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## Alumni Leadership

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### Association of Alumni Annual Meeting

**Sunday, October 23**

**Alumni Hall**

**11 a.m.**

**Summary**

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John Walters '62, president of the Association, called the meeting to order at 11:20 a.m. Four hundred alumni were in attendance.

### Introductory remarks

Mr. Walters introduced the executive committee, several of whom are completing their term of service this year. He noted that the meeting was being tape-recorded, and that a complete transcript of the meeting would be available upon request. The only official business of this meeting, he said, is the election of officers and executive committee. He also expected an informative and interactive discussion of the work of the Alumni Governance Task Force.

Mr. Walters noted that there are differences in the alumni body regarding the relationship between the Association and the Alumni Council, including issues of mistrust and suspicion which he feels are unwarranted. During his tenure, he has tried to be open, transparent and fair in communications. He feels that the college administration and board of trustees recognize the importance of alumni communications (he cited the board's Alumni Relations Working Group as an example)—but the quality of communications clearly needs to be improved.

Alumni trustee nominations are a key responsibility of the Association officers and executive committee. This year there was a lively balloting process in which petitioners won. Mr. Walters congratulated new trustees Peter Robinson '79 and Todd Zywicki '88 and thanked the other excellent candidates for their participation. New election guidelines permitted greater candid communications with alumni, including emails from the candidates to the alumni body. These emails actually caused confusion among voters, and Mr. Walters didn't think it worked that well. Further improvements are being developed. Third-party web sites and blogs were extraordinarily active, and had a major impact on the balloting. This frustrated alumni on all sides of the spectrum. There were complaints about electioneering and violation of campaign guidelines. Problems with the mailing of ballots contributed to frustrations, and many alumni were unhappy as a result. A study group of the Association will recommend new guidelines in this regard.

### Introduction of the new Vice President of Alumni Relations

Mr. Walters introduced David Spalding '76, new vice president of alumni relations. Mr. Spalding said it warmed his heart to see so many alumni on campus for the meeting and was happy himself to be here. While he is not an alumni relations professional, he has been a consumer of alumni services and an active volunteer. He sympathizes with volunteers and interested alumni and wants to make it easy for alumni to participate and volunteer. This year we are celebrating a long tradition of alumni service (150 years). Alumni are passionate and that is critically important on an occasion such as this. He thanked all for being present at the meeting.

### Introduction to Alumni Governance Task Force (AGTF) Issues

Mr. Walters stated that alumni governance has been under study for many years, and more recently, the relationship between Association and Council has been examined.

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The Association's executive committee actively supports the work of the AGTF in devising more democratic and inclusive governance structures. The AGTF is committed to getting it right; it has engaged in full and open discussions. It is not trying to change rules or weaken the Association. On the contrary, its recommendations would strengthen the Association and enhance direct alumni participation. Now is the time for commentary. The AGTF acts independently, is politically diverse, and determined to be responsive to any and all concerned alumni. At the 2003 annual meeting, a draft constitution was approved by 71 percent but did not pass the required 75 percent supermajority. The perceived (albeit not supported by the facts) lack of communication about the draft constitution will *not* happen this time. It will be up to the newly elected executive committee to decide when and if to call a special meeting for the purpose of voting on a draft constitution.

John Daukas '84 spoke briefly on behalf of the AGTF. A change in alumni governance is clearly needed, he stated. The status quo is not acceptable. The AGTF is trying to achieve a better relationship between Dartmouth and its alumni. The new proposed constitution is a vast improvement on what currently exists, especially in the area of democratic representation.

We are here today to listen to alumni. There will be no vote on the constitution today. This is the first public hearing on the constitution. Tell us what you like and don't like. Mr. Daukas expects that the draft constitution will change over the next few months as feedback is given. The AGTF has already met with a diverse group of alumni, and is happy to keep meeting to get more input. This constitution requires a vote of *all* alumni. All alumni need to feel that their sentiments are heard. He hopes that all officer and executive committee candidates will allow the process to come before a vote of all alumni. He respects alumni enough to trust them to make the decision.

Contrary to some allegations, this whole process is not about squashing dissent. He is one of the alumni dissenters himself, and in fact ran on the opposition slate last year.

What's in this constitution? A more democratic, more transparent system of alumni participation. The Association of Alumni is different from Alumni Council. It hasn't really acted as a governance system, hasn't done that much; most governance has been handled by the Alumni Council. The Association's executive committee runs the trustee elections but doesn't nominate the candidates. Under the new proposal, responsibilities of Nominating and Balloting committees will come under aegis of the Association, not the Council, and these committees will be elected (half) by all alumni. The proposed creation of an Alumni Liaison Board (ALB) will provide alumni with a stronger, interactive voice. The Alumni Assembly becomes the successor to the Council, a more representative alumni senate, and a resource for alumni service. All alumni may vote for president of the Association, at-large members of the Assembly and ALB. The Assembly will have double the class representation and greater representation for older alumni.

