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Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Community and Dartmouth's World
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WOMICK: I'm Cally Womick, and I'm here in Rauner Library. Today is May 20th, Monday, May 20th, 2013.

So to get us started, why don't you introduce yourself and talk about your life before Dartmouth, where you grew up.

WANG: Great. So, hi. I'm Rachel Wang. I am a '13. Previous to Dartmouth, I lived in Madison, Wisconsin, for about, I would say 14 years of my life, and then prior to that I was in Santa Barbara, California, for a year, and then prior to that, I was in China, where I was born.

So my parents were both professors in China, and my dad got a research position in California and decided to move to the U.S. temporarily. When they came, they really enjoyed the freedom and liked the idea of being free from university politics back in China, and so they decided to stay on.

And so I grew up in Madison, Wisconsin, which, now I've realized, is very different from Dartmouth in many ways. I think it's also very different from Wisconsin in many ways. It's very much a liberal bubble, and Wisconsin is not. And I grew up, you know, very happy.

And I chose Dartmouth because I was really looking for a community. I had a great network back at home, and I sort of wanted to have the same kind of feeling in college, and so Dartmouth seemed like the perfect size between, like, a huge state university and a really small liberal arts college. And when I came for my tour, my tour guide basically sold me on it, and I wanted to be her. So that's how I decided to come.

WOMICK: Okay. So how long before you decided to apply did you visit?

WANG: So I visited spring break of my junior year of high school.

WOMICK: Okay.

WANG: Mhm. So I did it before I had applied to any other schools. Dartmouth was really interesting. It was spring break, but it was, like, one of the coldest days of the year. Mother and I were underdressed and were, like, shivering. And, like, you know, throughout the tour it was just like—we were just, like, “Why are we here, walking around when it’s so cold outside?” But what was really interesting was how committed the tour guide was. And she was, like, dressed less than we were, which—I think no one was prepared for the weather, and so she was shivering, but she was just, like, so committed and energetic. And we were, like, “You know, if someone can show that dedication under such extreme temperatures, like, this is probably a good place to be.” So—

WOMICK: So what was it like coming here as an official student?

WANG: So I think my first introduction to Dartmouth was very much the Trips experience. And I was, like, reflecting on, you know, my Dartmouth experience, and I think Trips was integral to my freshman year and to the subsequent years. I did moderate hiking, so J65, for the record. [Chuckles.] I think it was harder than I expected. Of course, I didn’t know what moderate hiking was, coming from Wisconsin. It’s pretty flat, so hiking is usually not so strenuous.

I think we went through some really interesting experiences—you know, walked through a beehive, you know, had extreme temperature changes at the top of a mountain, and throughout the experience, I made some of my best friends here on campus, and I think that is absolutely what I am so grateful for. And that was really the start of forming, you know, that community and then the start of other communities here on campus for me. Yeah, I love my tripees [chuckles], especially Cally Womick. I know—I don’t know if this is, you know, improper, but—

WOMICK: [Chuckles.] So what about orientation and fall term?

WANG: Orientation doesn’t really strike me as hugely memorable. I just remember that it was very much a time for me to get to know my freshman floor. And I think that probably is what I most remember, was, you know, that first day, having my mom drop me off and then having her leaving and going to

that first floor meeting. It was pretty scary because this has been the first time that I've actually left home. I've not really done it for summer camp or any other reason, and so, you know, not being with my parents and being faced with all these strangers for the first time and, you know, living with someone I didn't know was really scary.

But I felt, you know, a sense of connection to these, you know, 20-some other people. They were all very nice to me. And pretty soon, you know, I was able to form relationships and, like, feel like I belonged on my floor.

WOMICK: Cool.

WANG: Mm-hm.

WOMICK: So what sort of things were you involved in over freshman year, and who were you hanging out with?

WANG: So the people I was hanging out with were mostly my tripees and my freshman floor. The activities I was involved in: I did some, you know, random jobs here and there. I, like, tutored for a term. I worked for Green Corps just to dabble in things. I did a WISP internship in computer science, even though I'm an econ major now.

I think the most memorable experience is—probably was working with Student Assembly and being involved with, like, the academic affairs side of things as well as Parliamentary Debate. That was a pretty large experience for me.

WOMICK: Do you want to talk about those?

WANG: About Parli or SA?

WOMICK: Either. Both.

