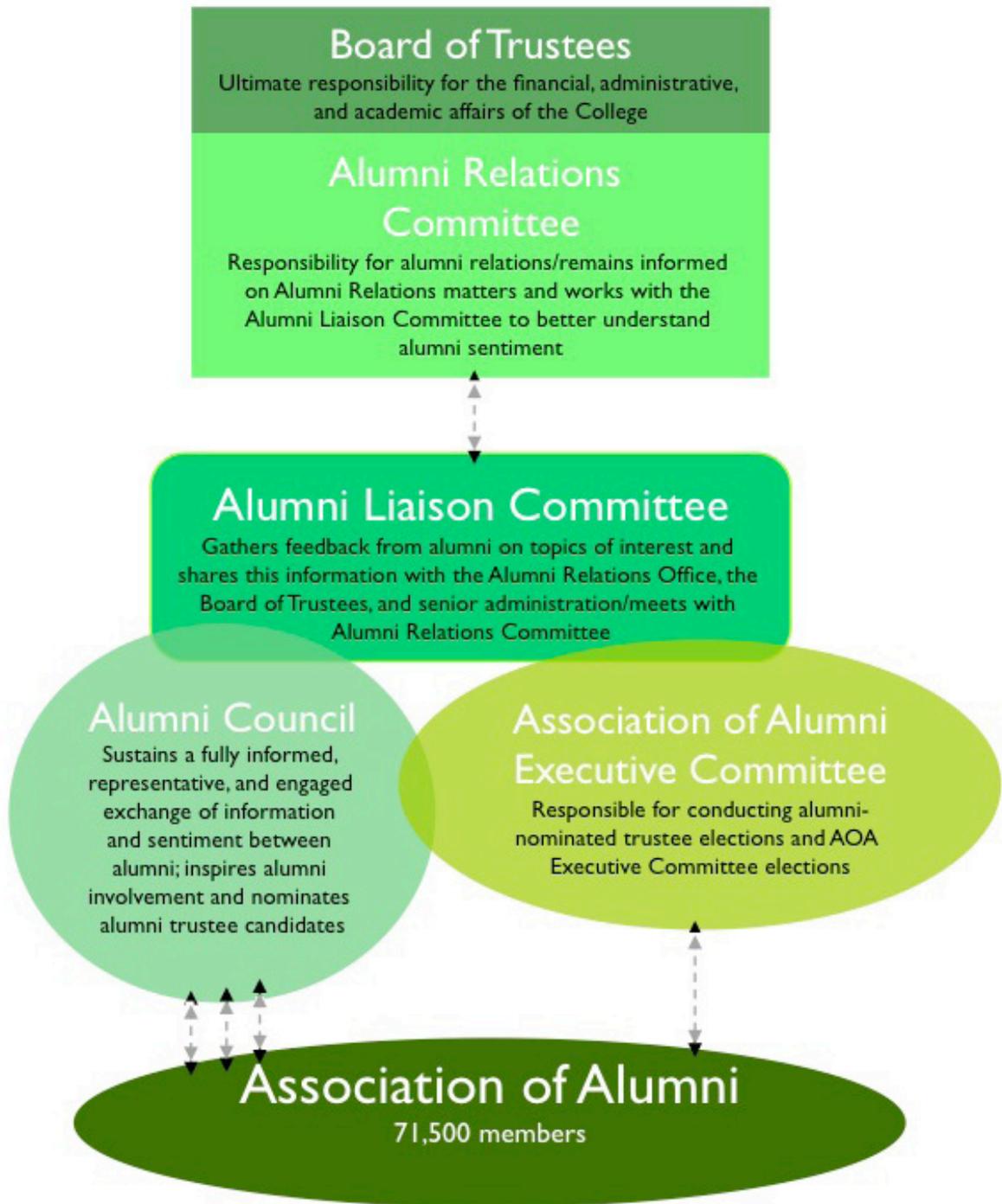
# Dartmouth Alumni Leadership Flow Chart



# Dartmouth Alumni Leadership

## Flow Chart

### Functions



## **Summary of Alumni Council Activities**

The Alumni Council finished another extremely successful year in carrying out the mandate described in the Introduction section of this report. The high points were the two meetings of the council in Hanover in May and December. Both were well attended and featured full agendas of committee work; presentations by College administrators, faculty, and students; and the nominations of two outstanding alumni to serve on the Board of Trustees. The meeting agendas and summary reports are included in this report as Appendices A-D. In accordance with the 2007 amendments to its constitution, the council is now operating at its full strength of 125 members. A retirement schedule listing all councilors is included in this report as Appendix F. Fifty-eight councilors are picked by their classmates, six at-large members are selected by the council, and the remainder are selected by various affiliated groups, regional clubs, and other alumni constituencies around the country and around the world. Councilors come from a wide range of backgrounds and are united by a love of Dartmouth and a desire to maintain the strong bond between the College and its alumni.

