

## **PROPOSED CONSTITUTION OF THE DARTMOUTH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

*“By this Constitution, the partnership between Dartmouth and her alumni stands strong. All alumni are welcome, all shall be heard, and all may serve.”*

*—Preamble*

Report of the Alumni Governance Task Force  
to the Alumni Council and the Association of Alumni  
on a new governance and trustee nomination system

*May 12, 2006*

## ***BACKGROUND: HOW WE CAME TO THIS PROPOSAL***

Dartmouth alumni governance has been dynamic since 1854 when the Association of Alumni was first founded. A handful of alumni wrote a constitution that said the association's purpose "shall be to unite in such meetings, exercises & other measures as shall be appropriate to the Alumni of a literary Institution & as shall tend to strengthen the bonds which bind them to each other & to their common Alma Mater."

Open to all who matriculated at Dartmouth, as long as their class had graduated, the association was the principal formal connection between an alumnus and the College. The association gave rise to all other alumni groups, including class officer organizations and local clubs. In 1913, led by Ernest Martin Hopkins '01, the association founded the 25-member Alumni Council as a representative body "to guide and direct Dartmouth alumni affairs, and to serve as liaison with the College."

In 1915, the Association of Alumni asked the Alumni Council to take over the role of nominating alumni trustees, thereby completing the transfer of responsibilities from a group that included all alumni to a smaller, more workable, representative body. Only two duties remained with the Association: voting on alumni trustee nominees put forward by the Alumni Council and holding an annual meeting.

**Splitting the organizations.** The close relationship between the two groups lasted for more than 70 years. The council in 1984 sought independence from the association, as it was cumbersome for the council to make constitutional changes governing its structure when its constitution was part of the association's. The council was then, and continues to be, a center of alumni service to Dartmouth, the place for discussion of alumni sentiment, and the communications link between alumni and the College. The group today numbers 96.

The major responsibility of the 66,500-member association was, and is still, the election of alumni trustee nominees for eight seats on the 18-member Board of Trustees. The association's Executive Committee provides information about the candidates, issues election guidelines and certifies balloting results.

**Nominating process.** In 1990, the Association of Alumni approved the current alumni trustee nominating process, in which three candidates are recommended to the alumni body by the Alumni Council after an extensive search and vetting by the council's Nominating Committee. Alumni may vote for any candidates that they feel are qualified for the job: one, two or all three. Alumni may propose alternative candidates by collecting 500 alumni signatures on a petition.

After the members of the association vote, the Board of Trustees has the final say over whether or not to seat the candidate. Once an alumni trustee is seated on the board, that individual's trusteeship is identical to that of each charter trustee selected by the board itself. The board itself determines whether that individual should serve a second term.

The alumni trustee nomination process established in 1990 was essentially reaffirmed by trustee committees in 1994 and 1998, with the groups recommending only incremental improvements. Both, however, said that the Alumni Council might want to consider proposing fewer than three candidates.

**Reorganization.** In the mid-1990s, the Alumni Council reorganized itself with a new constitution that reduced its size and established a rotation for class representation every three years. In response to the council's changes, the association undertook a self-study of its role. Both groups asked themselves a question that reflected the traditional spirit of unity and cooperation with the College: How can alumni best help Dartmouth?

By 2001, the new council structure had been in place for five years, enough time for councilors to recognize both its benefits and its shortcomings. With a smaller size, the Council was more efficient, yet many councilors still felt their roles to be insignificant. Some councilors doubted the council's effectiveness and urged better communication between alumni and the council and between the council and the Board of Trustees and College administration. The council was urged to consider if its membership was truly representative.

That same year, the association Executive Committee introduced alumni trustee balloting via the Internet as well as paper ballots. The move was designed to boost participation in alumni trustee elections. Voting rates had dropped from a high of 28 percent in 1991 to a low of 21 percent by 2000, despite having the first petition candidate on the ballot since the late 1980s. Providing more information about the candidates and allowing Internet voting in 2001 resulted in a participation rate of 22 percent. By 2002, with a second year of Internet voting, the rate had risen to 23 percent. The voting rate in 2005 was 24% percent.

**Joint Committee begins.** In summer 2001, the presidents of the council and association created the 10-member Joint Committee on Alumni Governance and Trustee Nominations. Its charge was to look at the relationship between the association and the council as well as the trustee nominating process. This study would allow the joint committee to tackle several notable issues:

- The separation of the group that included all alumni (the Association of Alumni) from the group charged with representing them (the Alumni Council) in the College community;
- A feeling among members of the Alumni Council that they are underused and should have a greater purpose;
- The unfortunate effect of the current trustee nomination process of requiring the close examination of a large number of alumni, placing a substantial burden on the Nominating Committee and inevitably leading to numerous unsuccessful candidates.

**Politics abound.** In the meantime, the political climate was heating up. The mid-1990s and early 2000s saw four lawsuits filed against the College and/or the association over various governance and trustee nomination issues. While these lawsuits did not prevail in court, alumni were beginning to be publicly divided over governance issues.

Association leadership elections became politicized, featuring both nominated and petition slates. New groups with an interest in governance sprung up, including the Dartmouth Alumni for Open Governance and, later, the Hanover Institute. The unsuccessful petition candidate who ran in 2000 ran a platform of improving governance.

The joint committee ultimately produced a new combined constitution for the council and association. The proposal would have reduced the number of nominated trustees from three to two as well as changed the voting system to an instant runoff system, where alumni rank their choices. That constitutional proposal was narrowly defeated in the annual meeting of the Association of Alumni in Hanover in December 2003.

The debate on the issues was lively and not always civil, with tempers sparking. Some characterized the tension as being between “insiders”—those who had volunteered on behalf of the College—and “outsiders”—those who brought fresh thinking to the table. As the most extreme arguments on both sides went, the “insiders” were said to be co-opted by the College administration and involved in a conspiracy to steal alumni “rights” and keep alumni in the dark, while the “outsiders” were enemies of Dartmouth trying to gain control of College policymaking by dominating the Board of Trustees and turning back decades of College policies, such as the decision to admit women. Among the small group of alumni who actively followed the issues, there was a clear divide.