WANG: Okay. So Parliamentary Debate was something I wanted to do because I had done debate in high school, and so it was very much one of those things where I was, like, you know, *This is something I'm really excited about. It gives me a great opportunity to meet people on campus as well as travel outside of campus.* And there were some really great

upperclassmen on the team, who, you know, I really looked up to.

So I did it. You know, I think the success of it was mixed, but throughout the process, I really learned a lot about myself, and I learned a lot about the school and what it means to be a student at Dartmouth. And so—it's also, like, the kind of the style of debate, parliamentary debate, is very different from public forum, which is what I did in high school. So parliamentary debate is very much on the fly. You know, you sort of don't know what's ahead of you. Someone is presenting a case, and then you just have to defend yourself. And so that kind of—you know, I guess, being able to create arguments with very little time is something that I learned and really appreciated learning, 'cause I think that is something you have to learn to do okay here at Dartmouth as well, 'cause you might find yourself in either a debate in classroom or outside of classroom, and it's really good to, like, think through things quickly and also just, like, having a good understanding of the world before you get into a conversation like that.

Student Assembly was really fun. I also met some really, really great people there, but I think what it showed me was sort of, like, the difficulties of working with the D-Plan. You know, you have lots of leaders in the group who are great and then left, and so committees sometimes fell apart when, you know, leadership wasn't there. Or just dealing with the politics in general of Student Assembly. I was pretty active in, like, campaigning for a candidate who lost with very small margins, and so that was pretty difficult for everyone. And at the end of the day, I think for us it was unclear how much effect we were having on campus, and perhaps the most difficult was working with upperclassmen who were in charge of Student Assembly, who weren't necessarily aligned with, like, the visions of the freshmen. So I think we had a lot of attrition that first year, where a lot of really involved first-year students didn't stay on afterwards.

WOMICK: Mm-hm. What about sophomore year?

WANG: Sophomore year. Sophomore year was pretty big, for a few reasons. I was accepted to join COSO, the Council on Student Organizations, my freshman spring. And so

sophomore year was when I officially became a member. And I think that was a great experience, working with student organizations and dealing with, you know, the challenges that arise from it.

For me, you know, looking at all the proposals of the events that students were putting on was really exciting. I loved to know what was going on on campus, and I loved working with the board. I think the board—you know, COSO is not as well known to a lot of people, but the way I would describe it is just a lot of people with some really interesting experiences and personalities coming together, trying to best support the groups but not always agreeing initially. And just, you know, being able to have those conversations and deal with potential conflicts that might arise was really exciting. And I think that's the kind of energy and, you know,—I don't know, a different side of campus that I really appreciated being a part of, and I'm very honored to be a part of it.

I think the second thing that was sort of major about sophomore year, or the start of it, at least, was joining a sorority. So I joined Epsilon Kappa Theta, and I joined partially because I, you know, didn't really know what was going on and it just happened. But I think more importantly, I really wanted a community of women and especially upper-class women that I could look up to. And that's definitely what I found in Theta: lots of incredibly strong women, a strong community that really works to build people up and, you know, foster interesting conversations. And I gained a lot of confidence through that experience. I also, you know, push myself a little bit more to, like, be more open and to engage more with others, and I think that was a huge positive result of joining a sorority.

I think the last thing was I was coming sort of into my own with academics. I struggled freshman year with classes. You know, it was really strange because I didn't quite know why I was struggling. It wasn't like the classes were, like, so incredibly challenging that I couldn't do it or, like, you know, that somehow I was just so far behind. But it was—I felt like every time I tried, I was just coming short of, like, where I wanted to be. And so that was sort of the constant struggle I had.

And sophomore fall, I sort of hit my stride, being, like, *Wow!* Like, *This is the level of work I have to do. This is the kind of work I have to do to really get the most out of my experience.* And so that felt very liberating.

WOMICK: Mhm. Yeah. What about junior year?

WANG: Junior year, I was off in the fall. I took an internship at the Department of the Treasury, in the Office of Economic Policy, and that was something that I wanted to do because I was an econ major and was interested in public policy at that time, and so during sophomore summer I Googled those two words together plus internship, and this was one of the top hits on Google. And so I thought, *You know, I'm gonna apply for it.*

And I was lucky enough to be accepted, and so I went with Rockefeller funding. And that was a really great experience. I lived with someone that I found on Craigslist, you know. She was a Spanish woman, single mom, who was, like, a revenue manager for Marriott. And we had great conversations about, like, you know, I guess being a single parent and, like, the hotel business. And for me it was definitely, like, a stretch to put myself to live, first of all, with someone I didn't know, but secondly, to live independently and cook for myself, manage my own budget, you know, manage my own transportation, all of that. And I think it was incredibly rewarding.