### **President Kim's Second Year**

President Jim Yong Kim '82a spoke at both council meetings and, as usual, his remarks were enthusiastically received. His comments at the May meeting featured a change in format, with the president speaking more informally at the Friday afternoon plenary session rather than at the dinner. In advance of the meeting, the council's executive committee submitted suggested subjects for the president's presentation. After the talk, there was a lengthy question-and-answer session, which the councilors found highly informative. The high points of the president's two talks were included in the minutes of both meetings and passed along to all alumni in individual councilor reports. The president and his team have now dealt decisively with the financial challenges that greeted them in the spring of 2009, have made the appropriate budgetary adjustments, and are hard at work on a number of initiatives that will make the College stronger. In his two talks, President Kim listed the following priorities:

- Maintaining Dartmouth's reputation as the best undergraduate institution in the world.
- Maintaining Dartmouth as a global leader in innovative thinking. The president cited the recently established Dartmouth Center for Health Care Delivery Science, a joint program that includes all the schools at Dartmouth (undergraduate and graduate) and the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. This center is designed to tackle one of the most intractable domestic issues facing the country.
- Dealing with difficult problems on college campuses presented by binge drinking, sexual assault, and use of illegal drugs. With the establishment of the Learning Collaborative on High-Risk Drinking, Dartmouth once again is a leader in a national effort to address a serious public health problem.
- Nurturing the relationship between Dartmouth and its alumni so as to make the alumni network the strongest in the country.

### **Advancement Division**

One of President Kim's initiatives has been to consolidate alumni affairs, public affairs, and development departments into one Advancement division. Senior vice president for Advancement Carrie Pelzel '54a heads this new division and has established a goal-oriented system for its operation. Former Alumni Council president Martha Beattie '76 has recently taken on the role of vice president for Alumni Affairs under Pelzel's leadership. Among other things, the College is reviewing the structure and timing of reunions with the goal of strengthening them. At the council meeting in May, councilors participated in focus groups to discuss this important issue.

## **New Director of Athletics**

The Thursday evening program at the December meeting was devoted entirely to the athletics program at Dartmouth, and nearly all varsity coaches attended the dinner as the council's guests. The keynote speaker was newly hired director of athletics and recreation Harry Sheehy, who spoke of Dartmouth's commitment to its athletic programs and his plans to make them better. Sheehy is an inspiring speaker, and his commitment to excellence is evident to all.

## **Classroom/Student Encounters**

Many councilors have observed that their interactions with students are the most enjoyable part of the meetings. The December session related to a newly created social event management procedures (SEMP), which is motivated in part by the College's attempts to deal with binge drinking and other forms of alcohol abuse. In connection with this effort, the work of the council's Ad Hoc Committee to Support Greek Letter Organizations continues. More will be said about this work later in this report. During the May meeting, five students took part in a panel discussion titled "Round the Girdled Earth," related to their involvement in a number of worthy community service programs. Dartmouth continues to be highly selective and to attract the most accomplished young men and women in the country and the world.

## **Committee to Support Greek Organizations**

As noted, the work of this organization continues under the able leadership of former Alumni Council President John "J.B." Daukas '84. The goal is to have an alumni advisory board in place for each Greek letter organization in an effort to help them endure and thrive.

## **Trustee Nomination/Selection**

Following the recommendation of its Nominating and Alumni Trustee Search Committee, led by Tom Daniels '82, the council determined to nominate two alumni for the two open seats on the Board of Trustees. The council then chose Gail Koziara Boudreaux '82 and Bill Burgess '81 for those positions. Their elections were uncontested, and the board duly seated them. Both Boudreaux and Burgess were distinguished undergraduates academically and athletically and have gone on to highly successful business careers. Their presence on the board strengthens it in many ways.

## **Alumni Awards**

Another important council responsibility is to identify and recognize deserving alumni for their service to Dartmouth. During the past year, the following alumni were presented with the Dartmouth Alumni Award:

Pete Bleyler '61  
Wayne Davis '73, '79Tu  
Julie Koeninger '81, '85Tu  
Mary Thomson Renner '82  
Morris "Rocky" Whitaker '74

The Young Alumni Distinguished Service Award was presented to:  
Kimberly Koontz Haring '96

## **Communications with Alumni**

The council continued to work hard on its core mission of communicating with alumni and responding to questions and concerns promptly through the ALC, chaired by former Alumni Council President Janine Avner '80. As reported earlier in this

report, councilors sent some 200 messages to their constituents and received over 700 communications on a variety of subjects. In the digital era, the vast majority of these communications are by electronic mail. The council and the College continue to explore social media and other forms of communication in an effort to strengthen this process.

