Many thanks to all our Friends of Dartmouth Figure Skating who make our team possible! We use Friends donations for coaching, travel for competition, and other necessary team expenses. Our annual solicitation form is enclosed with this newsletter. If you prefer the convenience of donating online, just visit our team website www.dartmouth.edu/~skating and click on “Donate Online.” Your Friends of Dartmouth Figure Skating donation is tax-deductible, is included in the Campaign for the Dartmouth Experience, and will be used exclusively for the support of the Dartmouth Figure Skating Team. As a restricted gift, it is not part of the Dartmouth College Fund, which comprises unrestricted gifts used across the College. We appreciate all of your support!
A Letter from the Captains

Dear Friends of Dartmouth Figure Skating,

Welcome to the start of the 2009-2010 Collegiate Figure Skating season! We welcome our new team leaders, Annie Saunders as Treasurer, Vanessa Szalapski as Programming chair and Alexandra Mahler-Haug as Alumni/Donor Relations chair.

Starting this year, we have begun a new training program, that includes off-ice conditioning as well as on-ice training. Under the direction of our coach, Jacki Smith, we hope to build on our team’s solid foundation and past successes.

Not only have we reached out to our skaters, but we have also begun to embark upon more community outreach activities in the Upper Valley. We plan to host our second annual “Come Skate With Us” day for skating youth and any interested supporters. We also continue to present bi-annual exhibitions and team fundraisers in the fall and spring. As always, local supporters are most welcome to join us!

This spring, we were excited to attend the Dartmouth Figure Skating Team’s ninth Collegiate Nationals. Our successful third place finish at Nationals this spring was made possible by every skater on our team, who all earned points towards our total score. In May, we were honored to attend the Wearsers of the Green induction ceremony in Boston. Members of every national championship team, as well as individual national champions and our retired coach, Loren McGean, were inducted into the Dartmouth Athletic Hall of Fame.

Despite of our recent successes, we still have a lot of training and hard work ahead of us. With that in mind, we look forward to our new season, new freshmen and new leadership!

2009-2010 Co-Captains
Natalie Falsgraf ’10 and Rory Grant ’11

Coach’s Update

I would like to begin by saying what an honor it is to be working with the Dartmouth Figure Skating Team. Intercollegiate figure skating is still relatively new and I am amazed at all of the opportunities to skate and learn that have arisen in recent years–just 10 years ago there were only half as many schools participating. I am so excited to be a part of it all, especially at a place like Dartmouth, where academics are stressed as much as extracurricular activities.

It has been a fun year getting to know all of the student-athletes, as well as learning the ins and outs of Dartmouth College. I couldn’t have asked for a better group of girls during my first year of coaching at Dartmouth. They are not only hard workers in the classroom and on the ice, but they are also truly wonderful people.

Last year, our season got off to a slow start at the Cornell University competition, where we came in 4th. But we rallied at both the University of Delaware and University of Pennsylvania competitions, placing 3rd at each and earning a spot at the 2009 U.S. Intercollegiate Championships, hosted by Colorado College in Colorado Springs. Despite a freak snowstorm in the middle of April, we all arrived safely and our student-athletes all skated well to a 3rd place finish, behind Boston University and the University of Delaware.

Looking forward to next season, we have a relatively small team of very strong skaters. We are also hoping to build on the ice dance events, as we were very strong in those in the past. We have been in contact with some incoming freshmen, who could be really good assets to our team. I believe we have a good shot at regaining our national title, and we will be making every effort to do so. Looking ahead, the 2010 U.S. Intercollegiate Championships are slated to be held in the Eastern Conference and we are hoping to host a competition at Dartmouth for the 2010-2011 season.

I knew when I took this position in October that I had big shoes to fill. Dartmouth is known for its dominance in intercollegiate figure skating and I am excited to help the team continue that reputation. I hope to help give all the skaters a supportive environment to achieve their skating goals while attending such a highly competitive academic institution. After my first season coaching at Dartmouth, I would like to especially thank the 2009 class – Cynthia Chen, Julie Corwin, Zoe Dmitrovsy, Rachel Feder, Kate Schmidt, and Sarah Zimbler– for their help was immeasurable. I would also be deeply remiss if I didn’t also thank Joann Brislin, our honorary figure skater, for all of her help and support.

I can’t wait for 2009-2010 season–go Big Green!

Jacki Smith
This past spring, skaters on all of the five-time national championship teams were honored at Wearers of the Green. The event, hosted by the Boston Alumni Association at the Westin Copley Place hotel in Boston, MA, recognized students, alumni, and coaches for their outstanding athletic achievements. Founded in 1984, the event takes place every five years, and athletes from all sports including skiing, rowing, cross-country, swimming, sailing, squash, and ultimate Frisbee, among others are recognized. In order for a Dartmouth figure skater to be recognized, he or she must either win an individual national title or be a member of a national championship team. With five national championships under our belts, graduates from 2005, to current skaters in the class of 2011, were honored at the event that took place on Saturday, May 16, 2009.