I learned so much. And working at the Treasury itself, too, was great. For the first time, it really showed me that the government is not some, like, body that just, you know, exists. It is comprised of people: people who have families, people who are really passionate about their work. And so I was impressed by how hard-working and intelligent the people at my work were and actually how non-hierarchical it was. It was very much—you know, sure, people had different positions in the office, but people also respected the opinions of people who weren't as high up. And so, like, as an intern, I would have the ability to have input, and I could do work for other people and, you know, people talked to me like—and I called everyone by their first names. And so I think in that way, it took a lot of the mystery out of the government for me, and that experience was very positive.

I also got to do some cool things, like go to the White House for the Christmas tree time, where you could just, you know, go to each room and each room is decorated differently, with different Christmas trees and ornaments, and it was, you know, gorgeous. And it was sort of interesting because, you know, invitations to those are, like, given out sort of mysteriously, but, like, at the Treasury, the office got a few. And the administrative, you know, assistant basically told the interns, like, “You guys get first dibs.” Like, you know, “This may not be the case in every office, but in our office like, you’re not doing this for pay, and, like, this is the least we can do.” And so I think that was an opportunity that maybe wouldn’t have arisen in a different context, but for us it was great. So all the interns went, and it was a really great experience.

WOMICK: Sounds wonderful.

WANG: Yeah. There’s lots of—you know how Bo’s the family dog? There was lots of, like, I don’t know, like, miniature structures of Bo. And I remember, like, in an interview, Michelle Obama said something about how, like, he was confused when he, like, went to the different rooms and, like, saw, like, you know, replicas of himself. He’s, like, *What’s going on?*

WOMICK: [Chuckles.]

WANG: It was really adorable.

WOMICK: Anything else about junior year?

WANG: Mmm? Anything else about junior year? It was really good. I think one thing that I actually have left out, talking, I realize, is that I was a UGA for two years for a freshman floor. And so that has actually been an incredible learning process for me, being able to not only be responsible for myself but be responsible for my community, and also being *more* responsible for myself so that I can actually be responsible for my community is something that was a great learning process. You know, starting off in sophomore year, I felt like I was barely older than the people I was supposed to be a mentor to, and being able to balance the different aspects of my life as well as my job, also being able to have that

relationship where we're friends but at the end of the day, you know, I will be the one who, you know, will be responsible and say, like, "This is not okay behavior" was a really good learning experience. And that really shaped who I am, how I think about things, and I think it really impressed on me the importance of sort of modeling what I preach and being accountable to my own actions and being accountable for the people around me.

And one thing I am learning senior year is being able to, you know, admit when I have done things wrong, being able to tell other people when I think something is wrong, and really creating and fostering this sort of culture of accountability I think is something that I learned as a UGA, and is something that I'm trying to practice now.

WOMICK: What about senior year?

WANG: Senior year. So senior year has been, like, really interesting. I think coming on in the fall, I was so excited to, you know, see people again after not seeing many of them for a while because of the D-Plan. And I decided to room in a five-person suite with three of my freshman floormates as well as just another really great friend. And, you know, being able to, like, figure out how that worked and having that work was really great. I felt like I was very much included in this community. I continued to, you know, have connections with people who really mattered to me, and that was great.

Throughout this time, though, I was dealing with the fact that my parents had decided to move to China, and so—we had lived in the U.S. since I was four, and my dad decided to take a job that was, you know, a dream job of sorts, and so he and my mom decided, "Okay, we're just gonna move to China." The move was very quick. They moved I think in July. And so basically, when I came back to school, they were already in China. And I had decided by then to take winter term off to go spend time with them.

It was sort of interesting, the decision to take winter off, just because I guess with that I sort of killed the existence of my public policy minor 'cause of some classes I needed to take during that term and just, like, some other personal decisions

of, like, jobs that I could no longer accept because of my D-Plan. That was hard.

But I spent three months with my parents in Asia. I spent a week in Seoul, Korea, to hang out with my roommate. I think that experience was really great because it taught me that relaxation is awesome. I think I've gone through Dartmouth, and, you know, I've always been, you know, very committed to being busy, and, you know, I was always doing things that I enjoyed. I think that was something that I emphasized. And I thought, though, that the only way I could be happy was to be busy, that, you know, if somehow the busy, the crazy all died down, then I would just be sad and bored.

