Hello ‘24s!

This is Kellen Appleton ‘20 and Jake Klein ‘20, the Director and Associate Director of the 2020 First-Year Trips program – the College’s largest and oldest pre-orientation program. You haven’t met us yet, but we’ve been working since November to prepare to welcome you to Dartmouth.

And we want to say congratulations and WELCOME! We’re absolutely thrilled that you’re joining us. We feel so lucky to have you as part of our community and have the chance to get to know you, your stories, and your faces. In whatever way or fashion you come to Dartmouth, we know that it will be a different, better place because of you. And we can’t wait to see it.

Before we say too much more, we want to send our love, support, and positive vibes to you and your loved ones. The transition to college is often challenging, but we know that that might not be the most challenging thing you’re facing these days. Dartmouth might seem very far away right now, as you may face immediate challenges that test your resolve in new and uncomfortable ways. We’re thinking of you all and sending positive thoughts, and whenever, however you get here, we’ll be glad to see you.

First-Year Trips (or “Trips,” as we like to call it) is a student-led, pre-orientation program that has welcomed incoming students to Dartmouth, the spaces around us, and our collective community since 1935. Hundreds of student volunteers work to help you discover supportive and meaningful relationships, encourage reflection, create connection to Dartmouth and the spaces around us, and introduce you to new people, perspectives, and communities here.

Traditionally, we have the privilege of holding Trips in the incredible outdoor spaces surrounding the College; this year, we are disappointed that won’t happen. Our first priority is to provide a safe, equitable, and accessible program to your class, and we cannot in good conscience hold our traditional outdoors program. However, at its heart Trips isn’t about going outside—it’s about community, reflection, and connection, and we are ecstatic to welcome you to the Dartmouth community by collaborating on experiences that deliver those goals.

Each year (in fact, for the past 85 years exactly), we strive for each first-year student (that’s you!) to feel welcomed and empowered as you join us. Countless students and staff work creatively, passionately, and tirelessly to ensure you enter Dartmouth equipped with the feeling that you belong and are valued here (spoiler: you do and you are), and a support network of students and other members of the Dartmouth community that care about you.
We intend for this year to be no different. We are confident, and excited, that we will be able to help you find your place at Dartmouth, no matter what the world looks like, or where you are in the fall term. What’s important to us is that however you come to Dartmouth, you come knowing that we’re behind you the whole way. While things might be uncertain, given the outpouring of love and support we’ve witnessed from the Dartmouth community, we know you will be well supported.

We’ll send you more details as we have them. Stay healthy. Stay well. We can’t wait to meet you.

Much love from so many of your unmet friends,

Kellen Appleton ’20
Director, DOC First-Year Trips 2020

Jake Klein
Associate Director, DOC First-Year Trips 2020