Truly a stunning event, it was a chance for past members of the team to connect with current ones and to celebrate the outstanding achievements of our young team. The night began early for many of us, jumping on the shuttle bus in Thompson Arena parking lot to Boston. The event, which lasted from 6pm-10pm, granted us the opportunity to mingle with the other athletes being honored and to eat a scrumptious meal. 169 athletes, 4 coaches, and 5 honorary wearers that included President and Mrs. Wright, were inducted. While many athletes were honored, the figure skating team definitely asserted a strong presence; we had the most members inducted of any team! Four team members were also recognized individually for winning a high level freestyle event at nationals. Katie Collins ‘06 won gold in high level dance, Nicole Newman ‘08 and Katherine Kalaris ‘07 won senior and junior long, respectively, at the 2007 Nationals hosted by Dartmouth, and Tenley Brownwright ‘10 won junior long test track at the 2008 Nationals hosted by the University of Michigan. President and Mrs. Wright recognized each athlete individually, presenting him or her with a special 14k gold pin or pendant beautifully engraved with the green Dartmouth “D”. The evening ended all too soon after the ceremony and the numerous mandatory team photos.

While it was truly a great honor to be recognized along side so many outstanding athletes, for me, there was an even greater sense of accomplishment not associated with the award. The event brought together the skaters from seven different classes, all of whom have contributed to the success of the team. It required seven years of skaters who practiced until their muscles ached, finished homework on the road, laughed together, cried together, bit their nails together, and cheered together to achieve not one, but five national team titles. I am so proud to call myself a member of the Dartmouth figure skating team. It is my hope that we can continue our legacy in the sport and induct many future Dartmouth skaters!

Vanessa Szalapski ‘10

Wearers of the Green
2009 Inductees

Rebecca Broccoli ‘05
Jeanne Franzzone ‘05
Victoria Lee ‘05
Lauren Morgan ‘05
Katherine Collins ‘06
Lydia Gokey ‘06
Rachel Bloch ‘07
Celia Kujala ‘07
Katherine Kalaris ‘07
Adrienne Lee ‘07
Kirsten Murray ’07
Severina Ostrovsky ‘07
Holly Ponichtera ‘07
Tegan Vay ‘07
Hallie Damon ’08
Daniel Dittrick ’08
Cynthia Chen GR ’08
Nicole Newman ’08
Julie Corwin ’09
Zoe Dmitrovsky ’09
Rachel Feder ’09
Katherine Schmidt ’09
Sarah Zimbler ’09
Sarah Alexander ’10
Alexandra Arnold ’10
Tenley Brownwright ’10
Natalie Falsgraf ’10
Jessie Stefanik ’10
Vanessa Szalapski ’10
Jenny Friedman ’11
Rory Grant ’11
Alexandria Mahler-Haug ’11
Loren McGeen ’92

Past and present members of the Dartmouth Figure Skating team at the 2009 Wearers of the Green induction ceremony in Boston, MA
Dear Friends,

This past 2008–2009 season was a transitional year for the Dartmouth Skating team, with the exit of longtime coach Loren McGean and graduation of 5 seniors. The coaches, Jacki Smith and Kristin Meyer were a strong, technical, and organizational presence for our skaters. We were aided by the valuable leadership of Joann Breslin, serving as our liaison with the Athletic Department.

The Co-Captains, Natalie Falsgraf and Kate Schmidt, worked well with the new organizational changes and led the team to solid finishes in all East Coast competitions. While we didn’t claim 1st place in any competition this year, the team still managed to keep the Cornell team at bay and qualify for 2009 U.S. Intercollegiate Nationals, where the team finished 4th.

After the 2009 Intercollegiate Nationals, a new slate of officers was elected this spring to support Co-Captain Natalie Falsgraf ’10 for the 2009-2010 season: Rory Grant ’11 (Co-Captain), Jenny Friedman ’11 (Secretary), Vanessa Szalapski ’10 (Programming Chair), Annie Saunders ’12 (Treasurer), and Alexandra Mahler-Haug ’11 (Alumni/Donor Relations Chair). We will work closely with this talented group of organizers to make the team successful in the upcoming season.

Fundraising this past year was a tough challenge, due to the abysmal economy. The Advisory Board, specifically Gordon Thomas, worked closely with the Co-Captains to raise funds. Similarly, fundraising will be an even more significant focus for this 2009-2010 season. We look forward to your continued financial support of the team.