**AGTF created.** In this mood of heightened need to address and solve the continuing governance issues and to try to reconcile differences of opinion in the alumni body, the Alumni Governance Task Force—the AGTF—was formed in January 2004.

The council and association commissioned the Alumni Governance Task Force to examine additional ways to improve the current governance system, engage different and often divergent points of view in the alumni body in a constructive manner, and to create a new and improved constitution that would be acceptable and perhaps even enthusiastically embraced by alumni. In the hopes of creating a constitution that would work for the majority of alumni, the panel included people (“insiders” and “outsiders”) who had disagreed with one another for several years.

**What we learned.** The committee conducted outreach with alumni of every stripe, using small group meetings and conference calls to get to the heart of their concerns. The task force, feeling the weight of alumni divisiveness, debated and brainstormed many, many approaches. With numerous internal drafts, the AGTF produced three public drafts: Sept. 18, 2005, March 10, 2006, and the final one described in this report, April 14, 2006. Once again, we argued the merits of different approaches and philosophies from comments we received in person, on our blog, through emails and through letters.

We provide this often discursive report to reveal the issues we wrestled with.

This proposal is our best effort—“in the name of fellowship and with fierce love for Dartmouth College”—at capturing the desires of all alumni to create a transparent, democratic governance structure that will serve Dartmouth well for years to come.

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Anton Anderson '89  
Trevor Burgess '94  
J.B. Daukas '84  
Kelley Fead '78  
Martha Hennessey '76  
Bill Hutchinson '76  
Joe Mandel '60, T '61  
Joe Stevenson '57, T '58, chair

## **SECTION-BY-SECTION REPORT**

### **NAME, MISSION AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE DARTMOUTH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (Articles I-II)**

The association shall seek to promote the welfare and educational goals of the College as a helpful partner of the College's governing bodies by supporting their governance activities with and through the alumni. It shall also be dedicated to connecting and engaging all Dartmouth men and women (hereinafter "alumni") and to nurturing strong lifelong bonds between the College and the members of the Dartmouth family.

—Mission of the Dartmouth Alumni Association

The new constitution was written to reflect a bedrock truth: Dartmouth and her alumni must work together for the good of the Dartmouth family of students, trustees, administration, faculty and alumni. The partnership between alumni and the College is reaffirmed by inviting participation and engagement through sharing opinions, voting in alumni elections and doing volunteer work in service of Dartmouth.

The purpose stated in the preamble is to "invigorate and encourage alumni participation and support from every quarter, facilitate the exchange of ideas and opinions between alumni and the College, strengthen alumni institutions, and maintain and nurture the historic role alumni have held in the life of the College."

The AGTF agreed the association is made up of "alumni" men and women, using the widely acceptable word for graduates of both genders instead of the archaic Latin "alumni and alumnae." The association's members include those who have matriculated at Dartmouth and whose undergraduate or graduate class has graduated. Honorary members are welcome at the association's annual meeting, but do not hold voting privileges.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE ASSOCIATION (Article III)

**Structure.** In a desire to provide a strong focus for alumni involvement, the AGTF created a robust association with four components that encompass and expand the functions and duties of the current association executive committee and the Alumni Council:

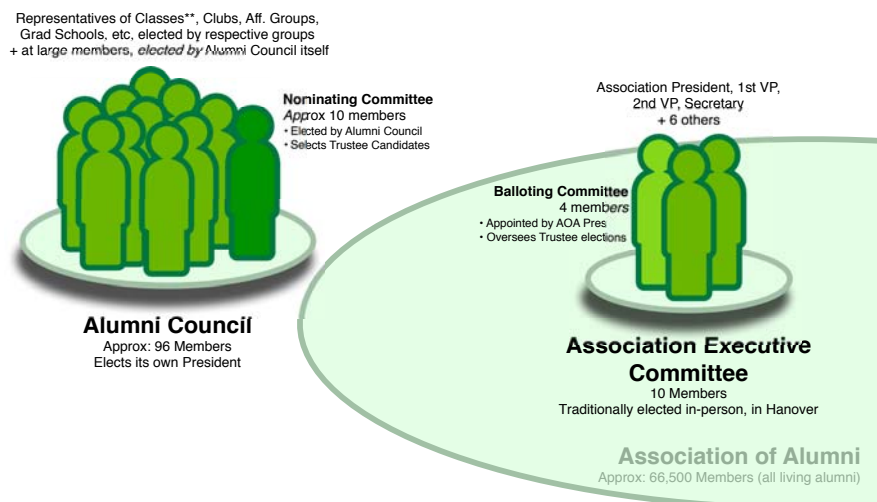
- *Alumni Liaison Board (ALB)*, a two-way communications group to bring alumni views to the trustees and administration and help convey the thinking of trustees and administration back to alumni;
- *Alumni Assembly*, a representative alumni senate and service organization;
- *Nominating Committee*, a committee to identify potential trustees and alumni leaders; and
- *Balloting Committee*, a panel to oversee all alumni-wide votes.

The new association addresses the disconnection of the association from the Alumni Council by bringing all of the activities under the association umbrella and eliminating the council. Confusion will be eliminated by having one organization, not two, for alumni to look to in their relationship with the College.

Moreover, the association structure satisfies proponents of representative democracy, with an assembly empowered to take stands rooted in broad-based alumni opinion, and direct democracy, with vastly increased powers of the alumni electorate and a strong new communications vehicle.