## **The Year Ahead**

The coming year will be a busy one for the council as president Danielle Dyer '81, '89Tu takes charge. Agendas for the two meetings are being prepared, and the Nominating Committee (to be chaired by Pete Frederick '65) is actively engaged in the process of identifying candidates for three open seats on the Board of Trustees. One-third of the councilors attending the December meeting will be new to the council, and the process of orienting them has begun with particular emphasis on their communication responsibilities. All alumni owe a debt of gratitude to those alumni who serve as council members.

## **Summary of ALC/Trustee Interaction**

The ALC continued to meet with members of the Dartmouth Board of Trustees this past year to ensure that the College fully understands alumni sentiment and to discuss issues of importance to the College. On October 1, 2010, the ALC participated in a conference call with Brad Evans '64, the chair of the Alumni Relations Committee (ARC) of the Board of Trustees, to discuss the 2009-10 ALC annual report. On December 4, 2010, in a breakfast meeting during the December Alumni Council session in Hanover, the ALC met with President Kim '82a and trustees Brad Evans '64 and Sherri Oberg '82, Tu'86, who later updated the council on trustee activities. Due to severe snowstorms in February, the in-person meeting between the ALC and ARC was postponed to April 7, 2011. At the April 7 meeting, the ALC met with a majority of the ARC board members, including Stephen Mandel '78, chair of the Board of Trustees; Evans; John Donahoe '82, immediate past chair of the ARC; and Trustees Oberg and Morton Kondracke '60. Carrie Pelzel '54a, senior vice president for Advancement, was also in attendance. During the May 21, 2011, Alumni Council session, the ALC met and discussed alumni feedback with President Kim, chief of staff David Spalding '76, newly appointed vice president for Alumni Relations Martha Beattie '76, and newly appointed trustees Peggy Tanner '79 and Bill Helman '80, who then spoke to and entertained questions from the entire council. The agendas for these meetings are attached as Appendices G, H, and I.

At the April 7, 2011, in-person meeting in Hanover, the trustees noted that peer-to-peer communications have been very effective, and they have been very impressed with the substantive weekend agendas for the Alumni Council meetings and the information that is communicated by councilors to their peer constituents afterwards. This level of communication, along with the ALC summarization and report of alumni sentiment to the Board of Trustees, has created a solid working relationship among the board, administration, and alumni bodies as the communication flows from one entity to the next and ultimately to the alumni at large.

# Communications to ALC by Category\*

## Academics

The ALC received a total of 20 emails since August 2010 pertaining to academics at the College. Many of these emails were inquiries about various course offerings at Dartmouth, while others offered specific suggestions of ways to potentially enhance Dartmouth's curriculum, undergraduate teaching, or the marketability of Dartmouth graduates to future employers. A couple of emails inquired about the ROTC program on campus. There was a mix of positive and critical comments, although all correspondence demonstrated the authors' passion for Dartmouth College.

The ALC received four emails relating to healthcare delivery. A member of the Class of 2008 was excited about the Dartmouth Center for Health Care Delivery Science, especially given President Kim's healthcare expertise. Another individual described his hope that Dartmouth "can be part of the solution regarding healthcare in the United States." A Dartmouth '85 graduate wrote to describe her work in "health economics" and a presentation she gave to the Society for Values in Higher Education. A member of the Class of '96 inquired whether there are any plans for a pre-nursing or registered nurse curriculum at Dartmouth.

Several emails pertained to specific questions or thoughts about course offerings at Dartmouth. One alumnus questioned whether Dartmouth offered Korean language courses. A question was raised in one email about whether there are plans to add classes in data analytics or predictive analytics. Another alumnus sent several emails advocating the use of Dartmouth's Arctic Studies program as a catalyst for development of a program examining climate change and the consequences of melting Arctic ice. (This same alumnus forwarded an entire article on this topic from a recent edition of the journal *Science*.) Offerings in the philosophy and religion department at Dartmouth were questioned by another individual from the Class of '96, who had visited Dartmouth on two occasions to participate in a panel discussion and also to give a lecture. Professor Susan Ackerman '80, chair of the religion department, provided a detailed response to this email, which was forwarded back to this alumnus. One alumnus was intrigued to hear from his councilor about the Dartmouth Entrepreneurial Network and wrote to request more information about this program.

There were a few emails relating to Dartmouth's adaptation to changes in the United States' educational system and workforce. One author wanted to receive information regarding "how Dartmouth is facing the challenges to American education in context of globalization and the ongoing digital revolution." Another alumnus observed that more employers are recruiting at schools where graduates have "tangible skill sets" such as accounting or engineering backgrounds, as opposed to a classic liberal arts degree. He wanted reassurance that the College is marketing Dartmouth students' problem-solving abilities and creativity to future employers. Finally, one email pertained to the College's initiatives to educate the most promising students to be responsible leaders.

The ALC received two emails pertaining to the ROTC program on the Dartmouth campus.

