

The Vision of the Dartmouth Outing Club

The Dartmouth Outing Club is student driven. This goes beyond having students simply lead the activities of the DOC. Instead, students are ultimately responsible for every step in the planning, execution, and success of each activity. Specifically, the students set the goals, arrange logistics, determine the qualification level for participation, and make pertinent decisions in the field. Students are also responsible for member club budgets, elections, and even the core structure of the club. This stands in contrast to activities that are student *run*, where the ultimate responsibility lies with a college employee. The extent to which the DOC is truly student driven makes it unique, and these ideals are what we cherish most in the club.

The DOC chooses to create leaders through a peer review process. This is a key aspect that sets us apart from similar groups and is crucial because certifications alone do not make a safe leader. Students must prove to their peers that they can be trusted with responsibility for others' safety. Peer review of potential leaders is a self-checking system that couples subjective review of an individual's judgment in the field with objective assessment of technical skills. This practice requires all members to take ownership of the club, benefiting both the club and the individual's experience.

The DOC is an independent organization. Students work closely with the College's Outdoor Programs Office for logistics, support, and mentorship. OPO also acts as a liaison between, and advocate for, students and administrators. The OPO staff is able to communicate on equal footing with faculty and administrators. Additionally, OPO deals with such club business as memberships, vehicles, finances, and PE classes. Finally, OPO retains an institutional memory beyond the scope of an undergraduate career. This allows ideas and traditions to endure as student energy waxes and wanes. It should be clear that OPO does not run the DOC; it facilitates the DOC's endeavors. The DOC's trust in OPO depends upon student involvement in OPO's affairs, including budgeting and hiring.

The DOC provides an opportunity for experiential learning to the entire student body. The breadth of trips the DOC offers – from students, for students – ranges from whitewater kayaking to winter trekking, cabin respites, rock climbing, and beyond. Students with no outdoor experience prior to matriculation can graduate competent and confident leading their peers in the outdoors, fostered all the way by their peers. The DOC strives to provide students a sense of place beyond campus. As stated in its constitution, the DOC furthers "the educational objectives of Dartmouth College and its principle of community, by stimulating an appreciation of nature and environmental stewardship... and above all, the development of such personal traits as initiative, integrity, tolerance, self-reliance, and leadership." These qualities remain as integral to the DOC's vision as they were at the club's founding in 1909.

The DOC is active and expansive. In the last year alone, students have run the largest Freshman Trips program in the country under student management from start to finish. Students completed construction of Harris Cabin, the single largest student construction in the DOC history. The DOC also built a timber-framed sugarhouse, a shelter at Velvet Rocks, and a solar greenhouse - all student-driven projects. The clubs of the DOC planned and executed four spring break trips: climbing in Nevada, kayaking in North Carolina, trekking in the Gila Range, and hiking in the Canyonlands of Utah. All told, ninety students participated, and interest exceeded the spots available. The DOC also funded international expeditions to six continents including trips to the Himalaya, Zambezi, Patagonia, and beyond. Closer to home, clubs have taken hundreds of students out on beginner trips in all activities, and seen membership increase to approximately 1,500 undergraduates.

The above statements outline the fundamental aspects of the DOC, without which the club would cease to be the nationally unique organization that it is.