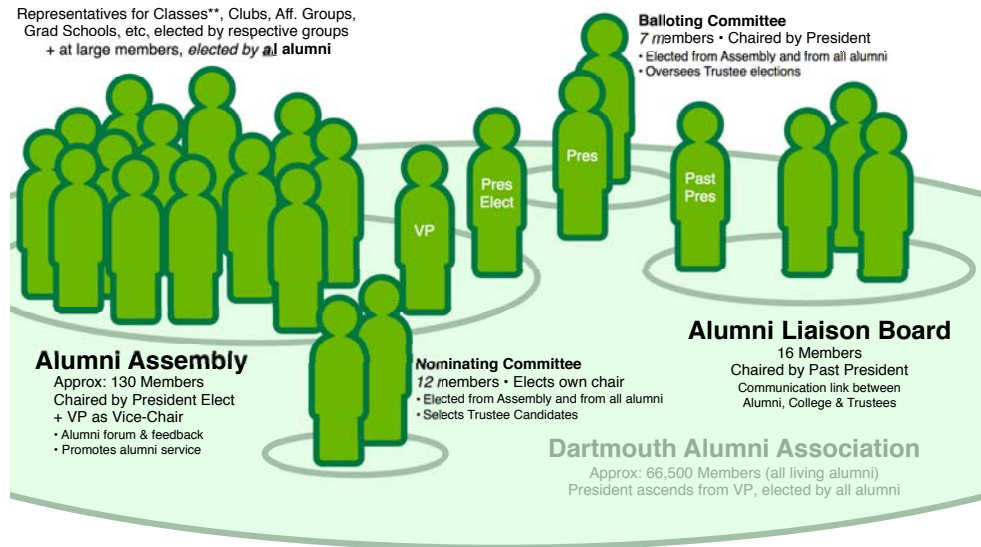
**Association year.** The association year will track that of the College's academic year, beginning July 1 and ending June 30.

### Current Alumni Governance Structure\*



Conceptual Diagram by Anton Anderson '89 • version 5/8/06  
\*\*For first 50 reunion classes, there is one representative for every other class  
\*Reflecting 2006 constitutions of Alumni Council and Association of Alumni

## Proposed Alumni Governance Structure\*



Conceptual Diagram by Anton Anderson '89 • version 5/8/06  
 \*\*For first 50 reunion classes, there is a representative for EVERY class  
 \*Based upon 4/15/06 constitution proposed by the Alumni Governance Task Force

## **ASSOCIATION COMPONENTS AND LEADERSHIP (Article IV)**

**Leadership.** The AGTF created a leadership arc of four years. Association members elect their leaders by choosing a vice president who succeeds to four consecutive years of office. In the first year, the vice president acts as vice chair of the assembly. In the person's second year, he or she chairs the assembly as president-elect. In year three, he or she becomes president (CEO) of the association. In year four, he or she becomes immediate past president and the chair of the Alumni Liaison Board.

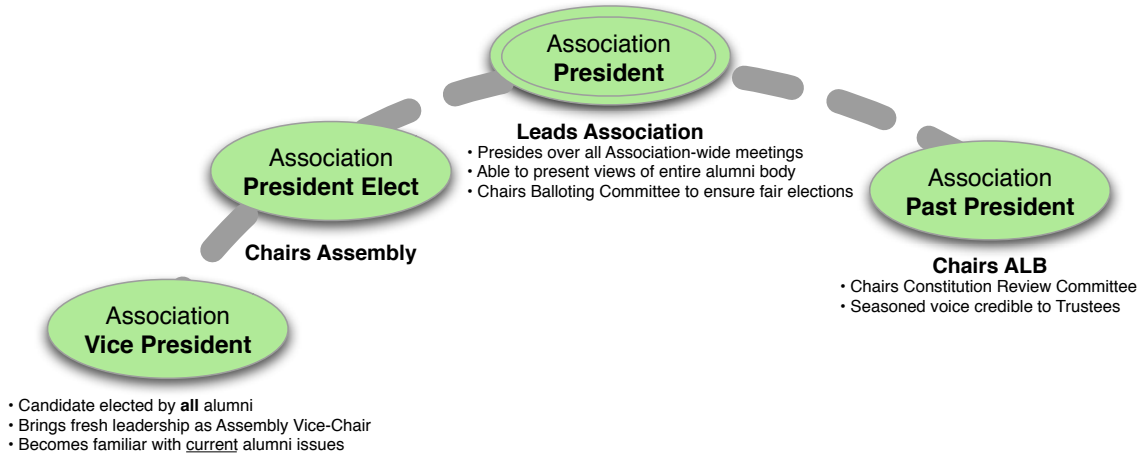
The president is the CEO of the association, chairing all meetings and heading the Balloting Committee. The president-elect acts in the president's stead where necessary and serves as the chief operating officer of the association while chairing the assembly. The immediate past president, in addition to chairing the ALB, also chairs a constitutional review committee when appropriate.

**Election of officers.** To become an association leader, any association member may collect 250 signatures on a petition or be nominated by the Nominating Committee. This procedure follows those for the alumni trustee nominations (please see page 21 for a full explanation of these procedures).

This succession arc was a thorny issue for the AGTF, with some members arguing that people needed experience to head the assembly and association and others arguing that anyone should be able to run without having to meet any experience or service qualifications. In a compromise, the task force added a year for a person to gain experience before being thrust into the position of chairing the assembly or presiding over the whole association. The arc also recognized that leading the association and chairing its assembly are enormous volunteer positions, requiring much dedication and commitment of time. Having a vice president helps ease the burden somewhat.

The secretary is a member of the College's Alumni Relations office and may vote only if he or she is a member of the association.

## Proposed Alumni Governance Structure: Alumni Association Leadership Arc\*



**Annual meeting.** Each year the association will hold an annual meeting open to all alumni that will serve as a forum for “expression of alumni sentiment.” The association leadership, assembly and Alumni Liaison Board will report on their activities. Trustees are invited to participate. No elections will be held at this meeting, as all voting for leadership will now occur by mail, Internet or other means that do not require in-person attendance at meetings.

