

The logo for the Dartmouth Alumni Council is displayed on a dark green rectangular background. The word "Dartmouth" is written in a white, serif font, and "Alumni Council" is written below it in a smaller, white, serif font.

## Dartmouth Alumni Council

Dear Geoff,

As I complete my year as Alumni Council president, I know there is great reason to be optimistic about Dartmouth and Dartmouth's relationship with her alumni. The College is in terrific shape and the students love it--96 percent of the senior class donated to Dartmouth this spring. The trustees and administration understand alumni wish to be heard and they are listening. The past decade demonstrates that working together constructively within the Dartmouth family to improve the College is productive, while waging a partisan, contentious struggle outside the College is destructive.

### **Past Problems**

I believe there were problems in the past. During portions of the 1980s and 1990s, some in Hanover seemingly did not appreciate that Dartmouth's differences from other institutions were what made it great and should be celebrated, not eliminated in an effort to imitate others. At times alumni opinion did not seem welcomed or respected. (Read more on the recent history of alumni-College relations [here](#).)

### **Dartmouth's Leadership "Gets It"**

That certainly is not the case today. Former President Jim Wright and President Jim Yong Kim understand that Dartmouth is unique in higher education in the access that students have to tenured professors; its sense of community fostered by fraternities, sororities, and other student organizations and institutions; its access to the outdoors; its athletic tradition; and the sense of family imbued in its students that stays with them for the rest of their lives--to the extent that alumni become misty-eyed when talking about Dartmouth, and retain a lifelong passion for the College.

### **Trustee Governance**

I know some alumni were unhappy with the board's 2007 decision to increase the number of charter trustees by eight instead of having four of those eight new positions filled by alumni-nominated trustees. I and Association of Alumni president John Mathias '69 have talked to members of the board about adding additional alumni-nominated trustees in the future. The improvements to the alumni trustee election/nomination process which the alumni overwhelmingly adopted this past spring are a step in the right direction. Yet the fact that seven out of ten alumni do not vote in trustee elections undermines the argument that alumni want to elect more trustees. If alumni want to select trustees, they need to vote.

### **An Improved Alumni Council**

During the past several years, the Alumni Council radically recreated itself to better represent alumni. We added representatives for each class through the 55th reunion year, tripled representation for the oldest classes, increased representation for affiliated groups, and refined geographic representation. We created a culture of communication. It is now the norm for the 125 members of the council regularly to communicate with alumni. During the past year, the council received more than 600 emails from alumni, and we communicated alumni views to the College. You can find your representatives [here](#).

### **The Trustees Are Listening**

The council created a 12-person Alumni Liaison Committee (ALC) to communicate alumni sentiment to the administration and trustees. The ALC meets regularly with the trustees' Alumni Relations Committee (ARC) and prepares an [annual report](#) to the trustees concerning alumni opinions, which is available online. If you have any questions, opinions, or concerns that you would like to share with the College, you can [contact one of your Alumni Council representatives](#), or send an email directly to [alc@alum.dartmouth.org](mailto:alc@alum.dartmouth.org).

### **Fraternities and Sororities**

Finally, this past year the Alumni Council created an ad hoc Committee to Support Greek Letter Organizations (CSG) to assist fraternities, sororities, and co-ed houses. The CSG includes alumni councilors, deans, alumni advisors, faculty advisors, and students, and is intended to help Greek letter organizations by improving physical plants, increasing alumni and faculty involvement, and tackling long-range issues such as the need for more sorority housing and capital improvements for all houses. We hope to complete a report by spring 2010.

### **Reason for Optimism**

As someone who has been involved on various sides of alumni debates over the last 25 years, I know that we are poised to enter a new, golden era of alumni-College relations. Working constructively together within the Dartmouth family, we can help to make Dartmouth even better for future Dartmouth students--and that, after all, is what it should be all about.

It has been a pleasure and an honor serving as your Alumni Council president.

Yours truly,

John "J.B." Daukas '84  
President  
Dartmouth Alumni Council

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