

# Dartmouth

## Executive Summary of the Proposed Alumni Association Constitution

*Prepared by Alumni Governance Task Force, April 14, 2006*

The proposed Dartmouth Alumni Association constitution seeks to invigorate Dartmouth alumni governance and strengthen the traditional partnership between Dartmouth and her alumni. Transparent, democratic, and encouraging of all viewpoints, the proposed system represents a renovation and enrichment of the 152-year-old Association of Alumni to which all 66,500 Dartmouth graduates belong.

The voice of alumni would be strengthened by:

- ◆ An innovative Alumni Liaison Board with a direct, meaningful relationship with the Board of Trustees and a finger on the pulse of alumni;
- ◆ A widely representative Alumni Assembly that both would serve as a crucible for the forging of broad alumni sentiment and help the College extend its resources through volunteer service; and
- ◆ A trustee nomination process that encourages two-candidate elections (with one-person, one-vote balloting), makes it easier to be a petition candidate and substantially levels the playing field for all on campaigning.

The proposal is the result of debate and compromise over a two-year period by the Alumni Governance Task Force (AGTF). Appointed by the presidents of the Association of Alumni and the Alumni Council, the group included fresh faces on these issues, plus members of the Dartmouth Alumni for Open Governance (DAOG) organization and the predecessor association/council Joint Committee on Alumni Governance and Trustee Nominations. The nine AGTF members, several of whom have been publicly at odds over the past five years, have found accord and excitement about the future in drafting and agreeing upon this proposal.

### Major Provisions

*Structure* The association would include all 66,500 alumni as its members, as it does today. It would contain several components: Alumni Liaison Board (ALB), a two-way communications vehicle for alumni and the College; Alumni Assembly, an alumni senate and service organization; Nominating Committee, a committee to identify talented alumni for potential service; and Balloting Committee, a panel to oversee all alumni votes. The Alumni Council would be replaced by the more representative assembly.

*Leadership* The association membership, by mail ballot or other appropriate means (e.g., the Internet), would elect a vice president each year. This person would hold four roles in succession over four years, starting as vice president (and assembly vice chair), then succeeding to president-elect (and assembly chair), followed by the presidency of the association. The president (and CEO) would chair the association and succeed to the immediate past president position. The immediate past president would chair the ALB and, at least every five years, the Constitution Review Committee. The election and voting procedures would mirror those for alumni trustee nominations.

*Trustee Nominations* The constitution promotes contests with two candidates running against each other so that alumni may simply vote for their choice (one person, one vote). Petitioners would need only 250 signatures (half of what is required now) to put themselves in the running. Their petitions would be available 30 days

before the Nominating Committee selected its slate from among alumni nominated by themselves or their peers or those identified through the committee's own outreach efforts. The slate could consist of one or two candidates, as long as every election featured a choice between two or more Association members. Each vacancy would require its own set of candidates. An alumni trustee vacancy in an unexpired term of more than one year would be filled through the standard trustee nomination process.

*Voting* The balloting process for election of the vice president and alumni trustee nominees would ask alumni to vote their preference in the case of two candidates. If there were three or more candidates, alumni would vote for as many as they deemed qualified, with the highest vote-getter being the winner (continuing the current approval voting system).

*Alumni Liaison Board* The 16-member ALB would seek to improve and increase communications among Dartmouth alumni, the Board of Trustees and the College administration. Half of its non-ex officio members would be elected through association-wide voting. The ALB would collect alumni opinion through such vehicles as surveys, questionnaires, interviews and town meetings and meet regularly with trustees.

*Assembly* The roughly 125-member assembly would serve as a representative senate and as a body for encouraging participation, service, and engagement with the College. All classes up to the 50th reunion would have a seat (the council has one for every two classes); five people would represent the post-50th reunion classes; graduate and professional school alumni each would have one rep (the same as in the council); class and club officer associations each would have three reps (consolidated from the council's reps from associations such as class treasurers, presidents, etc.); clubs would have 21 reps (the same as in the council); recognized affiliated groups would have two reps each (up from one each in the council); 21 at-large members would be elected by all alumni (now elected by the council). An association member could join the assembly by being elected by a group such as a class or club or through the at-large election process. To be on the alumni-wide ballot for at-large seats, one would need either to be nominated by the Nominating Committee or collect 50 signatures.

*Independent Committees* All alumni would be asked to elect one half of the non-ex officio members of the Nominating Committee and seven-member Balloting Committee. The other half of each would be elected by the assembly. The current Council Nominating Committee is elected by the council itself; the current association Balloting Committee is appointed from the association Executive Committee.

*Constitutional Amendments* The Constitutional Review Committee, any assembly member or one percent of the association membership (through a petition) could propose an amendment to the constitution. An amendment could be passed by a majority of those voting in the assembly and a two-thirds vote of those association members voting. If an amendment did not receive a majority vote in the assembly, its proponents could submit a petition signed by three percent of the association membership to put the issue on an alumni-wide ballot (with its failure to win assembly approval noted). If it received approval by two thirds of association members voting, it would be enacted.

*Enactment* The proposed constitution would be enacted by a two-thirds vote of alumni voting by mail or other appropriate means after approval by a two-thirds vote by those present and voting at a meeting of the Alumni Council.

Send comments to [AGTaskForce@alum.dartmouth.org](mailto:AGTaskForce@alum.dartmouth.org) or the Alumni Governance Task Force, 6068 Blunt Alumni Center, Hanover, NH 03755-3590, or call (603) 646-3929.