

## Report on the November 2012 Alumni Council Meeting

Gentlemen: The Fall 2012 Alumni Council meeting was held in Hanover from Nov. 1-3, hard on the heels of Hurricane Sandy and just before the national election. Attendance was therefore a bit off from what it otherwise might have been; nonetheless, a productive session. I will send to Jim Lawrie the Communication Committee's comprehensive meeting report – all 3826 words of it! – for posting on the class website; and I expect Dave Gang may want to quote parts of it in the next newsletter. For now, though, for both sources, the highlights of the meeting.

I've been scooped already on two of the biggest items covered at the meeting: an update on the presidential search process from Board of Trustees chairman Steve Mandel '78, and an overview of Dartmouth's Year of the Arts, featuring the opening and dedication of the Black Family Visual Arts Center. Steve Mandel's update has been rendered moot by the selection Philip Hanlon '77 as Dartmouth's new President, and the recent issue of Dartmouth Life has covered the Year of the Arts and the visual arts center in far more detail – including pictures worth thousands of words! – than I could.

A word about the selection of Philip Hanlon: As a fellow mathematician (and paragon of logic and rationality!), I am really pleased with his selection. His background in university administration and finance seems ideally suited for the challenges facing Dartmouth; his interviews in Dartmouth's press releases and the most recent Dartmouth Alumni Magazine suggest a genuinely grounded and super-nice guy; and his professional credentials recall Dartmouth's great mathematician-president John Kemeny. I hope the same dynamism and vision will mark Philip Hanlon's presidency.

### Two other major developments marked the weekend:

- The first was the announcement and approval of Mitch Kurz '73 as the Council's recommendation to fill the one alumni-nominated seat for election to the Board of Trustees this winter. Mitch's background as former president of Young & Rubicam, followed by a second career as a leading education advocate, gives him a unique set of talents to bring to the Board. The Council unanimously endorsed his nomination; that means I did too, and I hope you will as well in the alumni voting to follow.
- The second development was the Council's opportunity to see, and be lodged in, the newly renovated Hanover Inn. Reaction to the new look reflected what I'd heard already – kinda mixed. Some like it; others decidedly don't. My own reaction is that the new lobby and conference rooms are, well ... *clean*. Sort of like Sanborn House meets a satellite assembly clean room. Normally such an ascetic look appeals to me, and this is very well done ... but I found myself missing the warm clubby rustic charm of the old Inn. The answer to this, of course, is for you to come to our reunion in June and see and decide for yourself!

Other Council sessions covered a variety of topics:

- Director of Athletics Harry Sheehy '55a spoke on Dartmouth's student-athlete experience, and he was informative and entertaining as always. Faithful readers already know I'm a big fan of Harry's. He is doing what he said he was going to do when he came here – expand the breadth of athletic participation, improve athletic fundraising, and raise the level of athletic achievement – as in, championships. Super guy. (Note: Alert readers will have noticed the '55a after Harry's name above. Our class Executive Committee recently voted to extend an invitation to adopt Harry as a member of our class, only to find that the '55s had beaten us to it. Damn. Would have loved to have him as a classmate!)
- Senior Vice President David Spalding '76 gave a talk on the cost of higher education, in particular at Dartmouth. I'll be blunt: I am troubled by this anyway, and I was neither reassured nor persuaded by his comments. A number of his cited financial figures appear internally inconsistent to me, and his arguments and justifications for current cost levels at Dartmouth seem a bit facile. I want to think some more about this issue, organize my thoughts, and comment at greater length to you, probably in the class newsletter. (In fact, this report and those comments will hopefully appear together in Dave Gang's upcoming midwinter edition.) I will welcome your thoughts on this issue, whether you agree (or not!) with my more detailed comments to follow, or if you want to chime in now. The current bottom line is this: in Kiplinger's list of "best values in private colleges", Dartmouth ranks 16<sup>th</sup> overall and seventh in the Ivies. I'm not real proud of that: I think it is Dartmouth's mission not only to educate leaders, but to lead in education – in all aspects of it, including accessibility. More to come – watch this space!
- VP of Alumni Relations Martha Beattie updated the Council on Dartmouth's goal of becoming more engaged with its alumni – particularly the goal of facilitating a lifelong engagement with the College. (One big step already, of which we're among the first beneficiaries: all reunions on weekends. Don't be like the Dalai Lama in *Caddyshack*: show your appreciation for the effort *now* by coming to the reunion in June!) Martha's big news to the Council was the announcement of Dan Parish '89 as the director of Dartmouth for Life. He is charged with the task of designing and implementing programs that will seek and create lifelong alumni engagement. All good wishes for his success – and let's pitch in and help him!
- Other presentations included an update from Dean Charlotte Johnson on the progress of the College's Harm Reduction Initiative (HRI), designed to reduce high-risk drinking, sexual assault, and hazing. Seems like this has become an automatic semi-annual update – but it's important, and progress is being made. More details are included in the full Communications Committee report.
- Finally, President Carol Folt '78a spoke to the Council at the Friday night dinner. An upbeat address focusing on a number of vibrant initiatives happening at Dartmouth, including the

progress of the College's strategic planning project. President Folt is "confident that Dartmouth is poised to adapt and thrive in a changing world."

Guys, I just read this over, and realized that Council meetings are so packed with information that even the executive summaries are long! Sorry about that ... As always, please contact me with comments or questions, and I'll pass them along or get you some answers. Thanks for reading!