

## Minutes

### D'61 Class Officers/Executive Committee Special Teleconference

**July 21, 2021**

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Attending the Meeting: Maynard Wheeler, Don O'Neill, Gerry Kaminsky, Denny Denniston, Vic Rich, Ron Wybranowski, Harris McKee, Rog McArt, Al Rozycki, Mort Lynn, Hop Holmberg, Glen Gemelli, Jon Sperling

Absent from Meeting: Pete Bleyler, Dave Prewitt, Henry Eberhardt, Tom Conger, Oscar Arslanian, Bill Collishaw, David Armstrong, Nyla Arslanian, Patti Rich, Vince Wilson, Art Kelton, Gim Burton, Jim McElhinney, Tim Grumbacher

Invited Guests: None

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Maynard Wheeler, Class President, called the ZOOM telecon meeting to order at 11AM EDT.

#### Discussion

- 1- Numerous classmates brought up several possible current management issues at the College ----- all with lingering questions (more so than answers): how or why the issues initially arose, how they were/are being dealt with and by whom, the degree that other "D" constituencies (see below) are being consulted with during the decision-making process and communicated with during the final decision-approval process, how these potential problems can be avoided going forward.
  - a- The administration
  - b- The faculty
  - c- The students
  - d- The alumni (both the alumni in general and Alumni Council in particular)
  - e- The Board of Trustees

2- The issues of concern mentioned for discussion:

a- Elimination, for the second year in a row, of the always exciting and enjoyable class competition for Class of the Year, Reunion Class of the Year, the various individual Class Officers of the Year, etc. Achieving these various awards and formal recognitions has helped to build the integrated fabric of each respective class and became part of the permanent historical archive for each class and class officer fortunate enough to achieve one or more of these awards. Once eliminated for one or more years, especially without justifiable explanation, is unfair to both the classes involved as well as the College. There may have been justification for the elimination of these awards during the first fiscal year of the COVID-19 pandemic (f/y 6/30/2020), but there appeared to be no viable justification for such last-minute elimination during the second fiscal year (f/y 6/30/2021) ----- at least none was provided. As a result, the morale of the Class has been damaged, hopefully not permanently.

b- The lack of guidance and support from the College administration and the alumni office to (at least) the Class of '61 which had to prepare for and execute its 60<sup>th</sup> Reunion (totally virtual) in June 2021. The only consistent assistance received was from Vince Wilson, in the area of DCF fund raising. The response to this has been that during the pandemic, there was a substantial decrease in Alumni Affairs staffing, and therefore accessibility, during the initial 1 ½ years of the pandemic.

c- The cancellation, without any apparent prior notice, of five varsity sports (including the men's and women's swimming teams, for a second time) during the summer of 2020, a decision which the College then backed off from in December of 2020. Apparently, the reinstatement is for a guaranteed period of only 4 years - --- why only 4 years? It was noted, further, that approximately 5 years earlier, the College had eliminated the men's and women's varsity swimming team, only to reinstate those same teams within a period of several months.

d- The handling of the alleged testing scandal at the Geisel School of Medicine which was initially supposed to have taken place during the early months of 2021, only to have the administration back-track on the highly publicized allegations shortly thereafter as being inaccurate.

e- The recent plans to drastically reduce the size and importance of the Tucker Foundation and its role as oversight umbrella organization over all the other religion-based organizations currently on the campus. Why?

f- The short-lived proposal to utilize a significant portion of the area included within the College Park property for the development of one or more needed residential dorms, which decision was subsequently reversed, presumably (at least) because of the objections of the physics department, the loss of much needed open space near the center of campus and the disturbance to the long-agreed to resting place for the life-size and popular Robert Frost statue and surrounding dedicated park area.

g- The closing of the Dartmouth-owned Hanover golf course on relatively short notice, with no clear indication of what was to become of the extensive piece of property.

h- The recent admittance by President Hanlon and the Board of Trustees in March 2021 about the College's "historical under-investment" ("for decades") in critical infrastructure upgrades, including the renovation of the existing undergraduate dorms that had been neglected and now was way behind schedule. This problem became even more apparent when the Valley News (June 20, 2021) stated that due to the shortage of student residential dorm space, the College would pay a stipend of \$5,000 per student for up to 200 students (potential total subsidy of \$1 million) for any student who agrees to give up their dorm rooms for the fall 2021 semester. We have not heard anything about the College refuting the aforementioned subsidy assertion and, in fact, the administration, at a high-level meeting held on July 21st, discussed the severe undergraduate housing shortage situation, including the overcrowding of existing dorm rooms and the College's "providing incentives to students" to make alternative plans.