**Nominating Committee.** The AGTF determined at the outset that the Nominating Committee should be a committee of the association, not the assembly (as is now the case with the Alumni Council), since under this constitution all alumni will be voting on almost all positions requiring balloting.

The purpose of the Nominating Committee is to identify alumni for leadership positions, whether in the association, on the Board of Trustees or within other Dartmouth boards, such as the Board of Overseers of the Rockefeller Foundation. The job of this committee is arduous, as they comb through the backgrounds of hundreds of alumni a year to find new talent to serve Dartmouth.

The Nominating Committee will be composed of 12 voting members to help ensure a range of views and a sufficient number of persons to handle what is surely a heavy workload. The group will elect a committee chair from among their members. If a member is elected to serve as chair during his or her third year, he or she will continue to serve as a non-voting member for a fourth year to ensure effective continuity.

The AGTF decided to divide Nominating Committee membership evenly—six members elected by the representative assembly and six members elected directly by the association—to help ensure a balance between elected representatives with current, hands-on alumni governance experience and non-assembly alumni capable of bringing a “fresh perspective.”

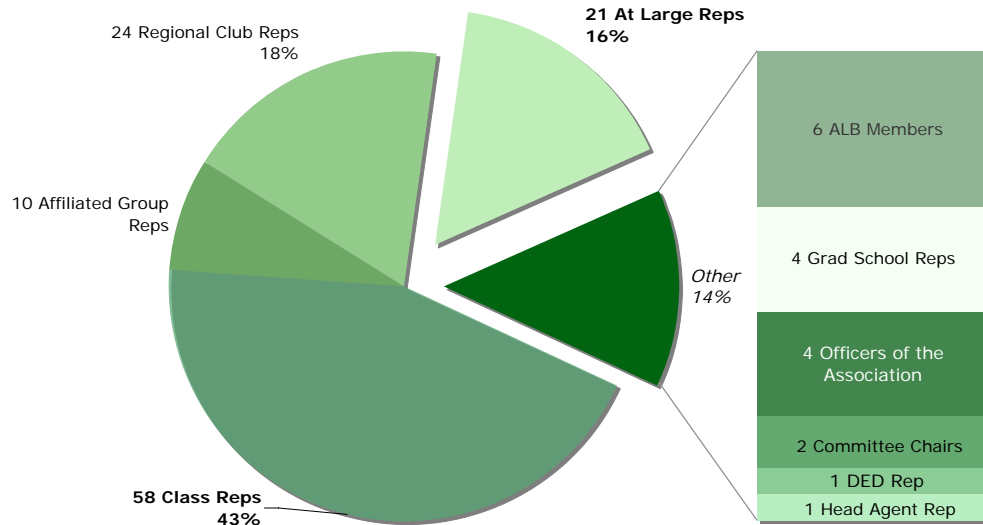
The AGTF considered making Nominating Committee membership either “all-assembly” or “all-association (non-assembly)” but decided a balanced membership would better ensure that slates of well-qualified candidates offering differing views are provided for all elections. To help ensure all alumni have the opportunity to serve on the Nominating Committee, we have provided the opportunity to run as a petition candidate for an association seat with only 50 qualifying signatures.

**Balloting Committee.** The Balloting Committee, which currently is an association committee, should remain a committee of the association for the same reasons stated above.

Six members are sufficient to handle the workload, and membership has been evenly divided between assembly and association (non-assembly) members for the reasons stated above. The president of the association will serve as a seventh voting member and chair.

The committee’s basic responsibilities include publishing guidelines for a “fair, transparent, and democratic election.” The AGTF decided not to establish those guidelines within the constitution itself, since: a) we anticipate the desirability of being able to update the guidelines as circumstances change, without having to formally amend the constitution; and b) we recognize that the constitution is already, of necessity, a lengthy and complex document.

## Proposed Alumni Governance Structure: Association Assembly\*



Infographic by Anton Anderson '89 • version 5/3/06  
 \*Based upon 4/15/06 constitution proposed by the Alumni Governance Task Force

### THE ASSEMBLY (Article V)

The assembly, based on a construct first envisioned by the joint committee, is designed to be more representative than the current Alumni Council. Why is it structured this way? Alumni tend to identify most closely with their graduating class, although many also find connections to the College through clubs, the graduate schools and affiliated organizations. The current council structure pairs two classes, asking a single representative to act on behalf of both classes for a three-year term. The consequence has been that many alumni do not necessarily feel adequately represented in Hanover.

The AGTF recommends that every class up to the 50th reunion class have an assembly representative and that five people represent the classes after the 50th reunion. The Nominating Committee each year would ask the post-50th reunion classes for nominees. These individuals would then be placed on a ballot put forth by the Nominating Committee to be voted on by the assembly.

Club representation, which has been adjusted a few times in the past decade, would stand at 21 metropolitan and regional clubs. The graduate schools each would have one representative. The class and club associations each would have three representatives. The head agents and district enrollment directors groups each would have one seat. Affiliated organizations recognized by the College as representing historically

marginalized groups would have two representatives each. There would be one nonvoting faculty rep as well as three nonvoting student reps, just as there are in the current council.

To make the assembly more representative of the alumni body, the AGTF recommends that the association elect the assembly's at-large members through alumni-wide voting to fill seven slots a year. Currently, at-large seats on the council are filled by a council vote on a yearly seven-person slate from the council's Nominating Committee. The association Nominating Committee would still put forward a slate, but alumni also could nominate themselves or others by gathering 50 signatures on a petition.

In another move to strengthen the representative nature of the assembly, the AGTF recommends that classes and clubs elect their assembly members via email or mail. Some classes and clubs currently use a casual appointment process to designate their councilors. This leads some alumni to feel that alumni organizations are run by insiders who nominate each other to positions of responsibility. Real elections would promote participation among alumni and strengthen the accountability of an assembly rep to his or her constituency.

There have been a number of questions on the makeup of the assembly that we want to address.