The trustee nomination proposal is not an effort to prevent petition candidates from voting. These provisions were included in the last draft constitution and were not controversial. If you don't like the proposal, let the AGTF know! Let's not let the tail wag the dog. We are here to listen and expect changes. The status quo isn't working. The draft may not be perfect, but it's a great step forward. The AGTF welcomes participation and wants all alumni to be part of the voting.

John MacGovern '80 rose to speak and asked about handing out proxies. John Walters noted that the guidelines do not allow for proxy voting, although the new constitution will change that provision. Mr. Walters added that it is fundamentally unfair to allow proxies without having announced that ahead of time, and stated that Mr. MacGovern's request was clearly out of order. He ruled that proxy voting is out of order and improper at this meeting.

#### **Nominating Committee presentations**

Anton Anderson '89 presented the slate of candidates nominated by the Association's

nominating committee.

Lauren Day '99 spoke on behalf of the petition slate.

### **Remarks by candidates**

Al Collins '53 has been an active volunteer for 50 years. He has not always agreed with the administration but always supported the institution, even when he didn't agree. He has been a witness to ongoing evolution at Dartmouth—it is a better school now than when he attended. Leadership has rewards and responsibilities, and he supports meaningful participation by all alumni. He thanked all for their attention, participation and vote.

Dean Spatz '66 professed a strong love for Dartmouth. He feels that the Association should not be a “good old boys” group. He believes he has the leadership to guide the petition platform, can vision and implement vision, and will work for inclusion of all alumni. He would amend the constitution to allow for all media voting and change the rules for sitting trustees. He is motivated by the three petition trustees, all of whom signed proxies.

Joe Asch '79: A resident of Hanover, an entrepreneur and a father, he audits classes at Dartmouth. He feels that alumni should act as a check-and-balance to the administration. He writes op-eds in the D. Alumni aren't just passive but should be active members of the Dartmouth community.

Merle Adelman '80: Comes from a Dartmouth family. Her commitment comes from the heart. Volunteering for Dartmouth is positive and defining. She lives her commitment every day through her volunteerism.

John Walters spoke on behalf of Precious Stargell '85.

Frank Gado '58: The Dartmouth Alumni Magazine isn't even covering this meeting, and that is a shame. He doesn't pay class dues to protest the way the DAM covers alumni news. Deserves to know what is going on. Is not pleased with the way things are going. He stands for change.

John Harrington '80: He's all about open governance. A lot has changed since 1990. Dartmouth Alumni for Open Governance has been the catalyst for many changes. He wants to see that rules are followed and that all voices are heard.

Stan Colla '66: Alumni he has met are committed and support Dartmouth's best interest. He trusts alumni when given full information to make the right decisions. He supports more efforts for alumni surveys. Believes in transparency and democracy; open dialogue with all alumni. Advocates free and open exchange of ideas.

Rick Roesch '60: Lives in Hanover, sees the college first hand; clearly a better school than in 1960 or 1980s. Not perfect. He chairs Hop/Hood Overseers and succeeded in making changes by working together with people of good will. President of the Class of '60. He believes in making positive contributions. He asked for the vote of the Association nominated slate.

Malcom Robinson '57: Learned the benefits of helpful partnerships through advisory board work at Northwestern. His hot button is partnership between alumni and the College. Doesn't feel alumni are being heard. This results in suspicion and disenchantment. Genuine participation and support obviates suspicion and distrust. Need to sell benefits of partnership to the College. We haven't asked convincingly for the partnership. Alumni are the biggest stakeholders in the college and we need to step up to it.

Bill Hutchinson '76: What's the most difficult thing to cook? A perfect hamburger. Picking the thing in the middle, time after time, is the greatest challenge. Let's stop

devouring each other and move forward for a better Dartmouth.

Quentin Kopp '49: Wants to ensure that the Association maintains petition processes for Association and Board of Trustees. Wants to see fixed rules established, i.e. Roberts Rules of Order instead of ad hoc procedural meetings.

Kate Aiken '92: Dedicated to listening to alumni and prospective students. She incorporates all of that into her volunteer work. Listen, connect, and communicate.

John Flitner '52: Believes in due process, notice of hearing, and all-media voting. He wants to see a better system of record keeping and reporting, and a standard of conduct via Roberts Rules of Order. He feels that Dartmouth is ignoring alumni and wants to see a shorter constitution. The Alumni Council should be independent and trustworthy.

