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Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Community and Dartmouth's World
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WOMICK: Just to get us started, I'm just going to put us in a time and a place. My name is Cally Womick, and I'm here in Rauner Library. Today is Monday, February 10th, 2014.

So why don't you introduce yourself and talk about where you grew up?

VOLL: All right. I am Eirik [pronounced AYE-rick] Voll or Erick, as I usually say here. I am a senior in college, a member of the Class of 2014, and I am from Norway. I grew up in Oslo, the capital of Norway, and I had never been to the United States before coming here.

WOMICK: What sort of schools did you attend, growing up?

VOLL: What sort of schools. Public, private, those kinds of things? Private schools aren't really a thing in Norway. There's not really such a thing, or there is but it's a fringe thing. I always went to state schools throughout my schooling. We divide our school years up to elementary school, up to seventh grade; junior high school, eighth to tenth grade; and then high school after that. And for the first ten years I would just be assigned to the school closest to my house. And for high school I had to travel a bit to the city center, a bit more sort of semi-prestigious, although normal public, state school in the city center.

And when I was 17 I got a scholarship to attend an international boarding school in Wales in the U.K., called the United World College of the Atlantic, where I met people from all over the world, and that's sort of a chain of very idealistic international boarding schools that very many international students at Dartmouth went to. I think almost half of the international students in my year went to one of these thirteen schools. Actually, Dartmouth loves the UWC, as it's more commonly referred to as.

WOMICK: So how did you end up at Dartmouth? What got you interested in coming here?

VOLL: Well, I got in, is the most important factor, I suppose. But I really wanted to come to the United States, first of all, because, you know, basically everywhere in the world except the U.S. and Canada—or certainly everywhere in Europe, you would apply for college. There's no such thing as a major. You apply for college, and you apply for a course, you know? And that's the one thing you study for your entire time, and you don't have much flexibility in terms of choosing classes and all that. I feel like I'm still too small a child to know what I want to do with my life, so the liberal arts system seemed a lot more appealing to me, where I could pick and choose and postpone the decision about what I was actually going to do with my life a bit longer.

Actually, if I hadn't gotten into Dartmouth, I would have studied law at the University of Oslo, and I would have been a lawyer next year 'cause, you know, we don't do college and then law school. That's a very American thing, too. We just go to law school right after high school, and it takes five years. So that's what I woulda done.

And Dartmouth in particular? To be honest, it was the only college I got into. I got rejected everywhere else.

WOMICK: Really!

VOLL: That's why I'm here.

WOMICK: Okay.

VOLL: [Laughs.] Which, of course, is not a bad place to be. It is kind of a joke when I say it that way, but it's true. I only got in here.

WOMICK: [Laughs.] What had you heard about the college before actually coming here?

VOLL: Oh, that's difficult. I'm not sure that I can remember that much about it. I certainly didn't know much about it until I actively sought it out. Dartmouth College is not something

average Norwegian on the street would have heard about, right?

WOMICK: Not the average American, either, to be honest. [Chuckles.]

VOLL: Oh, really? All right. Well, I suppose, you know, you might have heard about Harvard, Princeton, but Dartmouth is, I suppose, *just* below the level of the most well-known names that are so well known that they reach across the Atlantic. But, of course, I sought it out. I really wanted to come to the United States, and I very much liked the idea of a school in a small town in the middle of nowhere. But—what was I talking about? Remind me of your question again.

WOMICK: What you had heard about Dartmouth.

VOLL: What I'd heard about Dartmouth, yes. Not very much at all until I started looking for colleges in particular and read what was on their website, mostly. I also had a pre-admissions interview with a Dartmouth alum who came to my school and sort of introduced me to a lot and then I got very excited about it. We got along really well, I think, and she seemed to sort of try to want to push me to come here. But I suppose the short answer is I didn't know very much about Dartmouth at all until I started looking for colleges to apply to, and Dartmouth seemed like an excellent choice, both in terms of academic excellence and a wonderful New England setting and beautiful landscapes and the fact that it's, you know, so small. I'll probably spend the rest of my life in large cities most likely, right? So it's nice to be in the countryside a little bit, and I really like the fact that, you know, it's so small that I always run into people I know. So, yeah, I suppose that's the important reason, or how I imagined Dartmouth beforehand. I think once I started looking into—

WOMICK: And so what were your first impressions when you arrived here?