There were three negative emails. One alumnus from the Class of '77 was critical of the correspondence she received from her alumni councilor. She was chagrined that the Alumni Council seemed preoccupied with athletics, fraternal organizations/student social life, and strategic planning, governance, budgets, and finance at the expense of covering academic programs at Dartmouth. She summarized her concerns by saying, "at the end of the day, the primary unifying interest of Dartmouth's former students would likely be links to their educational experiences...." Another alumnus was

\*Each year the ALC selects categories, or topics of interest to alumni, based on prior years' categories, Alumni Council activities, important College events, and issues discussed with the Board of Trustees. Within each category, the alumni communications are tallied, summarized and in many cases quoted without revealing the author for obvious privacy concerns. There are times when one issue is discussed in an email but may fit into several categories, and that email will be directed to a particular category depending on the question or focus, but counted only once. In the case of "composite" emails, where many issues may be discussed in a single email, these are counted only once as well. Although there may be categories that are ongoing from year to year, many will change as topics of interest arise. Per the mission of the council, the ALC's intent is to provide the Board of Trustees with not only a broad view of alumni sentiment, but also to detail many of the alumni's suggestions, comments and questions quoted herein, in an effort to assist the College in understanding alumni sentiment.

concerned about the amount of time spent by Dartmouth faculty in teaching, and asked that tenured faculty be encouraged to spend as much time in the classroom as possible. The last email was in response to an article in The Dartmouth regarding the lack of adequate advising for certain demographic groups on campus. This individual felt “Dartmouth has long had poor advising and this is not a problem unique to any demographic group. Dartmouth should deal with these complaints as affecting all and not reflexly [sic] feel that they have not done enough for any single constituency.”

## **Action Items**

Among its activities, the ALC reviews all emails and other written communications sent by alumni to alumni councilors and the ALC email box. The ALC identifies “action items.” Action items are items about which the ALC contacts the College administration to pass on suggestions or gather information in order to answer alumni questions. The chair of the ALC confers periodically with the director of alumni leadership, who then communicates with the appropriate College administrator, department chair, or other official regarding the action item that has been submitted.

Over the last four years, since the creation of the ALC, there has been a significant increase in the number of action items submitted to the Alumni Council. In 2008-09, one dozen action items were submitted. This was followed by 30 items of this nature in 2009-10. This year, the number of action items submitted increased to approximately 90. Some of the Dartmouth topics addressed in these emails included language courses, the removal of the swim docks on the Connecticut River, historical trends of staff levels, need-blind admissions, veteran student support, friends group funding, the Learning Collaborative on High Risk Drinking, the Dartmouth Center for Health Care Delivery Science, the Dartmouth Alumni Magazine, diversity, the endowment, Dartmouth College Fund participation, ROTC, strategic planning, various academic departments, and athletics. The major issues addressed included topics pertaining to the administration, admissions, and student life, with much interest in President Kim’s initiatives to address high-risk drinking.

## **Administration**

Many of the 57 emails received within the administration category were positive comments in support of President Kim’s vision for and leadership of the College. Several emails raised concerns about the continued financial pressures on the College budget and the impact of the economy on the value of the endowment. Several others were written in support of President Kim’s multi-school initiative to address binge drinking on college campuses:

- “I fully believe that only an empowered large group of student leaders taking positive action to change the culture that values the inappropriate behavior is the method that will work. The student leaders themselves have to lead the way.”
- “...provide leadership development for student leaders of all types so they might together promote a better approach to the issue.”

Five emails expressed concern about institutional support for minority faculty, administrators, and students in light of recent staff reductions and vacancies within the Dean of the College division, poor minority staff and faculty retention, and recent hires within the administration. Some ALC members were included in threads of affiliated group leadership emails discussing this issue.

Two alumni expressed concern about their sense that conservatism on campus is limited and outside speakers should represent multiple points of view. Several others noted the loss of the swimming docks last summer and their preference to restore them for use by all summer term students. Finally, two other alumni expressed a preference for re-thinking the timing of reunions to avoid mid-week reunions for those folks whose attendance is limited for business reasons.

Many alumni noted ongoing positive communications between the council and alumni and appreciated having the opportunity to get more information about the College issues that are foremost on their minds.

## Admissions

The total number of emails on the admissions topic was 17, down significantly from 29 last year. The topics were again consistent with those of previous years.