**Graduate representation.** Representation of the graduate schools and programs is a notable concern for some alumni. While the AGTF would keep the representation at one each for the Tuck School, Thayer School, Dartmouth Medical School, and the graduate programs in the Arts and Sciences, we also recommend that the association Nominating Committee include at least one graduate representative among the yearly slate of at-large members.

**Size of the assembly.** The assembly would number about 125 under most circumstances, compared with today's council of 96. On the practical side, 125 is a comfortable fit for the Hanover Inn and many alumni meeting venues at the College. Some have been concerned that increasing the number of representatives could lessen the intensity of the job for some reps. On balance, the AGTF believes the more representative character of the assembly will increase reps' engagement because their constituents will demand more of them and because their voices will be essential in lively debates and votes.

Some alumni say a larger assembly could be cumbersome, a concern the task force shares. On balance, however, the task force concludes that the advantages of having every class up to the 50<sup>th</sup> reunion year represented (and involved in discussions to achieve real alumni consensus) outweigh the potential disadvantages.

Others have expressed concern that the size of the assembly would impose unacceptable cost burdens on the College. The College, however, in recent years has moved to cost sharing of the twice-a-year meetings with alumni councilors; this practice would continue with the assembly.

**At-large assembly reps.** During the 20 months of work and study that led to the initial joint committee constitution, the theme sounded most often by alumni was: "I'm not

represented in Hanover.” Having most councilors represent two classes makes sense on paper, but it hasn’t helped draw alumni closer to their alma mater.

Expanding representation to every class up to the 50<sup>th</sup> reunion, as the AGTF constitution proposes, addresses this point directly. This emphasis on class as the principal basis for representation does, however, leave open some concerns expressed about assembly diversity on almost any measure except age. For that reason, the AGTF stands by its recommendation that the 21 at-large assembly positions be continued to provide a means to make sure all alumni are represented.

One concern mentioned about at-large members is that they have no constituencies and lack purpose on the assembly. To the contrary, these reps, who would be directly elected by the alumni body (as is the case at many of our sister institutions), are quite likely to have constituencies. In addition to those slated by the Nominating Committee slate, anyone may collect 50 signatures to run for an at-large position.

**The representation of young alumni.** The younger coeducational classes are larger than the older classes. The task force considered giving younger alumni greater proportional representation on the assembly than one per class. But we concluded that a formula that creates class constituencies with one rep per class (for alumni out of the College for 50 years or less) best answers the sense among alumni that they are not represented.

With the passage of time, the proportionality issue will fix itself. Meanwhile, the AGTF urges the Nominating Committee, affiliated groups and others to keep in mind the need to build future alumni leaders and supporters as they nominate at-large members.

**The representation of affiliated groups.** The AGTF proposal calls for two reps each to represent affiliated organizations that meet College recognition requirements (representing a historically marginalized group and having membership lists, bylaws, etc.). Because this provision has received a great deal of attention in each draft, we present the discussion below to give you a sense of our thinking.

There are five affiliated groups currently recognized by the College (view the policy at <http://alumni.dartmouth.edu/groups/aapolicies.html>). The first affiliated group was the Black Alumni of Dartmouth Association (BADA) founded in 1971. Today, BADA has more than 2,700 members. The other four are the Dartmouth Asian Pacific American Alumni Association (DAPAAA); the Dartmouth Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Alumni/ae Association (D-GALA); the Native American Alumni Association of Dartmouth (NAAAD); and the Dartmouth Association of Latino Alumni (DALA).

Affiliated groups, like classes, represent all members who share a common affiliation. As with classes, many members pay dues and many do not, but all remain members of the group. These groups are growing, because the student body of today is more diverse than the alumni body as a whole. For example, 39.5 percent of those admitted to the class of 2010 are people of color.

Affiliated groups also are enthusiastically connecting many alumni to Dartmouth. D-GALA, for instance, worked over the past several years to increase giving to the Dartmouth College Fund, resulting in a more than 15 percentage-point pickup in participation.

Currently each recognized affiliated group is granted one seat on the Alumni Council. Today, affiliated group members make up 5.2 percent of the council. Under the new constitution, these reps would make up 8 percent of the assembly.

**Answers to questions about affiliated reps.** We've been asked: Why give affiliated groups seats? First, they have them today, and all members of the AGTF felt it was not realistic to take away all current representation. Also, one of the overarching premises behind the new constitution was to increase alumni participation in whatever way each individual alum chooses to connect with the College. A survey done at a recent affiliated group reunion found 100 percent of those in attendance more closely connected with the College via their affiliated group than via their class.

People also have wanted to know why there is no group such as "Friends of Football" or the "Cabin and Trail Association" with representation on the Alumni Council or proposed for representation on the assembly. That's because these groups do not qualify as "historically marginalized," under the College's definition. There also is a fundamental difference between being black or Native American and liking football. Friends of Football are encouraged to get together and run for an at-large seat or run within their class, club or affiliated group.

The last question has been: Why not one rather than two seats? Having just one seat would reduce the percentage of affiliated groups from 5.2 percent of the council to 4.0 percent of the assembly. Overall, 8 percent of the total seemed right to the AGTF when balanced with the 58 class seats (43 percent), 24 club seats (18 percent) and 21 at-large seats (16 percent) of the new assembly. Their voices are important to helping make the assembly more reflective of today's alumni body.

## **ALUMNI LIAISON BOARD (Article VI)**

The Alumni Liaison Board (ALB) is perhaps the most innovative ingredient in the new constitution and is of central importance in its alumni governance system. The mission of the ALB is to serve as the prime, highly active, two-way communications and information medium between Dartmouth alumni and the College trustees and administration.

One of the criticisms of the current alumni organizational system is its ineffectiveness in communicating important issues of the College back to individual alumni. The Alumni Council has not accomplished this on a consistent and regular basis. Similarly, the current set-up does not provide a good medium for conveying alumni sentiment and ideas to the Board of Trustees. The AGTF conceived the ALB to correct these deficiencies.