VOLL: It's funny you asked that.

WOMICK: [Laughs.]

VOLL: Because you're the first Dartmouth student I met. I don't know if you remember.

- WOMICK: So perhaps not too good. [Laughs.]
- VOLL: No, very good. Excellent. Yeah, the first thing I remember—well, the very first thing I remember was that I landed in Boston Airport, Logan Airport, and I'd been told that there would be, like, upper-class students who were doing international orientation, who would come to meet us at the airport and show us how to, you know, get to Hanover and everything, but once I got there—I think maybe I got there a little bit later than I should have or something, and they had left for the day, I think. I'm not sure. I can't quite remember. But anyhow, nobody came to meet me. So I was outside of Boston Airport for the night. I, you know, scratched my head and thought, *Well, now what do I do? How am I gonna get to the middle of nowhere in New Hampshire?*
- WOMICK: [Laughs.]
- VOLL: And what do I see? A bus turns around a corner that says "Dartmouth Coach" on it.
- WOMICK: [Laughs.]
- VOLL: And I thought, *Maybe that bus will take me to Dartmouth College?* Yes, it did. So I sat down, and as soon as I sat down, a beautiful current Dartmouth student turned around—
- WOMICK: [Laughs.]
- VOLL: —and asked if I—no, she said, "Dartmouth?" I said, "Yes."
- WOMICK: [Laughs.]
- VOLL: "Good guess," I guess.
- WOMICK: [Laughs.]
- VOLL: The bus wasn't going that many other places.
- WOMICK: [Laughs.]
- VOLL: Then we drove up to New Hampshire, and as soon as I got off the bus there, there was a whole crowd of people

welcoming me there, too, you know, which was incredibly nice. So, you know, international orientation—they actually stood there and waited for all the buses to arrive. I got a very warm welcome. Everyone was fighting to carry my bags to my room and everything.

WOMICK: [Laughs.]

VOLL: So, yeah, that was an excellent, excellent first impression of Dartmouth, although I was completely out of it and jet lagged and thought I was gonna fall asleep any minute. But it was still a very lovely introduction or first day.

WOMICK: What about orientation? How was that?

VOLL: That was great. Well, for me it started with international orientation. I got here a bit earlier than most American students, where—well, there aren't that many international students, so that was—I suppose I got to know almost every single international student in my class because of the extra whatever, three days or so that we had. Maybe it was more. I can't remember.

But, yeah, that was excellent. A lot to take in a short whatever it was, ten days or so, where we were to be inducted into everything. But it was a great introduction, and I think they—well, they did and still do a very good job of combining, you know, useful information sessions with settings, it was easy to get to know people, and, I mean, I guess it's just the nature of the place, of the college and the small size that it's pretty easy to get to know people here, you know? I feel like I very quickly got quite a large network because you can't help but run into people all the time here.

And orientation was certainly—when I say, a venue in which everyone got to know each other. Now, of course, everyone was there for the first time, and everyone was, you know, excited to be in college and all that, so that added to the experience, too. But, yeah, I think orientation was great.

WOMICK: Did you go on a first-year trip?

VOLL: Yes, I did, yeah. Oh, yeah, that was before orientation. I skipped that part, yeah. I went on a climbing trip.

