The 4th International Polar Year (IPY) 2007-08 covers two full annual cycles of field research from March 2007 to March 2009 and will involve thousands of scientists from over 60 nations examining a wide range of physical, chemical, and social research topics. The John Sloan Dickey Center for International Understanding and the Institute of Arctic Studies are organizing Dartmouth’s participation in IPY 2007-08 under Project ALE: Arctic Change: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue Between the Academy, Northern Peoples, and Policy Makers. The Institute of Arctic Studies, together with collaborating institutions in the U.S., Canada, Iceland, Greenland, and Europe, is leading a set of related projects that promote an interdisciplinary discussion about climate change, Arctic peoples, and international policy. Dartmouth IPY activities include special lectures and workshops, public exhibitions such as this one, organizing and hosting the 2007 Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW) meeting, and development of other international conferences and research initiatives.

“...The world’s troubles are your troubles... And there is nothing wrong with the world that better human beings cannot fix.”
—John Sloan Dickey, President, Dartmouth College, 1946 Convocation

“We are all in this together. Yet our perceptions are different. This is the challenge.”
—Aguakvály, President, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Greenland

Public lectures and events are an essential feature of IPY and many noted speakers are featured in Dickey programs to raise awareness of polar issues and climate change.

At the core of Dartmouth’s IPY activities are public exhibitions to promote interest and understanding of the polar regions. The major exhibit, ‘Tunut Traditions within a Changing Environment’ was designed with Dartmouth’s Hood Museum of Art, the Rauner Special Collections Library, and the Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center. This exhibit explores Inuit and western perspectives on climate change.

The Rauner Library exhibit, ‘Navigating the Northwest Passage: Just Missing The Ice’ featured materials from the Smithsonian Collection on Polar Exploration and portrayed changing images of the Arctic as they are expressed in the Inuit art. The exhibit featured complete the Northwest Passage and the implications of its opening in the near future. Due to meeting ice in the Arctic, crossing the once breakable Northwest Passage may become commonplace.

March 2007 brought the Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW) meetings to Dartmouth and to the U.S. for the first time. Hosted by the Institute of Arctic Studies and the Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory (CRREL), ASSW was a kickoff event for the IPY. U.S. National Science Foundation Director, Dr. Arden Bement, Jr., opened the major international meeting.

The Greenland Initiative joins interns of the Dickey Center and Arctic Studies with the Inuit Circumpolar Council, the University of Greenland, and the Greenland Home Rule Government through faculty and student exchanges, collaborative research projects, and conferences on topics such as Arctic change and security issues.

Beginning 200 years ago with footsteps of “Dartmouth Spy” John Leedyard, Dartmouth has moved to the forefront of polar studies as illustrated here in our IPY exhibition, Polar Connections. Imagine where Dartmouth will be during the next International Polar Year 2007-8...