- Four were specific examples of disappointment at a student with strong qualifications not being accepted to Dartmouth, including one mentioning that guidance counselors in Maine are disheartened and “no longer recommending applications to Dartmouth since no one from their area has been accepted in 10 years.”
- Seven were questions regarding the characteristics sought by admissions, covering whether admission is still need blind, whether diversity of race is factored in too heavily, how athletes are recruited, whether enough legacies are admitted, and whether diversity of religion is considered. This quote came from an alum whose daughter would like to apply: “‘Adding to Dartmouth’ is the worrisome buzzphrase for redistribution of higher education degrees unrelated to measures of student performance. If there is engineering of a socially diverse class, why aren’t they taking into account the religion of students?” he asked.
- Five were related to alumni interviewing — offers to be an interviewer, questions about logistics, questions about sons/daughters applying, and how/whether to arrange an interview.
- A final perspective was expressed that younger alumni are giving less and less to Dartmouth relative to the older alumni. This alumnus wondered if admissions could somehow look for people who are more likely to become loyal to the school and, therefore, give more to the Dartmouth College Fund. (Please note that we checked the validity of the first statement and don’t believe that younger alumni are giving less over time.)

The questions above were addressed by alumni councilors based on the ample information they receive at the on-campus meetings and, where needed, with input from the admissions staff. Overall, the comments are in line with what we can expect given that Dartmouth is a highly selective institution with a growing pool of applicants for a small admitted class.

## Athletics

There were 27 emails related to athletics received in 2010-11.

All of the emails were acted upon, with responses provided along with relevant material and information. For example, one email asked whether the College had decided to decrease or cut certain athletic teams due to economic pressures. Here, the response indicated that no such action was necessary at that time. This alum was very appreciative of the reply.

Recently, there has been a significant amount of positive buzz surrounding the appointment of Harry Sheehy, who was formerly the athletic director at Williams College. Positive comments stemmed from his presentation at the December meeting of the Alumni Council, an introductory webcast, and other outreach efforts. One email described Sheehy as “uplifting and inspiring.” Another described the decision to hire him as “terrific.”

Several emails credited Sheehy’s focus on not only competing in athletic contests, but also on winning. In particular, three emails mentioned Sheehy’s view on connecting sports and “smarts,” with emphasis on the new Peak Performance initiative, which seemed very well received.

Earlier in the calendar year, there was interest in learning more about acting director of athletics and recreation Bob Ceplikas ’78’s vision and plan for improving the winning percentage of Dartmouth’s teams.

Overall, the majority of email complaints focused on Dartmouth's win/loss record across the board and the need for a better winning percentage. There was some positive sentiment surrounding Dartmouth's improved football record last season (6-4). There were only five emails, far fewer than last year, that criticized the performance of the football program. However, there is still some lingering "disappointment" with the track record under Coach Buddy Teevens '79.

Several emails mentioned President Kim's passion for athletics, especially football, including his visible displays of spirit at the games.

There were a greater number of emails than last year (approximately 8-9) that mentioned poor performance related to other programs, including the men's and women's basketball teams, for example. Another email expressed a desire to see Dartmouth teams go from good to great across all programs, especially those that "come close" but don't quite get to the very top in their respective leagues.

One email complained about a lack of follow-up on a reference regarding a potential athletic recruit.

Finally, another email expressed concerns that club sports such as rugby don't get the "same level of recognition" in official college publications and newsletters compared with established Ivy League teams.

Overall, the tide seems to be turning. While there is still a sentiment that Dartmouth's performance should be better across the board, there is tremendous optimism and appreciation for the outreach by the ALC and the College, the appointment of Harry Sheehy, a renewed focus on winning, and the implementation of efforts such as Peak Performance.

## Composite

One dozen emails fell into the composite category, representing responses from alumni who commented on many issues related to the College. All offered constructive thoughts and appreciation for the work of the Alumni Council. Sample comments included:

"President Kim is great for the College. I am about to recommend him as a speaker for our 40th anniversary conference. I get a little resentful, however, about the tone of the Alumni Magazine...."

"The north campus is appalling. The buildings look like something from USC and it is barren of trees. Further, the buildings pointlessly drift off to the right, making it an unsatisfying prospect. Seriously, from Berry north they need to plant several thousand trees to soften and obscure this severe, inappropriate landscape."

"Good for you. I have been, unfortunately, only to two or three meetings, but I think you are doing a wonderful job attracting Dartmouth grads who are successful in the industry and having them speak at forums and other get-togethers. Keep up the good work; you have much to offer young Dartmouth people who graduate as well as a lot of us ole' folk."

"Happy to be supportive. I know you will hear lots of complaints about lots of things. Enjoy being back in Hanover."

"I served on the council in the past. Serving on the council is great way to serve the College, alumni, and students and puts you on the ground-floor level of the current tactical and strategic issues. Based on my research, three things come to mind from a priority standpoint:

1. Continued fiscal discipline and growth of the endowment and annual DCF campaign. The capital markets have largely recovered, thus aiding the turnaround of the FY '10 endowment return of 10 percent. The abnormal returns of 15 percent plus in the markets during the pre-crisis are likely a thing of the past (and if achievable,

would require a very high portfolio risk management strategy). [This,] combined with lowering the annual endowment distribution percentage, mean that fiscal discipline and the DCF campaign will increasingly be crucial factors.