- WOMICK: What was that like?
- VOLL: That was fabulous. We hiked a lot in the mountains nearby and actually only climbed for one day, but it was mostly a hiking trip. But that was great. You know, very—obviously also a setting where it's impossible not to get to know each other. We would, you know, sleep under a tarp, packed together, all was it ten of us, or so. So very intimate and certainly a good introduction to the New Hampshire natural landscapes. Not so much an introduction to the climate that kicked in in the winter, I suppose. But, yeah, I think it's a great idea to do trips. That was certainly a way to get to know people in the beginning, too. That was very effective.
- WOMICK: Mm-hm.
- VOLL: Dartmouth does a great job with making this a nice place to be, you know. It's very hard not to like it at Dartmouth.
- WOMICK: So how do you think having those opportunities to really get to know people early on, during trips and orientation—how did that affect your freshman fall and freshman year at large, really?
- VOLL: Well, certainly if I hadn't gotten to know as many people, it wouldn't be as nice to be here, right?
- WOMICK: Mm-hm.
- VOLL: But, yeah, I very quickly—especially very quickly gained quite a large network of friends, which is easy to do here. And, of course, I kept meeting new people the entire freshman year.
- WOMICK: What about your freshman floor?
- VOLL: Yeah, what about 'em?
- WOMICK: Well, I mean, some people talk about being very close with their freshman floors, but not everyone has that experience, so I was just wondering what your experience had been.

VOLL: I was quite close to quite a few people on my freshman floor, but I haven't stayed in touch with very many of them after that, for some reason. Yeah. I suppose—I mean, I got along with them and everything, and I liked all of 'em, but I suppose—maybe just not enough to make the effort to keep in touch once we didn't live together anymore.

But, yeah, I had a great freshman floor. I lived on the first floor of Butterfield, which was probably the noisiest floor ever 'cause it's, you know, right by Webster Avenue, or "frat row," as it is more commonly known as—especially in the winter, people pass by the whole time, pass through to get to and from parties. But it was a very sociable, very lively place, so I'm glad I was there, in spite of all the noise.

WOMICK: [Chuckles.] Yeah.

How do you think your upbringing and early years affected the way that you fit into the Dartmouth community once you were here?

VOLL: Hmm. Well, I grew up in the outskirts of Oslo to parents who are a photographer and a car mechanic, and I suppose my life was quite different from what it is here, or certainly not much—I'm not sure I can draw any big connecting lines there. I don't think my upbringing in particular contributed greatly to the fact that I even ended up here, more so my high school years in Wales, for instance. If I hadn't gone to Wales, I probably wouldn't have come here, either, actually. I probably would have just stayed in Norway and studied law in Norway.

But my school in Wales was, in many senses, similar to Dartmouth because it was also, you know, in the middle of nowhere, out in the countryside, much smaller than here, even. There were only 300 students all divided over two years. So that was the setting in which I virtually knew everyone, right? Which I liked. A lot of people after two years thought, *Okay, it's getting a bit small here. I need to sort of reach out.* Well, I thought, *I really like being in a small place, where I can't help but run into people I know.* So maybe that prepared me a bit for life in the countryside.

You know, I spent my first 17 years in a relatively large city, Norway's largest city. It wasn't that large, but—yeah.

WOMICK: Bigger than Hanover.

VOLL: Bigger than Hanover. Yeah, 60 times bigger than Hanover, or so.

WOMICK: [Laughs.]

VOLL: But our entire country has half the population of—about the population of Los Angeles, I think, yeah, so—or, yeah LA. So it's a big city for us. Yeah.

WOMICK: So if you were going to explain what it's like at Dartmouth to someone else—like, the community aspect of Dartmouth, not the institutional but just what it's like to be a person at Dartmouth, how would you describe that to someone who has no idea, no basis of comparison?

VOLL: Well, I would certainly emphasize the fact that it's small and few people and, you know, small both in terms of geography and population. Scratch that. What I would say was both in terms of area and population. It's a very—well, a strong community feel, right? This is something that actually people back home, when they ask me about, you know, "What's Dartmouth like?" it's sometimes difficult to explain it because life as a college student here or, I assume, most places in the U.S. is just so different from what it would be like back home.

There, university's kind of a 9 to 5 kind of thing. You rent an apartment privately and separately from the university, you go there in the day and you go home in the evening, while here, you know, university is your entire life from when you wake up in the morning until you go to sleep. Everyone, you know, lives on campus, so it's a totally different setting from an outsider who might not be familiar with American college life at all.