Tamar Gerber '93: Petition slate strives for reason, meritocracy, and fair play. Concerned about grade inflation and getting strongly held views. Dollar donations are up, but participation rates are dropping.

A twenty-minute question-and-answer session ensued, followed by balloting for officers and executive committee.

The meeting was halted for ten minutes, and reconvened to the presentation of the AGTF. The majority of the audience left Alumni Hall after the voting, with only 40 or so left in attendance.

#### **Discussion of the Draft Constitution, led by the Alumni Governance Task Force (AGTF)**

This constitution is an initial public draft, not yet a proposal, and is very much a work-in-progress. The AGTF came together in January 2004 to offer changes to the constitutions of the Association of Alumni and the Alumni Council and to devise a governance system that is more transparent, democratic, and easily understood.

The AGTF welcomes any calls and questions in the weeks and months ahead. A major initiative is to strengthen the voice of alumni via an Alumni Liaison Board (ALB) and a larger and more representative body to be known as the Alumni Assembly. Key elements include direct election of officers, ALB member, Nominating Committee, Balloting Committee, and at-large representatives to the Assembly. There is no hidden agenda on the alumni trustee petition recommendations.

The Association would be a single overarching entity with one constitution and several constituent parts, blending a bifurcated Association into a powerful entity. Communications would take place via the ALB, and alumni service organized via the Assembly. The leadership arc would flow from president-elect, to president to immediate past-president. Also discussed were the recommendations with respect to nominating and voting for alumni trustee, and the voting methodology (i.e. approval vs. instant run-off voting).

The details about the ALB and its role and operation were enumerated, followed by a description of the makeup, role and operation of the Assembly. Its increased size from 98 to 124 seats would engender a broader cross-section of alumni views. The direct, democratic election of at-large representatives would make it easier for a broad set of views to be represented.

The Nominating Committee and Balloting Committee would be committees of the Association, not the Assembly, and would be 50 percent directly elected by all alumni. Constitutional amendments, now voted on by alumni present and voting at an annual meeting, would be easier to propose and would be voted on by all alumni, via all media voting.

Enactment of this constitution would require a 75 percent in-person vote, *but* would

also be put forward to all alumni for a two-thirds ratification via an all media vote.

The AGTF wants to engage as many alumni as possible in conversation about the draft constitution, after which the AGTF will make a final draft available for vote. Hopefully this will happen in the spring of 2006.

During the commentary period, the work of the AGTF was applauded many, with the request to make sure that alumni know this is an open, not closed, process. Concerns were expressed about how Assembly committees are made up and about the length of constitution.

Some alumni felt that the inclusion of affiliated alumni representatives on the Assembly was a negative, and some suggested that the constitution be voted on in pieces, not necessarily all of it at once. Others questioned the recommendations with respect to the petition process for alumni trustees. Another point of question and commentary was the eligibility requirement for the Association president.

The Alumni Liaison Board, in order to succeed, needs something really substantive to do. Trustees should look forward a number of years and reflect on the main issues the college will be facing and engage alumni in this conversation. This is a perfect role for the ALB.

#### Announcement of Alumni Association Officers Election Results

John Walters announced the results of the election of officers and executive committee:

##### **President**

Allen Collins '53 (248 votes)

D. Dean Spatz '66 Th '68 (140 votes)

##### **First Vice President**

Merle Adelman '80 (249 votes)

Joseph Asch '79 (129 votes)

##### **Second Vice President**

Precious Stargell '85 (233 votes)

Frank Gado '58 (143 votes)

##### **Secretary-Treasurer**

Stanley Colla '66 Tu '86 (251 votes)

John Harrington '80 (128 votes)

##### **Executive Committee**

Kate Aiken '92 (253 votes)

Albert Cook '62 (231 votes)

Ann Fromholz '90 (236 votes)

William Hutchinson '76 (267 votes)

Frederick Roesch '60 (248 votes)

Kaja Schuppert '95 (246 votes)

Steven White '77 (228 votes)

Lauren Day '99 AM '00 (139 votes)

John Flitner '52 (124 votes)

Tamar Gerber '93 (129 votes)

Eugene Ellsbree II '55 (114 votes)

Quentin Kopp '49 (138 votes)

Malcolm Robinson Jr. '57 Tu'58 (129 votes)

Alexander Wilson '01 (128 votes)

Mr. Walters congratulated the elected slate and thanked the opposition slate for its excellent presentation. He hoped that we can unify the constitution and the alumni under a vastly improved governance system.

As a final order of business, Mr. Walters announced the date for the next annual meeting: Homecoming Sunday, October 15, 2006.

The meeting was officially adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Following adjournment, conversation between interested alumni and the AGTF continued for a period of approximately 60 minutes.

*(for a full transcript, contact Patricia Fisher '81, director of alumni leadership:  
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