

# Dartmouth

## ALUMNI COUNCIL

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Dear Classmates,

Last month, I was joined by more than 100 Alumni Councilors representing classes, affiliated groups, clubs, and associations for my final Alumni Council meeting in Hanover to work in committees and meet with College leadership, faculty, and students. It was a busy three days of informative sessions and lively discussion highlighted by beautiful weather and Green Key weekend going on all around us. The information below, loosely organized into bullet points, serves as a summary of this, my last meeting as your class counselor. I would also invite you to view [photos](#), browse a round-up of the [conversation on social media](#) during the weekend, and review the full [meeting minutes](#).

### Learning by Doing

Councilors participated in discussions with students and faculty engaged in three projects that demonstrate Dartmouth's intimate intellectual community and experiential learning opportunities at home and abroad.

- Terren Klein '17 and a team of students developed the [College Pulse app](#), an incentive-based opinion polling tool that provides real-time data to students about their College and community.
- A team of students traveled to Washington, DC, in November 2016 to deliberate the pros and cons of interest-rate hikes with Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen through the [College Fed Challenge](#).
- And in January, undergrads in Anthropology 70 made a [major fossil discovery](#) while excavating at a UNESCO World Heritage site at Malapa, South Africa. I was particularly interested in attending this presentation, having gone to Uganda recently with Dartmouth faculty member and primatologist, Professor Nate Dominy, sponsored by the Alumni Travel Office.

We also heard several other presentations that were academic in nature:

- Director of the **Dartmouth Center for the Advancement of Learning** [Lisa Baldez](#) spoke of the evolution of teaching and learning, reaffirming Dartmouth's commitment to the [teacher-scholar](#) model. Equipping faculty members to be excellent teachers is a longstanding tradition at Dartmouth and remains at the core of the academic vision for the College. Baldez talked about how the Center for the Advancement of Learning serves as a resource to make professors better classroom

teachers – especially in an era in which technology has upended the traditional format of lecture and Q&A.

- Professors Edward Miller and Jennifer Miller shared details of the **Dartmouth Vietnam Project**, a collaborative effort between students and faculty to collect oral histories from members of the Dartmouth community who served in Vietnam. Be sure to visit [this video](#) about their work. Those of you who attended our 50<sup>th</sup> reunion will recall that Ed Miller was the moderator our very moving panel discussion on the affects of the Vietnam era on our class.
- Dean Joseph Helble moderated a panel of faculty on how the combination of engineering and the liberal arts has resulted in national leadership for the **Thayer School of Engineering**, which [turns 150](#) this year. Thayer is the only engineering school to require an AB before a BE and has been recognized for its focus on entrepreneurship. In 2016, Thayer made history by being the first engineering class from a national research university to achieve [gender parity](#).
- The academic affairs committee of the Council presented the inaugural [Professor John Rassias Faculty Award](#) for exceptional educational outreach to alumni to Steve Swayne, the Jacob H. Strauss 1922 Professor of Music; and Don Pease, the Ted and Helen Geisel Third Century Professor in the Humanities, who is also Chair of the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program and a professor of English and comparative literature. Professor Rassias's daughter, Helene Rassias-Miles A&S '08, was there to congratulate the winners. Incidentally, this July I will be attending a week-long workshop at the Rassias Institute for teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) in Hanover which is overseen by Helene.

## Strategy and Vision

**President Philip J. Hanlon '77** shared his vision for Dartmouth as a distinctive experience defined by world-class faculty and students, intellectual rigor and interdisciplinary curricula, unique spirit, and magnificent setting. Among the highlights of his presentation to us were these:

- President Hanlon noted that the **Class of 2021** will be among the most selective and accomplished class in Dartmouth's history, faculty are being recognized for their scholarship, and rankings are on the rise.
- President Hanlon took questions from Councilors pertaining to tolerance of divergent opinions and freedom of expression, House Communities, fundraising plans, and recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty.
- He also referenced the appointment of N. Bruce Duthu '80 as [dean of the faculty](#) – an appointment that drew strong support from some (including those who noted that Professor Duthu would have been the first Native American to serve as dean

of the faculty) and criticism from others (while serving on the council of Native American academic association, Professor Duthu had signed a statement in 2013 in support of a boycott of Israeli academic institutions.) During the Council meeting, President Hanlon expressed his support for Professor Duthu, while reaffirming that Dartmouth will not support academic boycotts of any kind and remains committed to freedom of expression as a fundamental value of our community. Importantly and since the Alumni Council weekend, Professor Duthu announced that he would decline the appointment. In an email to colleagues, he explained that the controversy had become a distraction with the potential to damage Dartmouth and undermine his ability to serve effectively as dean. The president and provost are consulting with faculty members to determine next steps.

These were among the discussions we had with other members of the Dartmouth leadership team:

- Chair-elect of the Board of Trustees Laurel Richie '81 spoke with Councilors about her pride in Dartmouth and excitement to lead the **Board of Trustees**. As Board chair, Richie hopes to increase visibility and differentiation for Dartmouth by highlighting its special character.
- Vice-President of **Communications** Justin Anderson walked the Council through a comprehensive new branding strategy that builds on Dartmouth's unique location, academic focus, experiential learning opportunities, and that special "spirit" that makes the College "Distinctly Dartmouth." One small take-away: the decision to remove a reference in admissions materials that Hanover is "only two hours from Boston;" the point being that we should embrace our location and not appear to be defensive about it.
- Lee Coffin, vice provost for enrollment and dean of **admissions and financial aid**, spoke about the [Class of 2021](#) -- which had the highest yield (the number accepting an offer of admission) in Dartmouth's history at 61 percent – and his compelling strategy for increasing applications to Dartmouth from the very best students who are also a good "fit" with Dartmouth's uniqueness. Alumni interviewers participating in the [Admissions Ambassador Program](#) will continue to be a key component of this success.
- Vice President for Development Andrew Davidson P'20 and Advancement COO Ann Root Keith gave Councilors a brief look into the planning phases of the upcoming **Dartmouth Capital Campaign**. My successor as your Class Councilor, Roger Hanson, will be reporting back to you on the priorities and goal when they become public, but I am pleased to say that things seem to be going well.

## Recognizing Leadership

It has been said that Dartmouth is a launch pad for success, and that is clearly the case for the Honorable [Eric Fanning '90](#), 22<sup>nd</sup> United States Secretary of the Army who spoke eloquently over dinner at the Hanover Inn. As the “CEO” of the U.S. Army, he was responsible for its \$147 billion budget and its 1.4 million people. He is the first person to have held senior presidential appointments in the Army, Navy *and* Air Force. It was inspiring to hear his devotion to the men and women who defend our country (including my son, LT Lane Bracken USN, '11) and eye-opening to understand what a difficult job managing such huge organizations can be. His remarks focused on leadership and the role that his liberal arts education at Dartmouth played in his career trajectory.

In this, my final report to you, I wish to thank our class leadership for the opportunity to represent you on the Alumni Council these past three years. It has been an honor and a privilege to follow in the footsteps of my immediate Council predecessor, our recently deceased classmate, Ed Keible. A dear friend and teammate, Eddie served his country, the College, and our Class in so many ways. The still north remembers him, the hill winds know his name, and the granite of New Hampshire keeps a record of his fame.

Yours faithfully,

Ted

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