And I would—I suppose, to an American, I would probably emphasize the fact that it's small and that it's—you know, people are very proud of this institution, and people like being here. That's the impression I get. I like being here, at

least. And it's a great little community of very interesting and ambitious and accomplished people, you know? There's a both very nice social setting and also very interesting people that I can learn from, you know.

WOMICK: Would you say that there is such a thing as a cohesive Dartmouth community, something that every person here can feel that they're a part of?

VOLL: Yeah, I'd say you can't really escape it, can you?—once you're in this little bubble there's not really an easy way to stay on the outside. If you're a student, certainly, you can't avoid but be in this small, encircled unit. Or are you thinking about others: faculty members, professors?

WOMICK: How do you think they fit into it?

VOLL: Well, if it weren't for them, Dartmouth wouldn't be the same, either, right? And, of course, their lives are also shaped by the fact that we live in a small community where it's easy to get to know each other, I think. Yeah. And, of course, faculty members are a large part of the community. I know, you know, so many professors at a personal level, which I think is not the case in bigger universities, certainly not the case, I think, anywhere in Europe or definitely not in Norway. So absolutely, you can't help but be part of the cohesive community just by—I suppose in virtue of being in Hanover, you can't really escape Dartmouth because Dartmouth College is dominating the entire town, and everyone somehow fits into the greater organic whole.

WOMICK: So for the past couple of years there's been a lot of conversation about Dartmouth's problems and groups of people who are saying that the community does not fit their needs. So, how do you feel about those things? Do you think that there are people who have a tougher time fitting in at Dartmouth?

VOLL: If there is, then I think I've, to a great extent, been oblivious to it. Now, of course, I've heard of complaints, too. And, of course, in any given setting, there's always gonna be someone who is unhappy. But I think that's certainly the exception rather than the rule. As mentioned, I'm quite

certain that the vast majority of people here really like being here, and I think it's very hard not to like it here.

WOMICK: Mm-hm.

VOLL: And I can't even imagine what it would take for *me* not to like it here. And I suppose—well, certainly, of course, Dartmouth isn't perfect, and there have been many complaints, a lot of talk during my college career about sexual assault issues on campus, but I haven't really seen much of it, myself, or experienced it. So maybe I just have too rosy a picture of Dartmouth. But, you know, I love this place a lot. It's not that I didn't want to accept that it has problems, but I'm inclined to say that they might be exaggerated in many cases. And, of course, I might just be oblivious. But I think we're doing very well, all in all.

WOMICK: Mm-hm. So with that in mind, have there been any times, like, even just in a moment, that you've felt like maybe you didn't quite fit in here?

VOLL: [Pause.] No, I don't think so, actually. I don't think I can think of anything. Yeah, I really liked it here from the first day.

WOMICK: Yeah.

Do you think you could maybe, I don't know, talk about the groups that you've been a part of a little bit more and the role that they've played in your day-to-day life in maybe helping you feel like you had a cohesive, supportive community?

VOLL: Groups in terms of floormates?

WOMICK: Yeah, whatever people you've been spending your time with—you know, your friends, things you're involved with.

VOLL: And—

WOMICK: Not quite a résumé but—[Laughs.]

VOLL: How these groups have shaped—

WOMICK: Your time here.

VOLL:

—my time here? Well, I suppose—I suppose throughout my three years here, I haven't been part of a clique of close friends very much. I feel like I've had many friends the whole time, sort of many—a wide sort of net of people I like to spend time with but maybe not so much a smaller group of people that I've consistently—well, there are certainly a few people that I've consistently been seeing through my time here, but I can't really identify many groups, apart from sort of the first people I got to know: of course, my floormates freshman year, which at the time was a group, but after that sort of disintegrated as a group, although I, you know, see some of them separately.

And I guess—well, mostly it was through international orientation that I got to know a lot of the international students in my same year, so I suppose you could consider that another group that I've had quite a lot to do with. The many international students at Dartmouth tend to spend a lot of time with other international students, which I've sort of tried to avoid, not because I [chuckles] don't like them or anything but because it's a little silly if we came to America and only see other international students. I'm not sure why that is, 'cause I've heard that in other colleges, similar things happened there—you know, some Americans who don't know any international students and a lot of international student who tend to spend most of their time with non-Americans.