However, I was not bored or sad during the winter, and I think that's something that shocked a lot of people. [Laughter.] You know, I come back, and friends ask me, like, "So, like, were you doing research? Were you doing, like, an internship?" And I'm thinking, like, *Why?* Like, I just chilled. Like, I, you know, went to the market with my mother, I took walks, I biked around. You know, I read a lot, I did Zumba off of DVDs I had gotten for myself. Like, you know, I traveled quite a bit. You know, I went hiking, I ate lots of coconuts.

WOMICK: [Chuckles.]

WANG: Like, these are just great experiences, and I don't know why we always have to be so busy. And so I was thinking, like, *This is the longest vacation I'll have before I retire, so I might as well [laughs] make the most of not doing anything.* And so that was really, really good for me.

So then I come back to spring term, and all of a sudden everything is ramped up again, right? It's, like, so much work. It's, like, *How did I ever do this, ever?* But it's been really exciting and fun. I think one thing—you know, I'm grabbing a lot of meals with different people. I have standing meals with people I really care about, and it's nice to connect in that way.

One other thing is, you know, this spring term has been pretty controversial. There's been a lot of things going on campus with the protests, with people questioning the Dartmouth experience, and I think for me it's been really

liberating to think—I've spent a lot of time thinking and talking, and I love those conversations, and really being engaged with people has made this experience really fun and challenging. And I think for me sort of being alive is having the ability to think and to care and to question.

And so that has been spring term for me. It's not quite over yet. I have two weeks left, I think. The next few days will be spent writing a few papers, and then the week after that will be spending time with the people I care about most. So—I don't know. Sort of bittersweet, at this point.

WOMICK: Yeah. So thinking about all of your time at Dartmouth, would you say that there is such a thing as the, quote, "Dartmouth community"? And if so, who's a part of it?

WANG: Mmm. Interesting. I think that we often talk about the Dartmouth community, and I think in some ways, I think the Dartmouth community exists in the sense that, you know, if you are a staff, faculty—you know, any kind of worker here or student here, you know, in a sense you are part of Dartmouth. If you have, like, a @dartmouth.edu e-mail address, you're a part of Dartmouth. Now, whether or not that's a community is a different question.

But I think—you know, we see that—if, like,—we talk about, like, the community principles and stuff. So I think there is some existence of a community, although then I guess this gets into the question of what do you define as community. And I think that for me, a com—the community exists in the sense that we should hold each other accountable. We need to respect each other, and we need to make sure that everyone feels like they can participate to the fullest here.

So I think ideally there would be a community like that. I think there's a lot of problems that prevent it from fully existing now. So I think it could exist. I think it doesn't fully exist currently. But I also think for me, with my own communities, I try not to think about having an entire community 'cause I just think that's sometimes very exhausting, to think about my community as, like, this huge thing, so I think about, like, my community as, like, you know, my suite with the four people I live with; smaller communities, like, you know, the

organizations I'm a part of, like, COSO or, like, you know, being part of Theta.

And then I think about the Dartmouth community as a whole because, like, this something that I am a part of and I care about. But I think—I don't know, this is a hard question for me. I don't think I'm doing it justice, but I think there should be a community. I just don't think it fully exists,—

WOMICK: Mm-hm.

WANG: —I think is the answer. I think that's different than how I started, but.

WOMICK: Yeah.

Do you think that there are any people who have an easier time fitting in at Dartmouth and people who have a tougher time?

WANG: So I think the question really relies on what does it mean to fit in at Dartmouth, and oftentimes our definitions of fitting in are, like, what we perceive to be true or, you know, what we perceive—so I think—and it's really interesting because I think everyone struggles with fitting in, finding a community here, especially your first year, and I think that perhaps a lot of people who appear like they fit in don't actually fit in, and then the people who feel like they don't fit in are actually fitting in quite well. So I think that's sort of a difficult question, just like the, like, "Can you be happy at Dartmouth?" kind of question.

Personally, I feel like I do fit in. I think that I have found really, really incredible relationships, and that has helped me. I think my friends are what keep me happy and strong here at Dartmouth. And I definitely have problems with, you know, parts of our culture and parts of, you know, how things are run, but I think for me, the best way to address those is to talk about them and not pretend that they don't exist. And I think through talking about them in some ways, I've helped communicate it to the people that I care about.

