Part I: Provost Helble Introduction

- Lisa Adams, Co-Chair of the COVID-19 Task Force and an associate professor of medicine at the Geisel School of Medicine; Caitlin Barthelmes, Director of Dartmouth’s Student Wellness Center; and Eric Ramsey, Associate Dean for Student Life, will join today’s conversation.

- This webcast was postponed due to unrest in the U.S. Capitol on January 6th. Yesterday’s events remind us that even long-standing institutions are fragile, and must be treated with care and protected if they are to be preserved and strengthened. At Dartmouth, we value the freedom of dissent — peaceful, respectful dissent. Ensuring that each can thrive is the work of a university community like ours. At this moment, that job has never been more important.

I. COVID-19 Updates

A. In our last conversation, we noted that rising infections nationally would make Winter challenging, even as vaccines are distributed. In New Hampshire, vaccines will first be distributed to healthcare workers and the elderly.

B. Our current COVID-19 testing rate is currently 0.11%.

C. As of last Tuesday, there are 392 active cases in Grafton County — nine times higher than October.

D. We would like to remind the Dartmouth community that cases are rising, and it means that if the disease begins to spread rapidly at the college we will need to make changes — this may mean more restrictions. There is no other way forward in a pandemic.

E. This week, we became aware of a cluster of three undergraduate students that tested positive for COVID-19. These students are resting comfortably in isolation and are receiving medical care.

II. Winter Term COVID-19 Testing

A. Students, faculty, and staff on campus will be tested twice per week.

B. Arrival testing will be conducted in Leverone Field House.

C. Starting January 25th, testing will be moved to Thompson Arena for the rest of the term to support athletics’ needs for indoor space these next few months. To accommodate, Dartmouth will provide transportation to Thompson every 10 minutes from 10am to 3pm, and from mid-afternoon to early evening. More details will follow.

III. Research

A. Data collected by Vice Provost of Research Dean Madden shows that, from April to September 2020, funding from external sources increased by 40% compared to the same time period in 2019. Additionally, there were 149 additional proposals submitted this year.

IV. Winter Term Activities

A. The Dartmouth Skiway is now open, with the Winslow Lift operating today.

B. We now have the outdoor programs and rentals office active in the Hanover Country Club for operations. 50 sleds and tubes will be there for student use.
C. Plans for grooming cross-country trails on the golf course remain intact — we could use a little more snow, but we are certain it’s coming.

D. There will be 12 gas-fire pits around campus.

E. There will be ice skating on the Green. Weather permitting, the rink will be completed by the end of the month.

F. The Hood Museum will have in-person activities available. Registration will be open on their [website](https://www.dartmouth.edu/) as the term progresses.

G. We remain interested in your thoughts and ideas for safe activities. The dedicated email for submissions is [WinterTermSuggestions2021@dartmouth.edu](mailto:WinterTermSuggestions2021@dartmouth.edu). Suggestions are not restricted to outdoor activities.

**Part II: Questions from the Audience**

I. Given that there has been a recent rise in cases, growing by the day, will Winter term be fully remote? When will you decide that?

   A. As of today we do not expect to change our plans. Most classes will be fully remote, and some will offer a hybrid component. However, we are monitoring the situation on a daily basis and if the disease begins to accelerate to the point that cases on campus become difficult to manage, we will have to reassess our plans. If cases affect our ability to operate, we will communicate openly as best we can.

II. Last term, you mentioned that the threshold at which Dartmouth would reconsider residency was a 1% positive testing rate. Is that still the case?

   A. Yes, that’s still our threshold. This will not trigger automatic shutdown, as it is one of several parameters that we are watching. However, if we reach this number, we will reevaluate our operations and ability to manage on-campus residency.

III. Will Dartmouth be distributing vaccines just as it is doing testing or will faculty, staff and students have to go to a local doctor or clinic?

   A. Right now it appears that it is the latter. Vaccines will be provided by Dartmouth Hitchcock or through individuals’ local primary healthcare providers.

IV. What was the rationale for increasing the number of surveillance tests this Winter?

   A. There were some recommendations that came from public health authorities that two tests a week is good practice to keep disease transmission under control and to keep the community safe.

