



Dartmouth College HANOVER · NEW HAMPSHIRE · 03755

Office of the Dean of Freshmen (603) 646 · 2681

ALBERT I. DICKERSON
Dean of Freshmen

D. SCOTT PALMER
Assistant Dean of Freshmen

August 24, 1967

Parents Letter #2

TO THE PARENTS OF MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 1971

I have been happy to receive letters from many of you in response to my Parents Letter in April. (This was the four-page printed letter expressing pleasure over your son's admission and inviting you to write to me about him.) The present letter is the second in a series of six or seven which I shall send to you periodically through the year, supplementing your letters from your son, in trying to help you interpret and understand his freshman year experience - a unique and exciting adventure for most. To you who haven't written, I repeat the request that you send along such facts and insights as may help us do a wiser job in counseling your son.

Your son will be leaving soon for Hanover to begin his first Dartmouth year. In this letter I shall suggest a few matters which experience indicates it would be worthwhile for you to discuss with your son before his departure; and I am enclosing two items: a reprint concerning College rules and regulations from the Student Handbook 1967-68 and Sources: Their Use and Acknowledgement. I urge that you and your son read and discuss the material in the Student Handbook reprint and Sources. You may keep the reprint at home for reference as your son will receive the complete Student Handbook when he arrives.

In a report to the President of the College prepared by a Special Committee on Rules a few years ago appears a relevant statement:

"The College's ideal is the training of the 'whole man'; in striving toward this ideal, training of mind and body cannot be separated from the formation of character and the development of standards of conduct. In these two latter realms, the responsibility must perforce be shared with the home, the church, and other social agencies, and the primary responsibility must rest with each individual."

As I indicated in the pamphlet sent to your son, Freshman Year 1967-8 (and let me repeat the offer of a copy of that pamphlet for your own use, if you wish it), Dartmouth operates on the assumption that these young men have reached the point where they must begin to make their own decisions and to learn from their own mistakes. It goes without saying that this freedom to make their own choices, which in varying degrees is new to most freshmen, involves both important opportunities and some dangers.

Most freshmen are going through that stage in the approach toward maturity in which they establish the independence of their own personalities. For some, this stage brings emotional stresses. It may also cause some stresses for you, as parents, and may demand considerable understanding on your own part. This important, desirable, and (sooner or later) inevitable, stage in the progress to emotional maturity produces temporarily in some young men an assertiveness of ideas which they have adopted as their own, and especially of ideas differing from their parents'. To some parents, this phase is disturbing, seeming to nullify eighteen or so years of careful upbringing. Such a negation, I am authoritatively told, is almost never really what happens in any lasting fashion. In any event, may I bespeak, on your son's behalf, your sympathetic understanding if in the next few months or the next four years he has some hard times, or gives you some hard times, or - as is most frequent in these circumstances - both. (They not infrequently give some hard times to us at the College in the process!)

With regard to automobiles, you undoubtedly are already aware that freshmen are not permitted to own, maintain or operate motor vehicles in Hanover or its vicinity. We shall appreciate your cooperation in the observance of this regulation. The regulation purposely avoids a precise definition of "vicinity." For example, a student from western New York once inquired whether garaging his car in Woodstock (18 miles) would be in violation, or whether he should choose Rutland (45 miles). Maintaining a car in either place - or in Albany, for that matter - would have been in violation. On the other hand, a freshman who relieved a sleepy upperclassman at the wheel and drove right to the door of Topliff Hall would, if apprehended, be commended for his good judgment rather than disciplined for his violation.

The regulations governing the use of intoxicating beverages reflect the careful thinking of many here - including trustees, administrators, teachers, parents, and undergraduate leaders - concerning a problem that is older than the oldest university and indeed as old as civilization. Prohibition of student drinking has been tried on many campuses, including this one, with the widely accepted conclusion that, while campus prohibition may tend to conceal drinking somewhat, it is more likely to exaggerate the problem than to cure it, with the supplementary observation that unenforceable regulation is poor education. Our regulations represent our intention to hold those Dartmouth students who do drink (many do not) to standards of responsible, mature conduct with regard to drinking as well as other things. It is critically important that you and your son understand that intoxication is regarded and treated as grave misconduct at Dartmouth.