You know, sometimes their behaviors, by the people with whom I have these really strong relationships, there are

behaviors that concern me and make me upset. And the best way for me to feel better about them is addressing them and talking about them. And I've seen positive change from that.

And so I think on a larger scale, like, for students, if we see something wrong, like, it is okay to talk about it, and, like, eventually things are starting to change, do change, and I think that's something we need to be aware of as well.

WOMICK: Mm-hm.

WANG: So, wait, what was the start of your question? What was your question?

WOMICK: Do you think that there are people who have an easier time fitting in or a tougher time?

WANG: I think so. Yeah. I think, though, that also rests on your definition of what it means to fit in.

WOMICK: Mm-hm.

WANG: Yeah. And so I think some people make it harder for themselves to fit in, but I think, at the same time, maybe they'll have a more rewarding experience at the end of the day. So I don't think fitting in is necessarily a goal that I aspire to, you know? Like, I don't know if I fit in by any traditional sense of the word, but I'm happy with my experience.

WOMICK: Mm-hm. Have there been any times over your four years here where you've felt like you didn't belong at Dartmouth?

WANG: I think I've—so I don't know if I've ever struggled with—I think—I think—so I think the times when I struggled most with belonging are in relation to the drinking culture 'cause I'm not a huge drinker, and I very much dislike sort of this atmosphere of, you know, binge drinking that you see. That's very prevalent in communities around this campus. And so I think when I think about the drinking culture, when I think about, you know, people who—I think maybe people not understanding why they drink so much and who aren't taking care of their bodies—I think that's something that, like, makes me very uncomfortable and isn't something that I

want to associate with. But, at the same time, I don't think that necessarily erases my feelings of belonging here. I just think it's, like, I don't want to belong in that context, but, at the same time, like, I recognize that there are lots of spaces on this campus where that is not an emphasis as well.

And so I think I haven't struggled as much with the sense of belonging because I think belonging is something that I choose, and so, you know, I choose to stay at Dartmouth, and so—and Dartmouth chose to accept me, so I think, like, you know, those reasons are enough to ensure that, like, I belong here. Now the question is, like, whether or not—and because I choose to be an active participant at Dartmouth, I think that helps with that. So then the question is, you know: What makes me happy here at Dartmouth and then how can I make it so that I'm the happiest that I can be? Yeah.

WOMICK: Okay.

How do you think Dartmouth has changed during your time here?

WANG: I think—overall, I think students have less of an interest in student governance. I think this last year has been pretty transformational in the sense that I think people are really questioning what it means to have a Dartmouth experience. I think freshman year was very much, like, *Everyone is happy at Dartmouth. Dartmouth is great.* And then, you know, different things with, like, the recession and stuff really hit us. I think that was a huge deal, so that—you know, now money is more scarce. Like, the school as a whole has more challenges.

So then the question is, like,—then you see a lot more of the, “Oh, Dartmouth is bad,” “Dartmouth has all these problems,” and I think—yeah, I think that's the biggest change, is sort of the disappearance of this mirage of, like, perfection and the sense that everything is peaceful and happy and great.

WOMICK: Mm-hm.

WANG: Personally, I think that it's okay for Dartmouth to be more realistic. I think that is perfectly acceptable and better than the alternative of, you know, everything is peachy. But I also

think, like, it's important for us to focus on, like, what makes us good and great and build on that as well as, you know, target what makes us not so great.

WOMICK: Mm-hm.

What about you? How do you think you've changed during your time here?

WANG: [Chuckles.] I think I have grown up a lot. I think Dartmouth has been an incredible learning experience. Academically, you know, I've definitely become a better writer. I have learned to articulate my thoughts a little bit more coherently, I hope. And I've just really enjoyed lots of the classes that I've taken and, you know, learning economics, 'cause that wasn't something I really liked in high school but somehow really enjoyed in college. So I don't know. That was pretty exciting to discover.

I think, really, in other ways that I've changed: I understand the world a little bit better now. I was very, very sheltered in many ways, most ways, coming from Wisconsin, where, you know, people are nice and, in the winter, if you can't shovel, your neighbor will come and plow the sidewalk for you. You know, that was sort of the atmosphere I came from, where people came—my friends had stable family lives, and, you know, none of my friends really struggled with, you know, being able to afford things.