   B. The decision was made through consultation with public health authorities and our own epidemiologists over the course of October, November, and December.

   C. We are increasing testing in Winter because compared to Fall, infection rates are higher and continually increasing. Additionally, we know that people will spend more time indoors in Winter, which will increase the probability of infection.

V. Will Dartmouth offer vaccinations to the partners and spouses of essential employees?

   A. At this point and time, no. As with testing, our plans are to offer vaccination to employees. However, as of now it appears that Dartmouth will not be the entity deciding who in the
community will obtain the vaccine, and so a spouse or partner’s access to the vaccine will be
determined by the same parameters that determine a Dartmouth employee’s access.

Part III: Guest Conversations

I. Dr. Lisa Adams
   A. This past month, a newer strain that has been characterized as more infectious but not more
      virulent has been detected in the U.S. Does the current test detect it as effectively? Are we
      tracking it? Does its emergence mean that we should be thinking about things any differently?
      1. The emergence of this new strain is indeed worrisome. We’re still collecting
         information that it contains about 17 mutations, and is 50-70% more infectious than
         the original strain.
      2. Our current tests do detect the new strain, and the vaccines do provide protection.
         However, we are still learning.
      3. As we did in the Fall, we’ll continue to monitor the data and adhere to public health
         measures.
   B. Are there any details on vaccination that you can provide? When will a vaccine become
      available to the Dartmouth community?
      1. The short answer to this question is that New Hampshire has been rolling out the
         vaccine with a focus on reducing deaths and preserving the healthcare system. So, we
         have phases.
      2. Those in high-risk categories — whether by occupation, age, or medical history — fall
         under the first phase that will be completed by the end of March. In the second phase,
         vaccines will be distributed based on age groups, with 65-74 being first. Staff of K-12
         schools and childcare centers will also be included in this phase. Therefore, the
         majority of the Dartmouth community will be vaccinated based on age groups.

II. Director Caitlin Barthelmes
   A. Can you tell us about your role supporting community wellness?
      1. Our goal is to empower our community to thrive. We know we can’t accomplish this
         in just one department, so we really are thankful to have such strong partners across
         the entire institution. It truly takes a village to elevate the wellbeing of the
         community.
      2. In our department we invite folks to pause — to think about how things are going for
         them right now and to check in with themselves and those around them. We hope this
         empowers students to own their wellbeing and become ethical leaders that help the
         community thrive.
   B. Has anything changed in the way your office approached your work in the face of virtual
      learning?
      1. We’ve invested a lot of time and energy into thinking creatively about how we can
         increase access to opportunities.
2. Our website now acts like a virtual student wellness center. Here you can access things like recordings of yoga and meditation and publications on wellbeing guides, and can register for our virtual events.

C. We’ve been emphasizing the importance of receiving feedback from the community — a lot of the changes taking place this Winter came from conversations with Student Assembly and student leaders over the course of the Fall. What feedback have you received from the community you interact with? What will you be doing differently?
   1. In addition to tracking the website utilization, we concluded Fall term with a survey to all the folks who participated in our offerings. The preliminary data is positive, and many noted that the chance to check in with themselves was the most helpful.
   2. In Winter term, we will be training even more listeners, so students who want to connect with others will have more opportunities to do that. And, we will be launching a mindfulness 15 day challenge, starting in conjunction with when undergraduate students will return to campus to take advantage of the reflective space that comes with the quarantine period. This is for the entire community — undergraduate, graduate, on-campus, and off-campus