2. Current students are juggling curriculum/career planning due to insufficient class space in certain quarters. President Kim also spoke of this challenge. Investments in new technology around curriculum planning and a very focused strategy of new faculty hires are needed.
3. Enhance the career planning services platform offered by the College. In a likely tight job market for the near future, these best practices and tools are needed to give the graduating seniors the best chance to compete with their peer group. These can be interwoven with alumni mentoring and hiring from within the alumni body. Alumni may need these services, too, in this job market. The quicker that jobs are sourced the quicker that graduating seniors will likely have discretionary income to contribute to the DCF.”

“Reunions: This comes up at every reunion-type commentary...mixing the three class reunions up differently every other time or so. I know the point is moot for us now, but it would have been nice over the years to have a reunion with the Class of '84 and we were always with '86 and '87. I think it might have built more cross-class unity. Now we are so separated by time and lack of reunions [sic], the connections we had on campus are gone except in cases where an '84 was a close friend. I loved our 25th but you are in best place to critique how the College helped or hindered our planning.”

“Thank you for your recounting of the recent Alumni Council meeting, particularly the initiative that President Kim is encouraging regarding the harnessing of the College’s human and intellectual resources to address world challenges. Kim continues to impress me and I look forward to meeting him when I am back for my 45th this October. Dean Spears’ summaries, I read in The Review, were not really ground breaking. Too bad really, as Dartmouth has needed a way to create better choices to the least pleasant expression of extreme sports, extreme drinking. It was, of course, the same in the early '60s. I believe that change, when it comes, will come from the students, not the administration. How to cultivate the culture to encourage such change is the big question. I appreciate your services.”

“As a parent of a '13 and newly admitted '15, I think high-risk drinking is of great concern. Having seen my daughter and her friends go through the admissions process this year, I learned that some prospective students are concerned about the social life at Dartmouth. I am deeply thankful that the admissions office takes ‘a second look’ at legacy candidates. What a great way to build very strong bonds!”

## **General Response**

In 2010-11, the ALC recorded 335 emails from alumni in the general response category. The majority were notes of thanks and appreciation to Alumni Council representatives for their reporting. Thirty-three were notes of congratulation and thanks to incoming Alumni Council president Tom Peisch '70. Seven expressed appreciation to outgoing Alumni Council president Janine Avner '80 for her service. Four sought information on various items and six expressed opinions about specific issues (e.g., the effect of Hanover police tactics on the Good Samaritan policy, whether students should be allowed to swim from the docks on the Connecticut River, and the perceived political leanings of the faculty).

Overall, the communications in this category were extremely positive. Alumni truly appreciate personal reporting from their councilors. Here are just a few excerpts:

“Outstanding, as usual. I enjoyed every word and learned something from almost every word. I appreciate the care you have taken in representing us and in informing us. Thanks.”

“Since you are moving on, I want to say that I always enjoyed your reports and impressions of Alumni Council meetings.

You seemed to get to the heart of things in an insightful way and give just enough detail. And it was all tinged with a slight hint of love of the College. Great job.”

“This is truly a terrific note/communication. I especially like the elevator pitch. I also like how pithy and useful the rest is.... Thanks for all you and the AC reps do. We truly appreciate it.”

“Thanks for the long, newsy report. It sure helped to make me feel connected.”

“Best Alumni Council member report I have ever received (note I was on the council 30 years ago). Most encouraging spin on Dartmouth I have read in years. If only half of this were true, I would be reassured. Thanks for serving in this way.”

“Thanks.... Seems like all I get is drivel about voting for different slates, so it is really nice to hear some real news.”

And perhaps the greatest compliment that can be paid to a writer:

“Well, I almost thought that you were writing only to me!”

## **Governance**

There were approximately 28 emails received from alumni on the subject of governance, a decline from last year’s 98. Approximately 15 of these emails urged in one way or another that parity be restored so that alumni elect one-half of the members of the Board of Trustees. As was the case last year, some of these emails were quite pointed and threatened to withhold support from the College until a parity system was restored. Several emails described the current system as “packing of the board” with “cronies” of the administration or current board members. One email also complained about a disproportionate number of “Wall Street financiers” on the board.

Two emails raised concerns regarding a recent Valley News article alleging conflicts of interest among board members whose employers participate in the management of the College’s endowment. These two emails urged the College to avoid transacting business with firms that employ board members. Another email urged the College to be more proactive about encouraging participation by students in ROTC programs. One email complained about an admissions decision and commented that the decision reflected poorly on the College’s attentiveness to its alumni. A final email decried the lawsuit that had been brought against the College regarding governance and asked what steps were being taken to ensure that this never happened again.

