



REPORT FROM THE 208TH DARTMOUTH ALUMNI COUNCIL MEETING  
MAY 15-17, 2014  
By Dick Olson '68

Learned about many great things going on at Dartmouth at the 208th Alumni Council meeting in mid-May, and we had some frank discussions about issues that are hurting our College.

This was a "roller coaster" year for admissions. Faced with a 14% drop in applications, the admissions office did a full court press by expanding student to student outreach and proactive communication with families to address concerns about sexual assault and other campus issues. Thanks to that outreach, the yield surged from 48.6% last year to 54.6% this year. 1210 students accepted the 1120 spots in the class of 2018.

Maria Laskaris, dean of admissions and financial aid, bluntly told us that the narrative about Dartmouth has to change and catch up with reality.

At the communications committee meeting, I passed out copies of a letter Dave Gang wrote me before the meeting. Dave is concerned that the College is not fighting back with all the good things that are happening up in Hanover or publically countering with the leadership of Phil Hanlon in fighting against sexual assault and adopting strong zero tolerance policies at Dartmouth.

I also passed along Dave's letter to the Alumni Liaison Committee as I do with all your letters. The College wants to know what the alumni are thinking and passing along your letters is part of my job.

Tommy Bruce, Dartmouth's new vice president for public affairs, is pursuing an aggressive strategy: Don't let negative stories go unanswered, and crowd out the bad news with positive news.

The more I see of President Phil Hanlon, the more I think he is an extraordinarily good choice to lead Dartmouth. His background as a Dartmouth undergrad, mathematics professor, and then provost of the University of Michigan, is a great resume. But I also see that Hanlon is willing to take on the tough issues and has a vision for our college.

I am impressed with President Hanlon's push toward experiential learning. Dartmouth recently got a \$100 million anonymous gift to help this effort.

There is more opportunity for undergrads to participate in courses at Thayer School of Engineering.

Two students told us how they had invented a practical serving tray for restaurants. It was designed ergonomically to prevent injuries and with holes for glasses in the tray to reduce breakage.

Some good news for parents worried about costs Dartmouth has slowed tuition growth to 2.9%--the lowest increase since 1977. President Hanlon is also requiring all the major units of the college to identify the 1.5% that they would reallocate to new initiatives.

One highlight was the talk by Nathaniel Fick '99, trustee and author of *One Bullet Away: The Making of a Marine Officer*. Fick was in Afghanistan when U.S. at a critical moment when the U.S. had Bin Laden cornered at Tora Bora but much to the frustration of the soldiers on the ground, a decision was made in Washington (probably by Rumsfeld) not to send in the U.S. troops.

Learned there was a nice piece about President Hanlon's strong message on sexual assaults, campus drinking, and other extreme behavior in the Washington Post on April 14. Here's the [link](#).

The Presidential Steering Committee for Moving Dartmouth Forward is tasked with making recommendations that will combat extreme behavior in the critical areas of sexual assault and high-risk drinking, and will also seek to foster more inclusivity and civility on campus. Alumni are encouraged to submit their thoughts and recommendations to the Presidential Steering Committee via an online form [here](#) by June 30.

Just back from a trip to Athens and Crete with Deb, I sat in on Prof. Christesen's class on the Peloponnesian War. Dartmouth undergraduates are darn lucky not just for the caliber of their classes but also for the nice venue—the Black Family Visual Arts Center behind the Hop, named in honor of Leon Black '73, and his wife Debra, who contributed \$48 million toward the center which opened in 2012.

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Dartmouth Alumni Council

Hanover, NH 03755

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