Apparently, plans are under way for a new undergraduate residence hall with a targeted opening date in the fall of 2023 (2 years); however, the location of this dorm and the number of beds to be included were not available to us. In addition, a 500-bed graduate student housing facility was in process and set to open in 2022.

3- The current small size of the undergraduate student body was mentioned as a potential problem to Dartmouth going forward in order for the College to achieve

all of its achievement goals and in order to remain fully competitive with the other 7 Ivy League institutions. Was there any formal study done to analyze the pros and cons of increasing the size of the undergraduate student body, especially when all of the other Ivy league institutions had increased their student body size, some schools substantially, over the past decade or so? Dartmouth was now the smallest of the 8 Ivy League undergraduate schools, and getting smaller each year due to the growth patterns of the other undergraduate Ivy League schools.

- 4- The College administration's overwhelming involvement in fund raising has become apparent, at least to the Class of 1961, and to the possible detriment to other recurring "D" functions and activities at this time of the year (e.g. reunions).
- 5- Whether Dartmouth should consider adopting the University of Chicago's commitment to the "Chicago Principles", relating to the freedom of speech and all other forms of expression as an essential element of the institution's culture became a heated debate. It was noted that Dartmouth already has a published policy statement on the "Freedom of Expression and Dissent". After much discussion, taking up a significant portion of the discussion hour, the following summary thoughts were generated:
  - a- The concepts of free speech and the right to dissent presented within the "Chicago Principles" as well as within the Dartmouth's policy statement on the subject were certainly desirable goals that were readily agreed to by all of the '61 participants in the telecom.
  - b- It was generally agreed that there could be times when the ideal situation did not match the reality of the situation, primarily because of some or all the individual people involved. As a result, there may be situations whereby giving one segment of the population unfettered reign on the ability to say or communicate about another group of people in a derogatory manner, especially without truthfulness or adequate substantiation of the facts, needed "some degree" of control or curtailment over the concept of completely unfettered free speech.
  - c- Both the University of Chicago, as well as Dartmouth, understood this dilemma and inserted various wording into their statements backing the concepts of free speech and freedom of dissent with varying degrees of control, both direct and indirect, over the allowance of certain types of comments as well as

or instead of certain controls over the opportunity to exert unfettered free speech. Whereas the University of Chicago focuses directly on the types of free speech involved to determine an assessment of whether and the degree of restriction(s) that should be implemented, Dartmouth's restrictions appear to focus more on the concept of "community health and safety" in retaining "the exclusive discretion" to implement "reasonable limitations" in permitting in-person demonstrations and protests by exercising its discretion to determine the "when", the "where" and the "how" (via required permits, etc.) such demonstrations and/or protests may be held.

- d- Therefore, in each case it appears to depend a great deal on who is making the ultimate decision on whether or not selective direct and/or indirect controls are to implement, thus pushing the question into the grey area. As one classmate summarized it so aptly, once one side has the ability to exercise any direct and/or indirect controls over the side demanding unfettered free speech, then you probably no longer have free speech! No one participating in this telecom seemed able to refute this, but should there always be complete unfettered free speech remained an open question at this time?

#### Conclusion:

After reviewing what was said and discussed prior to/subsequent to and at the '61 special teleconference of July 21st, after receiving input from a few active alumni from a few other "mature" (i.e. older) classes, and after receiving input from other members of the class officers/executive committee as to these Minutes, Maynard will set up another on-line teleconference in the near future to discuss further the aforementioned areas of concern and to determine what, if any, course(s) of action the Class of '61 should follow next and in what order and to whom any future responses should be directed.

Maynard adjourned the meeting at noon EDT.

Respectfully submitted,

Vic Rich '61 Class Secretary