If I may share our experience with you, there are two areas of temptation to serious trouble for an undergraduate which can often be removed, or at least lessened, by close, continuing, straightforward understanding with his parents. One is on the use of alcohol and the other is on adherence to the strictest standards of academic honesty and propriety.

Most responsible young men will abide by their express undertakings given parents on not using alcohol at least until they are old enough to bear legal responsibility for its misuse. With respect to academic

propriety, many a young man has been saved from the tragedy of taking disastrous shortcuts by knowing, in the deep direct way which comes only through intimate conversation, that his parents do not expect him to excel - or even stay in college - at such a cost to himself.

A number of students in the recent past, who have found themselves in disciplinary difficulties for academic dishonesty, have sought to justify their actions with the claim that they did not realize that failure to acknowledge indebtedness was plagiarism. Their secondary schools permitted so-called "research themes" that were in fact a potpourri of unacknowledged ideas and quotations. Dartmouth's expectation in this regard are set forth in the two pamphlets, Student Handbook 1967-68 and Sources: Their Use and Acknowledgement, mentioned above. These are of the utmost importance. The Sources pamphlet, when first published seven years ago, was a helpful factor in diminishing markedly the number of penalties for plagiarism. To supplement this pamphlet, if necessary, I encourage you to urge your son to seek the counsel of his teachers at Dartmouth if he is in any doubt whatever about this particular academic obligation. In the discharge of all his academic responsibilities, he will be working within the climate of Dartmouth's honor principle.

The desire to excel is a worthy one, but a new perspective is required when several hundred young men who are accustomed to excelling among their school groups come together on a college campus in a kind of competition which they have not faced before. The problem of survival is not as acute as many freshmen fear; we normally lose by academic failure only one or two men out of about 800 in the first two terms; and almost invariably this is the result of immature use of freedom rather than any inadequacy of ability or preparation. But excelling is, by definition, for the few; and the A's and B's to which our students have become accustomed in secondary school are sparingly granted by college instructors.

During the last two years, concern about the experimentation of young people with LSD, marijuana and other psychedelic agents has been widespread. Newspapers and magazines have been full of articles on the subject, some of them making alarming estimates of the number of young people of high school and college age who at one time or another have engaged or will engage in such experimentation. There should be no uncertainty among Dartmouth students and their parents about the College's position on this subject. I call your attention to the following statement in the Student Handbook.

"The use or possession of any narcotic or hallucinogenic drug in any form (other than prescribed by a physician) is prohibited. Separation is considered the appropriate penalty."

We are indebted to Doctors Farnsworth and Prout of the Harvard University Health Services for a recent analysis of the physiological and psychological dangers of hallucinogenic drugs, a reprint of which you will find enclosed. College students inclined toward experimentation should also be fully aware of the severe punishments provided by federal and state statutes for the use, purchase or sale of such drugs - especially the sale or giving away of narcotics. For example, New Hampshire law provides a

mandatory sentence of 5-10 years for sale or gift of marijuana or any narcotic drug; courts are specifically forbidden to lighten or suspend such sentences. And there should be no uncertainty about the College's obligation to cooperate fully with law enforcement agencies.

The matters discussed in the preceding paragraphs - drinking, academic honesty, and experimentation with drugs - are probably not problems for your son; but a talk about them rarely hurts; and even one Dartmouth student saved from a grievous mistake makes it worth mentioning questions which for most will never be a problem.

I believe that your careful consideration of all the College regulations, jointly with your son, can be helpful to him, to us, and to you.

We must honestly face the fact that the opportunities of any college to exercise a controlling influence on the habits and deportment of individual students are limited, however determined may be its efforts to make all of its institutional influences good ones. One area of conduct in which this is true, among many others of great importance, is that of a man's consideration for other people, wherein the habits previously developed in home and school tend, with occasional exceptions, to continue dominant in college.

At a somewhat superficial level of consideration for others, I might mention the amenities of letter-writing. Faculty advisers have reported to me with understandable shock that some freshmen whom they have invited to dinner have failed even to acknowledge the invitation; and a larger number neglect to give appropriate expression of their appreciation afterward. A parting reiteration from parents to sons of what has been inculcated in the home in these matters might be in order.