The ALB is designed to engage trustees and all alumni in a regular, active interchange of perceptions, ideas and points of view. The ALB will meet with trustees and College officials on a regular basis to ascertain important information the board wishes to convey to alumni and it will report to the trustees on attitudes and opinions of alumni. The board has committed to such regular meetings and interchange with the ALB.

To drive the communications from the board to alumni, the ALB will use a wide range of media, including class and club online and print publications and College online and print publications. In managing communication in the other direction—from alumni to the College—the ALB will use a variety of tools and methods to gather and collect ideas, opinions, attitudes and information from alumni. These could include live meetings, regular and electronic mail, and Webcasts. It also will use appropriate market research methods (sampling, focus groups, broad-scale questionnaires, etc.) to measure alumni attitudes and opinions.

We received comments asking us to spell out specifically the activities of the ALB in the constitution. We declined to do so to provide utmost flexibility to the board and to avoid adding to the complexity of this document.

The ALB will consist of 16 members, six of whom are elected at-large by the alumni (all association members) and six of whom are elected from the Assembly.

## **TRUSTEE NOMINATION PROCESS (Article VII)**

The AGTF discussed at length many issues concerning the process by which alumni nominate alumni trustees for Dartmouth's Board of Trustees. The following describes the current system in detail and identifies concerns with and options for revising it.

**Brief history and overview.** The current provisions governing the nomination of alumni trustees were added to the Constitution of the Association of Alumni in 1990.

Under the association constitution, after an opening is announced by the Board of Trustees for an alumni trustee seat, the Alumni Council Nominating Committee undertakes a lengthy nominating process at the end of which it nominates three candidates. After the Alumni Council announces these candidates, alumni desiring to run as petition candidates have two months to gather 500 alumni signatures supporting their candidacy.

An election is then conducted by the Balloting Committee of the Association, which sets rules concerning campaigning and voting procedure. Votes are cast according to the "approval voting system." Under the approval voting system alumni are allowed to vote for as many candidates as they desire. The candidate receiving the most votes wins formal nomination regardless of whether he or she obtains a majority of the votes.

**Previously proposed changes.** Under the 2003 constitution proposed by the Joint Committee on Alumni Governance and Trustee Nominations, the process for nominating trustees would have been changed in two ways. First, the number of candidates put forward by the Nominating Committee would have been reduced from three to two. Second, voting would have occurred under the "instant runoff voting" method (IRV) in races involving three or more candidates. In races involving three or more candidates, IRV asks voters to rank their top two candidates in order of preference. If no candidate receives a majority when the votes are first counted, then the lowest vote getter is dropped from the count, and his or her ballots are allocated to the second choice candidate on those ballots and a recount is made. (With four or more candidates, if necessary, the process is repeated until a candidate receives a majority of the vote.)

These changes were proposed before the last two trustee elections; that is, before and without regard to the rise of the recent petition candidates and their winning of the balloting in 2004 and 2005. The joint committee's proposed constitution was narrowly defeated in December 2003 for reasons apparently having nothing to do with the proposed changes in the trustee election process. In fact, such proposed changes were noncontroversial at the time.

**AGTF's first proposal.** In September 2005, the AGTF published for alumni comment a draft of the current proposed constitution. Under the Sept. 18 draft, there would be three primary changes to the trustee nomination process. First, in order to encourage the Nominating Committee to consider all candidates, potential candidates who were considering running by petition would be required to identify themselves to the Nominating Committee at the beginning of the nomination process. Such notification was intended to allow the Nominating Committee to consider nominating a potential petition candidate. If the potential petition candidate received a nomination, then he or she would not be required to obtain 500 petition signatures. Second, the Nominating Committee

would put up only two, instead of three, candidates. Third, in elections involving three or more candidates, voting would be pursuant to the IRV method.

One additional major change under the Sept. 18 draft proposed constitution was that the Nominating Committee would be more democratically constituted.

Why? Some contend that the advent of petition candidates for trustee indicates unhappiness among the alumni with candidates nominated by the Nominating Committee, and/or unhappiness with the perceived direction of the College. Others strongly dispute such claims. Still others worry that there is a perception that “insiders” put up trustee candidates. Others still reject the “insider” label and believe that those who engage in long-term alumni service are important members of alumni organizations.

The draft constitution changes the composition of the Nominating Committee in an effort to address such concerns. As noted above, the current Nominating Committee that nominates trustee candidates is part of the Alumni Council. Its members are selected by the Alumni Council and are not elected by the alumni at large. The draft constitution makes the Nominating Committee a committee of the Association of Alumni and provides that half of its three-year term members are elected by the alumni at large through all-media voting. In addition, petition candidates may run for seats on the Nominating Committee by securing only 50 signatures (see page 9).

**Candidate burnout.** Some worry that we are burning through and wasting good candidates under the current system because the current system requires the Nominating Committee to put up three candidates. The draft constitution reduces the number of Nominating Committee candidates to two candidates in elections where there are only nominated candidates running. Reducing the number of candidates from three to two has not generated controversy.

**Difficulty in obtaining majority support.** Under the current system, it is very difficult for any candidate to obtain a majority of votes cast. This is due to the number of candidates that are required, or choose to run, under the current constitution and the way in which the alumni have in fact voted under the approval voting system. For example, in a four-candidate race, Candidate A could be the first choice of 40 percent of the voters, and the second choice of 90 percent of the remaining voters. In a head-to-head race where Candidates B, C and D each have only 20 percent support, Candidate A would easily win with a clear majority of the vote against any one of the other candidates. Under the current system, however, in a four-way race Candidate A wins with only 40 percent of the vote, and is subject to the claim that he or she is not favored by most alumni and thus lacks a mandate.

The same problem can be described from the other perspective by stating that the current system allows election of Nominating Committee and petition candidates without a majority of the voters supporting them. For example, a four-way race for trustee could be won by a candidate securing only 30 percent of the vote, even if 70 percent of the voters considered the winner their last choice.

