

## Transcript – Views from Dartmouth President-elect Jim Yong Kim

### PRESIDENTS AND PRECEDENTS

01:13        *James Wright, President of Dartmouth*

It's a tremendous honor to follow in the footsteps of Jim Wright. And I think that there's been a transformation on the campus over the last 10 years. Diversity is one of the things we've talked about. But the number of faculty, and the faculty-to-student ratio, is really a great accomplishment. Also the physical structure of the campus is just beautiful. I also think that Jim and Adam Keller and Barry Scherr have handled the economic crisis just beautifully. You know, one of the things that I noticed right away in the communications that came from them is that [the] first priority was a strategic focus on ensuring that Dartmouth could continue to do what it does so well into the future despite the economic crisis. Leading with strategy, leading with priorities, leading with commitment to excellence was very striking. And it didn't happen at all institutions, I can tell you. Following in Jim's footsteps is really a great honor, but it's also going to be a terribly difficult thing to do. Jim and Susan have created such a wonderfully welcoming atmosphere for students, faculty, alumni, and even for people like me. We'll do our best to continue in that spirit, but it's going to be a difficult act to follow.

01:22        *John Sloan Dickey, President from 1945-1970*

John Sloan Dickey, before he became president, spent a lot of time outside of the academy, and was, in fact, in the State Department when Franklin Delano Roosevelt was president. He came to Dartmouth, and one of the things that he said [was], "The world's troubles are your troubles." Now that is really extraordinary for a president of an Ivy League institution to say that to his students. It wasn't that he just said it. In teaching the Great Issues course, he brought those troubles into the classroom, and every senior through the entire senior year sat and listened to some of the greatest thinkers, some of the most controversial thinkers, in the world at that time. So I think that's extraordinary, to bring that kind of sense of connectedness to the rest of the world into a college setting. I mean, this was a man who not only was deeply engaged in the College, and deeply engaged with all the seniors every year, but he was engaged with the world.

01.37        *Ivy League milestone*

One of the people I called prior to the announcement of my presidency is Ruth Simmons. Ruth Simmons is one of my heroes. She's the president of Brown University. Ruth is the first person of color to ever lead an Ivy League institution. And it turns out I'll be the first male person of color to ever lead an Ivy League institution. Now that's extremely humbling for me. But I have to say, you know, one of the things that I've learned from working in some of the poorest countries in the world is that my ethnicity is only one part of my identity. You know, one of the most

important experiences of my life was going to Haiti and being called “blanc,” which means white, but it really means foreigner, and what it really means is that you are a person who has access to resources in education and so many other things. Whatever color you are—I’ve seen African Americans be called blanc in Haiti. And again, the distinction is that you are a person who has access to things. So, ethnicity is important. We don’t ever want to deny it. But, you know, race is just one of the many things that we have to consider. I don’t think we’re in a post-racial age, but I think my appointment as president of Dartmouth gives some indication of how far we’ve come.