And I thought maybe—well, of course, I know almost all of them just because we got here a little earlier and we're in a smaller group, but I don't know what that is—why that is, I mean. But I suppose that's a group that I don't have much to do with. I mean, I still have many friends from out of the international students in my year, which made up about 8 percent of the entire class or so, which is quite a lot, actually.

And—well, my sophomore year I joined a fraternity, so that certainly became another—well, certainly more defined and demarcated group of people that I can identify—which I like a lot. I like it a lot there. Very nice people there that have certainly have been very influential to my time here.

But apart from that, I—yeah. Hmm.

WOMICK: When you came—

VOLL: You'll have to take all the "ums" and "ahs" out.

WOMICK: [Laughs.]

VOLL: And repeats.

WOMICK: We can do that.

VOLL: [Chuckles.]

WOMICK: So when you came to Dartmouth, did you have an idea of how prevalent Greek life was?

VOLL: No, not at all. I had no idea that it existed, even, really.

WOMICK: Really!

VOLL: Yeah, I didn't know what it was. I didn't know what all those houses with funny Greek letters were when I first got here. I hadn't even—no, I hadn't really heard of it, actually. Or I suppose I heard of it once I started reading about Dartmouth on Dartmouth's web page, but I didn't reflect on it very much beforehand.

WOMICK: Yeah. So how did *you* get involved with it? Did you go out as a freshman?

VOLL: Yeah, yeah, I did. Well, that's why I ended up where I ended up, in Zeta Psi, because—simply because I happened to get to know quite a few people my freshman year. It was there, which sort of led me to go there more often. That's the community I felt home in.

WOMICK: Yeah. Would you like to talk about the community or culture of your house that you think makes it unique among the fraternities?

VOLL: That makes it unique? Nah, not so much, I think.

WOMICK: Nothing? [Laughter.]

- VOLL: Well, I think it's a very—it's a very open and welcoming place. I remember as a freshman—you know, I didn't quite understand the codes immediately, you know. If a bunch of freshmen were to walk into a fraternity house, I sort of had the sentiment at first that, *Well, this is kind of their house, where they live. Shall we just waltz in here? Is that something you do?*
- WOMICK: Mm-hm.
- VOLL: And, you know, not everywhere I felt as welcomed, I guess, which makes sense. Some freshman guy. Who cares? But I felt welcome there right away. Of course, I've had a good time other places, too. There are certainly many great people who are members of other houses, too.
- WOMICK: Mm-hm.
- VOLL: But that's where I liked it the most. Well, the main reason I ended up there was because that's simply where I knew the most people, and I liked those that I knew. But, unique? I don't think so.
- WOMICK: [Laughs.]
- VOLL: [Chuckles.] It's just a group of guys living together and to have a house and having an excuse to have somewhere to drink beer, and it's—you know, it's just not all that—it's not all that grand.
- WOMICK: [Laughs.]
- VOLL: But it's fun. I like it, but it's nothing unique or very special.
- WOMICK: Such a glowing review of your house! [Laughs.]
- VOLL: No, but I would probably say the same with any—if I were a member of any other, too.
- WOMICK: Mm-hm.
- VOLL: It's, like, if you say your house is unique, you've probably made some construct in your mind rather than actually—no, I don't know. I mean, I like it there a lot. I really like the people,

and I'm glad I joined. I've always had a good time there. But it's—you know, it's not gonna further my intellectual development or career or anything. It's just for fun, just to, yeah, drink and have somewhere to relax. It's nice to have a house to call your house, too, I think.

WOMICK: Mm-hm.

VOLL: So I really like the Greek system at Dartmouth just because I—you know, they've undergone a lot of scrutiny also, but generally it's, you know—and I could say this about the entire Greek community at Dartmouth—it's very open and welcoming, the fact that everyone is welcome to come into any house and—you know, it's a very nice—I think it's a very nice system in that sense, that—of course, many people complain that it is not ideal, that the Greek system completely dominates the social scene at Dartmouth, which, admittedly, it does, and there aren't as many other arenas. But, I mean, we're in Hanover, New Hampshire.