If I thought it would do any good, I would urge you to urge your sons to organize their lives at college in order to get adequate sleep. However, I have about concluded that nothing that you may tell them or that I may tell them will have any direct or immediate effect. For most freshmen, their first college year is the first time in their lives in which nobody has paid any attention to the time they go to bed. Many of them, therefore, spend their first college months trying to outdo one another in "late booking." Many of them appear in my office for conferences looking sleepy, pale, and bleary-eyed, ready to boast about how little sleep they get, about the number of "all-nighters" they've put in during the past week. Sooner or later, they discover that this does not really pay off in grades or in any other way; but experience seems to be the only way they discover this. Surveys conducted by the student radio station continue to show that freshmen stay up later than upperclassmen.

Certainly learning the mature use of freedom is the greatest challenge of the first college year. The most valuable wisdom your son will gain during the coming year will be learned in the process of making the many kinds of choices that he will have to make from day to day.

Few of the choices made during Freshman Week are irrevocable, but one of the unchangeable decisions is the question of enrollment in certain of

the ROTC options available at Dartmouth. Your son, therefore, should have the benefit of all your thinking on this subject before he leaves for college. As I have said to a number of you who have asked my advice with regard to your son's decision, the decision is such a thoroughly personal matter that no college officer can properly undertake to make this decision for your son. We make every effort to provide you with all the relevant information. The pamphlet ROTC Programs at Dartmouth, which was sent to your son in May, deserves his and your careful consideration.

To you mothers and fathers who are planning to accompany your sons to Hanover at the opening of college, I extend an invitation, on behalf of the Green Key Society and the Interdormitory Council, to a reception for freshmen, their parents, and faculty advisers on the lawn of Baker Library on Monday afternoon, September 18, at 3:30 o'clock. This may give you an opportunity to meet your son's faculty adviser, although you should anticipate that some advisers will not have returned to the campus by this date. (Lest those of you who cannot come fear that your son will be "out of it," I should add that the sons not accompanied by parents are always in the majority.)

The Hanover Inn is undergoing renovations which will severely limit its accommodations through the fall. To provide lounge facilities, the College will open a "Parents Lounge" in College Hall at the following times:

Saturday, September 16	Noon - 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, September 17	Noon - 8:00 p.m.
Monday, September 18	9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

To you fathers, may I suggest that you circle February 16-18 on your calendars as Freshman Fathers Weekend. This is an occasion arranged and conducted by the officers of the freshman class, and in due course their invitation will be sent to you.

Let me now introduce my associates in the Freshman Office with whom you may be having contacts during the year when you write or visit.

The Assistant Dean of Freshmen is Scott Palmer. He was graduated from Dartmouth with cum laude honors in international relations and attended the School of Political and Administrative Sciences, University of Chile, on a fellowship. He was awarded a master's degree in Latin American Studies by Stanford, and subsequently spent two years in the Peace Corps, teaching at the University of Huamanga in Ayacucho, Peru. While at Dartmouth he won the Barrett Cup, given to the student who contributes most to student life at the college, and the "Manners Makyth Man" award for his conduct on the football team. Mr. Palmer was an All-Ivy League end in 1958 and captain of the varsity crew.

Mrs. Frederick Brock is Assistant to the Dean of Freshmen and my secretary. The Registrar of Freshmen is Mrs. Hayward Dow. Mrs. Wayne Allard is our receptionist and office secretary.

I am afraid that this has been a pretty solemn letter, for the most part, and this is hardly appropriate because there is a great deal that is fun in the freshman year and not a little that is funny, both for the freshmen and for people like you and me who will be sharing their experiences vicariously. You will find some lighter notes in later letters, a number of which have been contributed by parents who have responded with humor to the challenges of being fathers or mothers of freshmen.

We had one such from a '68 parent even before the son's arrival:

"Rarely is a parent asked to write about his own child so I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without a reply to your kind invitation. I don't want to tell you too much about Hank because I would rather he come as a complete surprise.

"From your letter I gather you already know much more about Hank than we do. Of course you can't know that he can put up a tent in record time and follow that feat by pumping up two air mattresses simultaneously - one with a hand pump and the other with a foot pump. He tried doing three at one time (blowing into the third by mouth) but that proved too slow. He can crack open a coconut with proficiency, and he has an uncanny sense which enables him to disappear whenever there is any work to be done around the house.

"Naturally we love him very much. Are you sure you're ready?"

We were ready for Hank and his 800 classmates, and we're looking forward to your son and his.

Sincerely yours,

Albert D. Dickerson