Coming to Dartmouth, I think you have a lot more diversity, and so with that comes, you know, more opportunity to learn, and so I've learned from friends who, you know, maybe struggle with their relationships with their parents. I've learned about friends who, you know, have to work really hard to make Dartmouth more affordable for them. And I appreciate a lot more of what I have in my life. I've learned to really seek out the people who build me up and make me a better individual, who make me question my life, I think.

Okay, so I'm not gonna get emotional here, but I think one of the biggest questions someone asked me was, "If you died tomorrow, would you be happy with what you did?" And so—and, I don't know if you know who asked that question to me. That was actually, like, a really upsetting question for me

when I heard it 'cause I was, like, *Oh, my God! Like, I'm so busy and I don't know if I'm happy with everything that I've done. And, Oh, God! I don't want to die tomorrow!*

So [chuckles] this is just terrible! Terrible question. And so I think when she, you know, asked me that, I was very much in sort of denial of this question. Like, *I don't wanna answer that. It's, like, obnoxious.* [Laughter.] But I have thought about that question really, really hard, and I can say that, you know, if I did die tomorrow (heaven forbid!), I would be happy with who I am and how I've lived. And I think part of that is, you know, the fact that I've learned how valuable it is to take care of myself, to take care of the people around me, to know that, like, who I am is not necessarily what award I win or what new organization I join but, like, what I get out of those organizations and, like, how I choose to spend my time and that, you know, maybe lying on the Green for a few hours under the sun, talking to a friend from classes is just as important as, like, you know, studying during those hours. You know, just, like, being able to think about what I do and, like, to live really intentionally, I think, has been the biggest lesson at Dartmouth, to be able to make a decision and say, *I made that decision because of X, Y and Z, to say, like, I choose to do these things, and, like, it is what I choose and what I want.* Having that kind of ownership over my life is something that I've learned at Dartmouth.

I think some other great things that Dartmouth has taught me is, like, the ability to just, like, be silly and to dance around and to be crazy, 'cause my friends at home, —like, their idea of a good time is, like, playing board games, which I think is great. I love board games. But I also love, like, a dance party.

WOMICK: [Chuckles.]

WANG: And I think that's something that Dartmouth has really taught me to embrace, to be—you know, to own the fact that my dance moves are weird or, you know, to own the fact that, like, I can hug trees around campus and, like, people just ignore me. Like, it's great.

WOMICK: [Chuckles.]

WANG: So I think having that, having people recognize the quirky aspects of my personality and appreciate me for it has been great. So Dartmouth has been an incredible learning experience. I've learned so much. I can go on and on about how much I've learned from Dartmouth. You know, in many ways I think it was a loss of innocence, but college is a loss of innocence. You just learn more things about the world that aren't as happy and, you know, rainbows and leprechauns or whatnot. But at the same time, I'm really glad I've learned those lessons. I'm coming out a stronger individual, and I think I will leave, you know, a stronger individual.

WOMICK: Looking ahead past graduation, what do you think your involvement with Dartmouth will look like in the future?

WANG: So I will be moving to DC after graduation, and I am hoping to, you know, still stay connected with a lot of the people who are currently in DC or will be moving to DC. I think there's a huge Dartmouth community in the DC area, and so I definitely want to be a part of that, just on an individual relationship basis.

I am considering joining the DC club also, and I think there is a lot of value to staying connected, just because I've gained a lot from Dartmouth, and I hope that Dartmouth continues to improve, and I think as alums, you know, we sort of have that responsibility. You know, if we are unhappy now with how things are going or if we're happy now about how things are going, we have a responsibility to make sure that others, you know, can either have a better experience or that negatives experiences don't exist anymore. So my goal is to stay connected.

I'm not quite sure how the DC club will be. I think for me probably the strongest involvement will still be through personal relationships, so from the relationships of people in DC and also the relationships of people who won't be, 'cause I have a lot of friends who will not be close to me, and I think that is my number one goal, is to make sure I'm close with the people who are not in DC.

WOMICK: Is there anything we haven't talked about yet? I know there's a lot. Four years here.

WANG: Hmm. [Pause.] I don't know. Are there any questions about me that you don't know yet?

WOMICK: [Chuckles.] I'm sure there are so many. I guess I'd be curious: What advice would you give to someone who is considering coming to Dartmouth or maybe someone who's already committed to coming here next year?