## **Other Topics**

There were five emails received that were designated as other Topics. Two of the topics raised are noted below:

- The first was a complaint that has been frequently heard from more senior alumni regarding the decision to place alumni obituaries online rather than include them in the hard copy of the Dartmouth Alumni Magazine. Many of the senior classes include notifications and obituaries in their class newsletters, which can provide more extensive information on deceased classmates, so in the future the combination of the coverage in class newsletters with the Dartmouth Alumni Magazine web coverage might be a step forward.
- The second was a request from an alumnus for some guidance as to how to become reconnected to the College. Carrie Pelzel '54a, senior vice president for Advancement, has spoken during many Dartmouth volunteer weekends this year about her goal to maintain and cultivate lifetime relationships between Dartmouth and her alumni. This appears to be a strong priority of the Advancement division.

## Student Affairs

Alumni councilors received 38 emails pertaining to student life at Dartmouth.

Most of the emails (26) were about alcohol consumption at Dartmouth. Compared to last year, when all the alumni emails on this subject complained about the festering (or deteriorating) student drinking problem and fraternities, this year there were only two complaints. Instead, 15 alums praised the administration's proactive initiatives to confront the problem, including the College's new "Binge Drinking Prevention Program" and the learning collaborative led by Dartmouth. Half of these alums praised the focus on developing factual outcome measurements and the other half expressed a keen desire to learn more about the findings and conclusions that come out of these initiatives. Example: One alumnus said, "I'm excited about the program and its emphasis on better health. How can I stay updated on what's going on?" Another asked, "What was the outcome of the learning collaborative session at Dartmouth last month?"

Also, one alumnus asked, "What has been the students' reaction to President Kim's initiatives?"

Six emails were about ROTC at Dartmouth. Two of them asked why the Board of Trustees and administration don't support the ROTC program more fully and clearly, thus increasing student interest in joining the program. The replies sent back to the two alums were particularly comprehensive and factual, including comments from David Spalding '76, President Kim's chief of staff, and Carrie Pelzel '54a, senior vice president for Advancement. They pointed out that President Kim has openly supported the program (and the recruitment of returning veterans), that Sergeant-Major Bennett (who runs the ROTC program at Dartmouth) is currently improving the website and recruitment materials, and that Dartmouth is one of three Ivies (along with Cornell and Princeton) that offer ROTC on campus.

Several emails lamented the banning of swim docks at Dartmouth. One said: "Why did the administration ban swim docks and swimming in the Connecticut River? This is absurd bubble-wrapping of our students. Re-open the docks!" Fortunately, Lynne Gaudet '81, director of alumni leadership, could inform the councilors to tell these alumni that the decision was made to return the swim docks this summer.

Two emails were about the changes to the school calendar. One said, "I was recently at a session hosted by [trustee] Brad Evans that gave me a chance to talk with students from the classes of 2012 to 2014. They were really riled up about the shorter break between the summer and fall terms...and didn't like ending the fall term before Thanksgiving."

Two emails were about diversity on campus. One alum raised some questions: "How was the drive for diversity started and how is it being continued? Are there any statistics available that indicate that emphasizing diversity so strongly is helping the College in any area?" Dan Parish '89, director of admissions recruiting, sent the councilor a long and factual reply that covered all aspects of the issue and answered the questions. It was then forwarded to the two alums.

One alumnus praised the local community service initiatives on campus, but added, "There should be a national or global community service initiative too." (he had not heard of the national Dartmouth Partners in Community Service program).

Finally there was an email from an alumnus saying, "The choice of Conan O'Brien as speaker made a joke of Commencement. Can't Dartmouth get someone more profound?"

## Trustee Elections

We received a total of 101 emails regarding the trustee election process for 2011. The emails covered a range of topics, from the individual candidates nominated by the Alumni Council for the two open positions to specific comments about each candi-

date to general discontent about the overall process being “undemocratic” because the elections were uncontested.

The majority of emails provided feedback and commentary about the fact that there was a single candidate nominated for each open trustee position. These alumni expressed discontent that this limited choice and prevented a true electoral process. Uncontested elections were questioned because of the time and resources needed to administer them when weighed against the perceived value this would offer to the College versus simply appointing the candidates and skipping the election process.

- Forty-two emails signified that the writer was refusing to vote at all in the election.
- Thirty-nine emails specifically expressed frustration about the cost of uncontested elections and human resources needed to run them.
- Three emails stated that alumni would not vote at all in the elections since they are uncontested.
- Three emails were related to the overall voting process and clarification about the process using True Ballot Inc., the election vendor. These emails included questions about the ballot since there was no apparent choice offered on the ballot.
- Two emails recommended the opportunity to add a write-in candidate on the ballot during voting.
- One email offered feedback that there was simply too much communication about the elections from the College and other alumni groups.
- Three emails expressed concerns about the specific individuals nominated on the ballots.
- One email discussed concerns about the negative campaigning tactics used during 2010.