WOMICK: [Chuckles.]

VOLL: There aren't that many other fun places to go, and since everyone is always included and everyone's welcome, I think it's a great system that certainly enhances social life at Dartmouth, I think.

WOMICK: So how would you respond to the people who have been putting increased scrutiny on the system in recent years and who perhaps would even want to see it gone?

VOLL: I think if it were gone, that would be a great loss to Dartmouth. And, of course, uncomfortable situations occur, and sexual assault occurs. You know, the fact that men are in a dominant position because, well, you know, parties tend to be in fraternity houses, not sorority houses, all these things. Of course, those are problems, and I acknowledge them, but, as I said earlier, I haven't really felt these problems myself. I have trouble identifying when these issues actually occur. But maybe I've just been lucky. Maybe I've just been at the right place at the right time, and I haven't really had any negative experiences with it myself. But it's unfortunate that other people have. And, of course, it's not

perfect, and we can certainly work to improve it, but I think it adds a lot more value than it makes things worse.

WOMICK: I think you joined at an int'esting time, too, because—let's see, was it the year you joined or maybe the year after? I can't quite remember. But when the big Lohse scandal happened.

VOLL: Yeah, it was the year after.

WOMICK: With SAE. I think that pro'bly caused a lot of upset within the system.

VOLL: Yep.

WOMICK: Is that something you're willing to talk about, your ideas about that?

VOLL: Sure. [Chuckles.] Or—yeah. Or what do you mean exactly?

WOMICK: I mean, you know, there are so many things that get wrapped up just when you invoke the name of Lohse.

VOLL: Yeah.

WOMICK: [Laughs.]

VOLL: Yes. Obviously. Yeah [chuckles], I read the Rolling Stone article, and, of course, I don't know what goes on in other houses behind closed doors, but I have never experienced anything even remotely related to what he described. I have genuinely never had a negative experience in my house. Again, I don't know what goes on everywhere else when it's not open to the public, but I have not—I mean, it's not even anywhere near—and I would say I really never had a negative experience—you know, of course, we also have a pledge term, where, you know, there are certain chores and there are things you need to do, but I think my pledge term was the best term I've had at Dartmouth. I had so much fun, and the upperclassmen in the house did such a great job making it really fun. You know, it was a great bonding experience, and it took a lot of time. We had to be there much and sort of, I suppose, forced to have fun, in a sense, forced to party, which I loved. I mean, I loved that. I thought it

was great. I thought it was so much fun. And we were sort of the center of attention that term, and I really got to know the other people there very well.

So, yeah, Lohse. I don't know what that was all about, but if he's telling the truth, again I have no idea, obviously. But if he is, that sounds absolutely terrible, but that's absolutely not the experience I've had.

WOMICK: Mm-hm, yeah. I hear that a lot. [Laughs.]

VOLL: Yeah?

WOMICK: Yeah.

So let's see what else. I guess, sort of jumping off of that: how would you say that you have seen the Dartmouth community change during your time here, if you've seen it change at all? Big question, I know.

VOLL: Hmm. No, the Dartmouth community as a whole, I don't think has changed very much. Of course, it's certainly changed relative to me or the way I look at it. When I first got here, I was sort of the smallest and insecure and had to learn the cues and codes, while now I'm a mighty senior who sort of knows everything that goes on.

WOMICK: [Chuckles.]

VOLL: The community, itself, apart from me? No, I don't think it's changed that much. Or, are you thinking about something in particular?

WOMICK: No, nothing in particular. It's just, you know, an open question.

VOLL: It's still—yeah, I mean, as I said, as soon as I got off the bus, I got the most warm welcome I could imagine, and I'm sure the same would be the case today. I liked this place from the first day, and I still love it today. And I'm already not looking forward to the day I have to leave in a few months.

WOMICK: Aww. What about you? Do you think that your time at Dartmouth has changed you in any ways?