The difficulty of successful candidates securing a majority vote has created a confused situation in which some people claim that those elected without majority support do not have a mandate from or support of the alumni. They claim that the College should not take any sort of message from the election. Others vigorously object to this claim, and

contend that those elected with a mere plurality of the vote (but not a majority) are favored by a majority of the voters and would have won in a head-to-head race.

In order to fix this problem and silence the claim that plurality victors are less than legitimate, we have considered many ideas designed to ensure that candidates cannot be elected unless they receive a majority of the vote.

Options for promoting elections where only majority vote getters are elected include:

- Try to arrange a system that promotes two-candidate races. One method is to give the Nominating Committee the option of putting forth only one candidate if there is a petition candidate running. However, such a system requires that the Nominating Committee know if there is a petition candidate before it announces its candidates, and thus requires the petition candidate to come forward before the Nominating Committee announces candidates.
- Institute instant runoff voting. IRV is a cost-effective way of ensuring that the winning candidate is able to demonstrate majority support from the alumni. Voting experts consulted by the AGTF have told us that no system—not approval voting, not IRV and not any other systems—is without problem in elections involving more than two candidates. While IRV voting seems promising to AGTF members, we have received comments from some alumni who are very suspicious of this voting structure, and maintain that in certain hypothetical situations it is subject to manipulation.
- Hold an actual runoff election between the top two vote getters if no candidate received a majority of the vote. However, concerns have been raised about potential voter burnout and cost.

**Petitioner vs. Insider.** Some maintain that the current trustee balloting system has become too politicized and combative. They believe a system whereby the alumni regain confidence that the Nominating Committee is advancing suitable candidates is what we should seek, and fear that a system that codifies a situation where we always have an "outsider vs. insider" fight is unhealthy.

Among the reforms they would like to see is one where the types of candidates who otherwise would run by petition instead are put forward by the Nominating Committee as nominated candidates. These people have suggested having those who intend to run by petition first express their interest in a trustee seat to the Nominating Committee and go through the Nominating Committee process. In this way, such candidates could be nominated by the Nominating Committee and not have to collect petition signatures. If they are not selected, they still could choose to run by petition. (Unfortunately, this approach has generated great suspicion among some people who have commented to the AGTF.)

People in this camp also resist the idea of designing a system that assumes/accepts that there will be petition candidates and the current level of controversy evermore. Therefore, they oppose the suggestion that the Nominating Committee should nominate only one candidate who will take on petition candidates.

**AGTF responses to the issues.** Taking into account all of the comments that we have received, expert opinions from several voting experts with whom we have met, review of scholarly analyses and the various options, the AGTF proposes the following changes:

- A recast Nominating Committee that will be a committee of the Association of Alumni (not the assembly), with half of its three-year term members elected by the alumni at large;
- Reducing the number of candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee from three to two (or one if there are one or more petition candidates), but requiring that the Nominating Committee ensure that at least two candidates always run for an open seat;
- Reducing the number of signatures necessary to run by petition in half, from 500 signatures to 250 signatures, and reducing from two months to 30 days the time petition forms are available in order to make more equal the time that all candidates have to campaign; and
- Changing the date on which petition candidates must submit their petition from two months after the Nominating Committee candidates are announced to immediately before the Nominating Committee announces its candidates, in order to allow the Nominating Committee to adjust the number of candidates it nominates so as to promote two-person, head-to-head races and thus promote the victory of candidates supported by a majority of voting alumni.

Essentially, this proposal is designed to encourage two-candidate races. By changing the date on which a petition candidate must submit his or her petition, we allow the Nominating Committee to decide whether to put up one or two candidates.

In addition, we have received a number of complaints about perceived imbalances in the ability of nominated candidates and petition candidates to campaign. Under the proposed system, petition candidates would have only 30 days more than Nominating Committee candidates for official campaigning. The Balloting Committee will determine more detailed rules.

In order to make it easier for petition candidates to run, we have cut in half the number of signatures necessary to run by petition.

The AGTF had considered the argument that petition candidates need to know who the official candidates are before deciding whether to run. While this could be a weakness in the proposal, the AGTF believes, in reality, petition candidates have not decided to run for trustee in reaction to specific individuals who have been nominated by the Nominating Committee, but instead have planned to run as petition candidates well in advance of the announcement of Nominating Committee candidates. Therefore, the problem does not seem to be a very real one, and, in any event, it is outweighed by the benefits flowing from two-person races.

Finally, the elections will be run by a reconfigured Balloting Committee, half of whose three-year term members will be elected by all alumni in alumni-wide voting. The constitution requires the Balloting Committee to “publish a set of guidelines for conducting a fair, transparent, and democratic election at the time it provides notice of any elections.”

## **VOTING PROCEDURES AND VACANCIES (Article VIII and IX)**

The task force has never considered anything other than having all Association votes decided by “mail ballot, electronic ballot, or such other media as shall be determined by the Balloting Committee.” (That “other media” phrase is included in recognition of the possibility that future technology may create good new ways to cast votes.) The days of having to come to Hanover to cast “in person” votes for association elections will be over with the adoption of this new constitution.

We considered allowing proxy voting. But if all alumni can easily cast their own ballot, by mail or electronically, from any location in the world, proxy voting becomes totally unnecessary. In fact, allowing proxy voting would achieve nothing, while opening the door to possible abuses in the voting system. We believe all Dartmouth alumni are capable of making their own decisions—and casting their own ballots.

**Adoption of rules.** The AGTF also proposes that the assembly, ALB and the various committees can adopt, by majority vote, rules of procedure, including rules on voting and quorums. It also states that these rules must be posted and made available to all members of the association.

