

Jim Adler's Report on the 188th Biennial Alumni Council Meeting – May 20-22, 2004

This will report on the highlights of the recent Alumni Council meeting. Overall, the meeting was well-run, with a lot of good information and a high degree of candor in the exchange between College officials and alumni reps. I'll work at keeping this brief, but please come back to me with your comments, questions and requests for more information.

Trustees Report – The report came from Karen Francis '84, a 4th year trustee who chairs the Student Affairs Group and Tucker Foundation board.

- Mission – “Teaching is Dartmouth’s “raison d’etre,” but great research leads to great thinking and to great teaching.”
- Greek System – “The board has not spent one minute talking about eliminating the Greek system.” Approval has been given to loan houses up to \$500K at low interest for facility improvements. The system makes huge contributions to campus life. Behavior issues are a continuing concern – but not a reason to “kill the system.”
- Tucker Foundation – 75-80% of all students do volunteer work each year through Tucker.
- Student issues – Anxiety/stress (more and more kids are already on meds even before they matriculate – meds + alcohol can be a big problem). Other issues: cramped dorm and social space, managing diversity effectively, D-plan impact on students’ sense of community.
- Endowment – Up 16% this year. Recent belt tightening has helped eliminate waste. New budget setting process will help avoid boom/bust swings.

Governance Task Force Report

– Joe Stevenson '57, Chair – Working to resolve alumni governance issues and come up with a new constitution acceptable to all parties. Everyone wants the Association to continue and for alumni to have a strong voice. Biggest question is whether the Association should continue to have its own Executive Committee, given that the Alumni Council now conducts virtually all alumni business. Task Force has held two conference calls and will meet face-to-face in Chicago June 5th. Progress report will be delivered at the September 18th annual meeting of the Association.

Dartmouth Alumni Magazine Task Force – Ann Duffy '77, Chair – Working to solve DAM’s financial problems in some way other than continually raising the subscription price charged to classes. Really impressive thinking at work here. Multiple solutions being considered are: Incentives to classes to cease dropping and add back classmate subscribers; marketing to an expanded subscriber base (parents, grad school alums, etc.); an independent fundraising effort (a la Athletic Sponsors); increased College subsidy (now 10% of cost vs. a 33% average among peer publications); increased advertising revenue (made possible by a larger subscriber base); development of a long-term strategic plan, including an on-going reader feed-back mechanism.

Committee Reports (brief highlights)

- College Relations Group – This committee interfaces directly with the Trustees. There’s a clear recognition and concern over the disconnect between what’s going on at Dartmouth and what’s perceived by alums. It’s obvious many alums believe their opinions aren’t heard or aren’t taken seriously. Though the Trustees obviously reserve the right to make the decisions on governance at Dartmouth, they do spend a great deal of time listening to and discussing alumni input. Again, ways must be found to close the perception-reality gap. This is a high priority.
- Academics – More money is needed to fund Presidential Scholars and other student research programs which are in increasing demand.

- Communications – Various new communications tools are being explored, including a monthly web cast with reports from President Wright, the Trustees and the Alumni Council. Also looking at a possible dedicated web site to provide information (and dialogue ?) on current hot issues.
- Enrollment and Admissions – Applications for the class of 2008 were off very slightly (1%) – less than at peer schools. Mean SAT scores were up sharply to 713 verbal and 720 math. Almost half (44%) of the '08 class are scholarship recipients. Dartmouth will spend \$12 million on financial aid for this class (about \$24K per student receiving aid). Twenty percent of all '08s are from families with income of \$45K or less, the highest in the Ivy League. Dartmouth is a leader in personalized email communication with top prospects and this tool is proving highly effective.

Development Report

– VP Carrie Pelzel – Dartmouth relies on philanthropy to cover 38% of operating expense (annual giving – 9%, endowment income –29%). The quiet phase of the new capital campaign, to be called the Campaign for the Dartmouth Experience, began 7/1/02. Target is \$1.3 billion, broken down: annual giving - \$247 million, financial aid - \$149 million, campus life - \$177 million, academic enterprise - \$705 million. This covers the College and its graduate schools. As of April 30th, cash and pledges of \$347 million have come in. This is slightly behind projection. The public phase for the campaign will kick off in NYC November 12-13 and will run through 2009. Russ Carson '65 and Peter Fahey '68 are serving as co-chairs and '60 classmate Barry MacLean as a vice-chair.

Those are the highlights, gentlemen. Again, please let me have any questions or comments. My job is to represent everyone in the classes of 1959 and 1960, so if you have views you'd like to express or information you'd like me try to come up with please don't hesitate.

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