WANG: I would tell them that "one of the first lessons you will learn at Dartmouth is a lot of the things you apply to will reject you," so rejection is something that happens at Dartmouth pretty often. I would advise the person to pick themselves up and keep on trying. And I think that is sort of a lesson that I've taken from Dartmouth, is that, like, if you keep on trying, eventually opportunities open up that suit you and that, you know, sometimes you're not accepted for an opportunity but, looking back, it wasn't the right one for you anyway. And so being able to be strong and say, like, *I'm just gonna try my best*—I think having a good attitude is number one at Dartmouth—you know, having the attitude of—like, being willing to connect with others, being willing to stand up for yourself, to try for new things, but also to not assume that you know people when you first see them, 'cause one thing about Dartmouth students is we are never what we look like from the outside, you know. And I am continually amazed, impressed, shocked, you know, by what I don't know about people that I thought I knew really well.

And so I think having an open mind, having a great attitude and being really excited will take you far at Dartmouth. I think, you know, in order to be an instigator of change if that's something you want to do, you don't have to be down and say, *Oh, like, this is so terrible*; you can be positive and excited and say, *This is what I want. This is what I'm committed to.*

You know, if you don't want to do anything on the policy side of Dartmouth, you just want to go through being a normal student, that's okay. Like, it's okay to be a nerd. It's okay to study. In fact, I recommend it.

WOMICK: [Laughs.]

WANG: You're gonna do better in your classes if you study. That's something I learned.

WOMICK: [Laughs.]

WANG: You know? [Laughter.] There's just, like,—there's just so much. I think just, like, common sense is important. "Take care of yourself. Don't drive yourself nuts, 'cause if you do, the people around you will be nuts, too." You know, it's fun being nuts, but, like, it's not sustainable as a lifestyle. [Both chuckle.]

So basically: "Have a good attitude, take care of yourself, take care of the people around you, being mindful of what you want, making sure that you're making decisions that are best for you. Also staying connected to your family and the people who created you and were positive forces in your life before Dartmouth is really important."

Yeah, I feel like if, like, a first-year student came to me and asked me that question, I would just give them, like, a five-hour lecture. [Both chuckle.] Or a five-hour conversation. I would try not to lecture, but there's just so much—and you know what? I think part of it is you're never going to really understand until you've lived the experience. I think,—you know, I've always asked for advice from people, and it doesn't really set in until, like, I've gone through it and lived it and maybe made some mistakes and then had to deal with it.

And so I think one thing is sort of, like, "Yeah, you're gonna listen to my advice today, but you might just make a mistake tomorrow that is something I told you not to do. However, sometimes you need that experience." And so it's valuable. I guess the number one thing is "don't keep on making the same mistake. It's really easy to do that. It's really easy to justify making the same mistake over and over again. Try not to do that."

One thing that *has* changed, actually, in the last four years is, like, the food options here.

WOMICK: [Laughs.]

WANG: I don't know if anyone's talked about this, but I'm super passionate about food, and so I find it interesting that, you know, for us, we lost Home Plate, but what I'm starting to realize is, like, the 1953 Commons is pretty exciting. Like, I eat dessert every day and, like, fresh-baked cookies, which—I don't know, I just find that super exciting, and the fact that, like, I can make my own stir-fry. And, you know, like, piece together, like, 50 different items on one plate is, like, both, like, the most overwhelming thing ever for a meal but also, like, a pretty exciting thing. So I will miss the dining halls when I leave.

WOMICK: [Chuckles.]

WANG: Cooking is great, too. I try to do some of that. I've gotten really good at cooking breakfast over the last few years.

WOMICK: [Laughs.]

WANG: Cooking BFAB for a variety of organizations does that to you. [Chuckles.]

WOMICK: Yeah, I bet it would. [Laughter.]

WANG: Are you good at cooking breakfast?

WOMICK: Not BFAB type breakfasts, no.

WANG: [Laughs.]

WOMICK: That's a whole different level.

Is there anything you'd like to add before we turn the machines off?

WANG: I guess I don't know who will be looking at this or using this. Hopefully it's been helpful, but the other thing is I'm always willing to be reached, so if you have any questions about my experience or, you know, want to talk to me, feel free to reach me. I think probably the alumni office could deal with that. Oh, that's so terrifying! But anyway, feel free to reach out to me. I'd love to hear your stories, know what you're up to. So yeah.

WOMICK: Great. Thank you.

WANG: Thank you. I appreciate this.

[End of interview.]