The AGTF considered going into greater detail in the actual constitution on a number of important matters, such as: exactly how the ALB will seek an active partnership and heightened communication between alumni and the Board of Trustees and administration; exactly what guidelines the Balloting Committee should follow to ensure fair and informed elections; how the Nominating Committee should conduct its searches for the best qualified nominees possible; how the various assembly committees should determine their membership and elect their chairs; and how classes, clubs and affiliated groups should elect their assembly representatives.

We decided this would be unwise for several reasons: a) the constitution is, already, of necessity, a lengthy and complex document; b) in allowing groups and committees to establish their own rules of procedure, we make them stakeholders in the alumni governance process; and c) by keeping such rules of procedure outside the constitution itself, we provide the opportunity for these rules to evolve and improve over time, through trial and error, without having to amend the constitution itself.

Finally, we considered a constitutional provision that Robert’s Rules be followed for all meetings of the association. We decided such a provision would be unnecessary and, in fact, counter-productive. It is important to note that all future association voting will be by all-media balloting, rather than being cast in-person at association meetings. We do believe that rules of procedure should be established—and made public—for the conduct of association meetings, but that these rules should be kept simple and informal, to encourage a free flow of ideas and discussion, without the cumbersome restraints of strict parliamentary procedure inherent in Robert’s Rules.

The proposed constitution also provides for ordering filling of office vacancies to ensure consistent leadership.

## **REVIEWING AND AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION (Articles X and XI)**

The task force agreed from the outset that all alumni should be able to bring forward a proposed constitutional change, that proposed changes should be subjected to thoughtful discussion and debate prior to being put to a vote and that the hurdle for passage should be set high enough to ensure that constitutional changes reflect the clear will of the alumni body.

**Constitutional review.** To make certain the constitution remains an effective guiding document over time, a Constitutional Review Committee (CRC) is established to meet whenever deemed appropriate and not less often than once every five years. To ensure broad representation, the Nominating Committee is to appoint members drawn from the assembly, the ALB and the non-elected association membership (two each.) The CRC is to be chaired by the immediate past president to take advantage of his or her depth of experience after three years of association leadership.

The AGTF expects that a strong effort will be made to ensure the CRC is composed of alumni with a diversity of views (as has been the case on the AGTF.) To ensure that all alumni have the opportunity to contribute, the CRC must notify all members of the association that it plans to convene. To ensure transparency and effective communication, the CRC's written report is to be made available to all alumni via the association's Web site and by other appropriate means.

**Amending the constitution.** To ensure that the opportunity for suggesting constitutional change is always available to all alumni, amendments may be proposed in any year by the CRC, any member of the assembly or any 1 percent of voting members of the association who file a proposed amendment over their signatures. The 1 percent hurdle was selected as an appropriate balance between reasonable access to the amendment process and an effective filter to screen out "frivolous" amendment proposals.

After lengthy discussion, the AGTF agreed unanimously that all proposed amendments should ultimately require a two-thirds, all-media majority vote of all voting association members for enactment, but should first go to the assembly for thorough, in-depth discussion followed by a vote by that representative body.

In our original Sept. 18, 2005, public draft, we called for a two-thirds favorable vote in the assembly before amendments could be submitted to the association for final approval. Reflecting comments received since then, we reduced that requirement to approval by a simple majority in the assembly before moving on to the required two-thirds approval from all alumni.

We have also provided that a proposed amendment that fails to receive majority Assembly approval may be brought to a vote by all members of the Association if accompanied by a petition signed by 3 percent of all association members. In the March 10, 2006, draft, the signature requirement was 5 percent; however, based on comments received, and upon further reflection, we decided a 3 percent requirement would be more reasonable. We believe this still relatively high hurdle is appropriate.

On the one hand, we think it proper to provide a "safety valve" to ensure any proposed amendment may be brought to the full association membership for a vote if a truly significant number of alumni so desire. On the other hand, we believe it is highly unlikely

a proposed amendment that fails to win even simple majority approval in the assembly, following full discussion by that representative body, will be considered to be in the best interests of Dartmouth and her alumni by a full two-thirds majority of all voting members of the association. The failure to receive a majority vote in the assembly will be disclosed in those instances where a proposed amendment nonetheless is submitted for association-wide vote.

## **EFFECTIVE DATE AND TRANSITION PROVISIONS (Article XII)**

In establishing transition provisions, our objectives have been to get the new constitution up and running, with newly elected officers, representatives and committee members in place as quickly as possible, while at the same time assuring the continuity required to make certain that all important elements of alumni governance function effectively and without interruption during the interim in which elections are held and governance details are ironed out.

The new constitution takes effect immediately upon passage, with the existing Association Executive Committee and Alumni Council quickly establishing: 1) a new Nominating Committee composed of six continuing Alumni Council Nominating Committee members (for continuity) and six new members not on the Alumni Council (for fresh perspective) and 2) a new Balloting Committee composed of three Alumni Council members and three members not on the council.

During the transition period, assembly seat elections will be held by classes, clubs and affiliated groups, and all alumni will elect at-large representatives to both the assembly and the ALB. Within one year following passage, these critical bodies will be up and running, with all seats filled by persons elected under the rules of the new constitution.

For the transition period, all association executive roles will be filled by association and Alumni Council officers in place at the time the constitution is adopted to provide continuity. The Alumni Council's College Relations Group will serve as the Alumni Liaison Board until members are elected. These interim officers, however, will begin phasing out less than a year after the new constitution is adopted, with the first association vice president assuming office July 1, 2007, following an all-alumni, all-media vote.

We did consider the possibility of ending the terms of all persons now serving in alumni governance effective "immediately" upon adoption of the new constitution, replacing them entirely with persons "immediately" chosen in new elections. It seemed clear to us that such an abrupt change, with no real opportunity for effective continuity, would not be in association members' best interests and would actually work against our shared desire to have an effective new alumni governance system in place and running smoothly as quickly as possible.

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For more information, including previous drafts and a Webcast of a March 2006 town meeting on governance, call 603-646-2258 or visit:

<http://alumni.dartmouth.edu/leadership/association/index.html>