III. Associate Dean Eric Ramsey
   A. Could you start by telling us about what activities and offices fall within the scope of your department?
      1. The Dean of the College Division, broadly speaking in my own language, is about building positive, inclusive community and connections. We do this through student governments and groups to help students create their own experiences. So what this means for student life is that we do this through student leadership, student governance, and student organizations, and really agency in their own decision making. We take great pride in being a group of professionals behind the scenes supporting students to do their best and create their own experience, not only to Dartmouth but through Dartmouth and a lot of that is through exploration. Whether that is through the Student Center, Outdoor Programs, or Greek Life, the traditions that student life supports there are many opportunities and it’s also across the state of New Hampshire. We get to support the Moosilauke Ravine Lodge, 12 cabins on the second college grant, and all across the state of NH.
   B. Could you comment on a few of those things: how is the Moosilauke Ravine Lodge operating, if at all, this winter? How are we going to be utilizing the Collis Center over the course of the winter? Maybe you could even say a bit more about the firepits I had mentioned because I certainly am interested in the details and I am sure that since I’ve heard about it from students that it’s of interest to the student community as well.
      1. We’ll start with the Collis Center, where I am sitting right now. At the Collis Center this past term, we had a team of students, staff, faculty, and student government leaders focused on how to make sure that Collis remains central to Dartmouth’s daily life. In the fall, that meant a lot of supportive informal spaces, whether it’s study spaces on the second floor, opening of the Collis Cafe, etc. As we look to winter, as we
return upper-level students back on campus, we really are excited to return to a more normal Collis Center. Collis Commonground will return to hosting programs and events; One Wheelock will be central to the experience. We will also be expanding our offerings on the Collis Patio. We will have a Winter Wonderland on the Patio, with fire pits, adirondack chairs, and places for students to be able to congregate, even in the coldest times.

2. In Outdoor Programs, they have been critical to making sure students find community in the fall term. That’s not going to let up in the winter. The Dartmouth Outing Club will remain central to Dartmouth’s life as well. We will be opening Winter Wonderland North, which will be at the Hanover Country Club, and we are committed to providing low to no-cost programming for students. We want people to be able to embrace our northern woods location, whether it’s Nordic skiing, where beginner skiers can get a lesson for free, or sledding down the hill, or just talking as they go on a snowshoe across the golf course. Those are important things. I hate to correct you Joe, but we will not be opening one ice rink but two ice rinks on the Green so we can make sure as many people in the community can enjoy the ice rink and winter socializing as much as possible.

3. One last thing I will talk about is Greek Life. As we approach this winter term, many of our Greek organizations will be re-activating, and we will be hosting recruitment this winter (virtual) for both our Greek organizations and many of our Senior Societies. Those are important community spaces and we are excited to support those as well.

Part IV: Questions for the Guests

I. Dr. Lisa Adams
   A. Will people who receive the vaccine need to continue wearing masks, social distancing, etc?
      1. It is absolutely essential that even after someone is vaccinated they continue to practice good public health measures. The reasons for this are that we know the vaccine protects against symptomatic disease — we don’t yet know if it protects against asymptomatic disease and transmission. As we gain more information, we may be reassessing. Additionally, 95% efficacy is not 100%, so there is still risk of infection.
   B. If a student received their first dose of the vaccine at home, will they be able to receive the second dose on campus?
      1. Since the State is handling distribution, we would have to work directly with them to provide the second dose.
      2. We would have to ensure that the second dose is of the same brand as the first dose, whether it be Pfizer or Moderna.

II. Director Caitlin Barthelmes
   A. What are you doing for the mental health of students? What is the suite of services that are being offered to students who are coming in increasing numbers to seek help?
1. When it comes to crisis and students in need of support for mental health, this is handled by the counseling center. Dartmouth offers 24/7 on-call services for students regardless of where they are.

2. As for my department, we do not provide clinical services and are not substitutes for therapeutic interventions. What we know is that things that can bolster wellbeing are tools that can be used as gateways to a therapeutic path. This is a hard time for all of us, so anything that can help relieve stress can help improve mental health in general.

III. Associate Dean Eric Ramsey

A. Will there be a limit to the number of people who can participate in Winter activities at any one time?

   1. I think it’s important to note that we are in the middle of a global pandemic and we need to be very mindful of interactions. So, we will be capping college sponsored activities to 25 and informal activities to 9. There is some dialogue right now about larger outdoor events, but the details are still being worked out.

B. How is Student Affairs working with Students, during this public health crisis, to promote stress relief and well-being, both through the Student Wellness Center, and through Collis?

   1. Most of what we are implementing this Winter came directly from students. So, I would really encourage students to reach out and give us your ideas. We are interested in making Dartmouth its best this term, and we need your help.

   2. If you want to be involved in helping open Collis and the ice rinks, reach out. There are jobs available.

Notes by Robin Martinez ‘23