On a very tragic note, Laura Jessiman ’80, mother of skater Margaret Jessiman ’12, Dartmouth hockey player, Hugh Jessiman ’06, and Dartmouth Skating Team Advisory Board member was killed in a hiking accident in Scotland this summer. Our hearts and deepfelt condolences go out to the Jessiman family during this time of loss, pain and sorrow. Laura was very much a wonderful presence at many of the competitions this year and a great fan and supporter of the team.

Looking forward to this upcoming season, I know all of you will join me in eagerly supporting this wonderful team. On behalf of the Advisory Board, we sincerely hope that we can count on your future dedication, especially during these difficult economic times. I wish every skater the best of luck in during the upcoming months!

Edna Grant
Skater Update: Alina Everett ‘12

My freshman summer was incredible. I had the opportunity to live in Sun Valley, Idaho, a year-round resort that is known for its skating facilities (outdoor and indoor!) and for its professional ice show. During my freshman spring, I applied to work in the outdoor ice arena, which offers programs for skaters of all levels. I’ve been coming to Sun Valley every year since I was about six, so the coaches and people there comprise a community in which I already feel at home.

I was hired for the summer to be a coach for the new beginner lesson program, which means that I would teach anywhere from two to six group lessons per day, depending on the number of beginners who request lessons. Our program then feeds into the established private coaching system.

When I wasn’t teaching, I took lessons from my dance coach in Sun Valley, and tested dance and freestyle. I also had the honor of skating with the Sun Valley Ice Show, which happened every Saturday night. The show featured a different guest star every weekend, from Johnny Weir and Evan Lysacek to Brian Boitano and Alissa Czisny. Since I was in my first year of the show, I was considered to be a paid intern. As an intern, I was a part of the cast and rehearse with the cast, and I replaced anyone who was gone, so I was in about half of the summer’s shows.

If I do the show in the future, I will automatically be a full cast member. Professional skating has been an eye-opener in terms of my skating future beyond Dartmouth; being part of the college team definitely has strengthened my skating and has opened doors to a skating world I never really considered until now.

I was skating in the show and coaching until early September. I was also in a fashion show on ice and worked hard on tests for a late-August session. I missed the Dartmouth Figure Skating team and am so pleased and excited to be back on campus as a sophomore this fall!

President Kim talks Figure Skating

In July 2009, Dartmouth College President Jim Yong Kim spent his first week in office meeting students, faculty, and other administrators around campus. In one meeting, President Kim met with representatives of varsity and club sports, a group of six student-athletes that included Alexandra Mahler-Haug ‘11, a member of the Dartmouth Skating Team.

One of the only two club sports teams represented at the meeting, it was a great honor for the Figure Skating Team to be included. The meeting, which was meant to give President Kim perspectives on being an athlete at Dartmouth, gave Alexandra an opportunity to draw attention to both club sports and the Figure Skating Team, as well as set the stage for future interaction. In an interview with The Dartmouth daily newspaper after the meeting, Alexandra noted that, “The fact that [Kim] came right to us allows for a more effective and honest dialogue.” Hopefully, this meeting was the first of many such opportunities for student-athletes—and figure skaters in particular— to meet with President Kim and discuss life as an athlete as Dartmouth.
Greetings from Berlin!

Over the past year, I have been a Bosch Fellow in Germany. I spent the fall of 2008 working on microfinance and microinsurance projects with the German Development Bank and then spent the spring writing an article on microinsurance and working with an IT startup in Berlin. For the summer, I have been based in Berlin but working on research projects with a team in Edinburgh, Scotland, where I have also been spending time. It’s been an exciting year and I am very grateful to the Bosch Foundation for making it possible.

Over the past few months I have had a chance to catch up with Dartmouth figure skaters—past and present—in Berlin and beyond! This spring, I visited the German LSA students and met Alex Mahler-Haug ’11 and on a trip to the US, I got to catch up with Amy Stetson ’00 and Celia Kujala ’07 in New York City. In June, Emily Schaller ’02, now a Hubble Fellow, came to visit me in Berlin after a data-collecting trip to the Canary Islands. We visited Budapest together before meeting up with Paola Peacock-Friedrich ’03 in Paris. Along with another friend, we celebrated Emily’s bachelorette party in Paris and then drove to Dijon where all 3 of us participated in our first even inline marathon. The competition was tough, but we had a blast and, in my opinion, skated with a lot more style than all those French speed skaters!

In the fall I will return to the U.S. to begin my doctoral work in Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School. While I am sad to leave Berlin, I am looking forward to being back in New England, getting back on the ice, and visiting Hanover regularly. I am so proud of the next generation of Dartmouth skaters and look forward to cheering them on in the coming season!

Ariel Stern ’05

Thank you for your continued support!

To receive periodic updates on the team throughout the 2009-2010 competition season, ask to be added to our email list by emailing us at: Figure.Skating.Club@dartmouth.edu

www.dartmouth.edu/~skating/