Another email favored the current process for petition candidates so that alumni not selected by the Alumni Council Nominating Committee would continue to have a fair chance at running for these positions. The perspective of this writer was that the current Nominating Committee process could potentially exclude very qualified candidates who are under the radar of the Nominating Committee. Allowing for petitioners would preserve the opportunity for those who are interested in running and that may encourage unengaged alumni to support such candidates and re-engage with the College.

In summary, there continue to be concerns about the process because of the uncontested slate after several years of contentious elections, but overall the feedback is not as negative as it has been in past election cycles.

## Conclusions and Observations

A review of the past four years of ALC annual reports aptly illuminates that the mission of the Alumni Council is being fulfilled. With an increasing awareness of the opportunity to discuss issues and be heard, the alumni are not only appreciative of the outreach by their representative councilors, but also comfortable with hitting the “reply” button or writing a note to the College about their opinions, suggestions, or important questions on current issues. Alumni are not only receiving information about the College through their councilors’ reports, but also from President Kim and College officials through webcasts, Facebook, The Dartmouth, YouTube, Twitter, “Dartmouth in the News,” “Speaking of Dartmouth,” and our award-winning Dartmouth Alumni Magazine. Further, President Kim and members of the Board of Trustees are reaching out and meeting face to face with alumni worldwide.

In the council’s first year at full membership, how exciting it was to observe councilors representing classes, clubs, affiliated groups, and graduate schools, arriving from all parts of the country and worldwide, to witness the goings-on at Dartmouth, meet the students, faculty and staff, discuss the issues in open forum, and convene in a place so pivotal in our lives. This increased representation has also given rise to yearly increases in feedback from the alumni to the council, which is then summarized and presented to the College.

Although most alumni emails were positive notes of thanks to peer council representatives and the College, this could be called “the year of the action items,” namely, questions requiring further research and answering by the College’s officials. Because of President Kim’s steadfast and results-oriented initiatives, including the balancing of a \$100 million budget, improving the athletics department, and proactively addressing the difficult issue of student binge drinking and sexual assault, more than 90 emails out of the 700 emails received were answered individually by Dartmouth’s excellent staff and administration.

Two other topics of particular interest by alumni were the uncontested trustee elections (resulting in a decrease in alumni voter turnout) and issues surrounding minority faculty/staff retention, which stemmed from the resignation of three minority administrators during the school year. This spawned emails by affiliated group leadership and alumni asking why and offering assistance to the College. Both topics may require further council discussion.

The following is a brief summary of best practices carried out by the Alumni Council and College that have advanced alumni relations in the last few years and should be maintained:

- Communications from the Office of Alumni Relations, the College administration, and alumni leadership are timely, transparent, and impactful;
- Peer-to-peer communications between the alumni councilors and their constituents have made all the difference in alumni appreciating being “heard”;
- The council’s Nominating Committee communications and transparency regarding the process of vetting alumni trustee nominations and decisions by the council regarding trustee elections have become very important;
- Alumni access to pertinent reports is now crucially provided (i.e., the ALC annual report, Greek letter organizations report, statistics on alumni interviewing, election voting statistics, etc.);
- Alumni Council weekend agendas are substantive and councilors’ reports afterwards informative;
- The frequency of meetings with the trustees (with the Alumni Council, ALC, and the Association of Alumni Executive Committee) has increased with the invitation to dialogue coming from all parties. These conversations are substantive and very much appreciated by alumni.

Of course, there is always room for improvement, and now that the council has reached its maximum 125 members, the council will have an opportunity to streamline communications and audit itself more carefully. Notably, there were few complaints received about the amount of information received from councilors and the College. Instead, alumni sentiment has shifted

toward assisting the College, i.e. alumni interviewing, mentoring students, advising Greek letter organizations and affiliated groups, and student career advising.

Looking ahead, as the Alumni Council “stays the course” and continues to improve council representation of alumni groups and the two-way communication between alumni and the College, continued emphasis may be placed on the enhancement and encouragement of alumni involvement, particularly in these difficult economic times, that furthers the mission of the College as it prepares students for the challenges that lie ahead.

Respectfully submitted,

**The 2010-11 Alumni Liaison Committee**

Janine Avner '80, chair and past-president of the Alumni Council

Veree Brown '93, first vice president of the Association of Alumni

Tom Callahan '84, alumni councilor

Danielle Dyer '81, '89Tu, president-elect of the Alumni Council

John Ferries '59, '60Tu, Association of Alumni member

Susan Hess '81, alumni councilor

Sarah Jackson-Han '88, alumni councilor

Doug Keare '56, '57Th, '57Tu, second vice president of the Association of Alumni

John Mathias '69, president of the Association of Alumni

John Osborn '88, Association of Alumni member

Tom Peisch '70, president of the Alumni Council

Samantha Truex '92, '93Th, '95Tu, Association of Alumni member