VOLL: Certainly. Yeah, it must have. Well, I guess—of course, the college years are formative years for young people like us, regardless of where you are. But—yeah, that’s difficult, actually. It’s difficult to see myself four years ago. I suppose I had a lot of different interests then. I really wanted to get a Ph.D. in philosophy and become a professor my freshman year. That was the dream. Well, that’s eroded since then. And I’ve grown a lot. I think I’ve gotten more mature. Whether that’s because of Dartmouth or not, I’m not sure. Dartmouth might have inhibited my maturing more than promoted it.

But, no, I suppose I would have been a much less interesting and well-read person if I hadn’t come here because, firstly, it’s, you know, impossible not to learn a lot here. It’s very challenging academically, but it’s also a community of so many interesting people that—of course, the fact that you’re in a place with so many accomplished people makes you want to achieve, yourself, too, right? And it also makes it a very interesting place to be, and you can’t help but learn things about the world from your peers when there are so many, you know, intellectually gifted other students here. I guess the other students here have taught me a lot, and I think if I had gone to a university back home, I would both—not to bash the people back there, but I don’t think I would have gained so much from the presence of my peers if I were back home or in a larger school or in—I don’t like using that word, but in a less prestigious school, right?

WOMICK: Mm-hm.

So what *are* your plans for after graduation? It’s probably the question everyone’s asking, but—[Chuckles.]

VOLL: Good question. I... don’t know. Any suggestions?

WOMICK: [Laughs.]

VOLL: I don’t know, honestly. I’ve applied for jobs both here and in Norway and elsewhere in Europe, the DartBoard jobs in America and anything that a philosophy major might be able to do back home. But I haven’t gotten any offers yet. I was looking at—I might—I might start studying for a master’s

degree in Europe somewhere, either Norway or elsewhere, but the deadlines are a bit closer to the actual starting date back in the old world than here, for some reason, so I haven't gotten very far. But the short answer is I have no idea, really.

WOMICK: That's a fine answer. And you still have a good amount of time to figure it out.

VOLL: Yeah, that's funny because it's a little stressful, the fact that so many people at Dartmouth—and I hope this is a Dartmouth thing—so many people at Dartmouth have already gotten their super-fancy jobs, you know, last fall. And where I'm from, it's not so customary to do that. You tend to—you go to university, and then you graduate, and *then* you start looking for [chuckles]—*then* you start looking for a job, right?

So—well, last term I was—well, anyway, I was talking to a Norwegian acquaintance of mine, and last term, last fall, my senior fall, and I told him—I mentioned in passing, “Oh, yeah yeah, I have a job interview tomorrow” or something like that. I can't remember exactly. And the response was, “A job interview? Aren't you still in school? Aren't you gonna back to the school in January?” I was, like, “Oh, yeah yeah yeah! I mean a job, like, after school” and, “You know, in the summer or next fall.” He's like, “*What?*”

WOMICK: [Laughs.]

VOLL: “You're worrying about that now?” And that's how it is here, right?

WOMICK: Yep.

VOLL: Which, you know, makes me a little insecure that I don't have any wonderful job lined up yet, but, I mean, I'm sure I'll—I'm sure I'll do fine, but—and all my peers back home aren't looking for jobs yet, so it should be okay, right?

WOMICK: Yeah, I think you're totally fine.

VOLL: Yeah.

WOMICK: Totally fine.

So, thinking about your time here and, you know, your perspective as a senior man, what advice would you give to someone who is considering coming to Dartmouth or perhaps has already committed to coming here?

VOLL: Advice to the new—the next Dartmouth students.

WOMICK: Yeah.

VOLL: Hmmmm. [Pause.] Yeah, I suppose don't let any opportunities pass. Don't spend too much time drinking. [Chuckles.] Which is very easy to do here. Spend a little bit of time drinking, but not all the time.

Get to know professors. Actually—yeah, get to know professors. That's something that should be obvious in a tiny school like this, where they're so available, but it's also kind of a step to take, I suppose, and it's not so easy to—I remember, you know, during orientation, we would always be told, “Oh, yeah, you have to get to know your professors. You have to go to office hours. You have to”—but I'm not sure that many people act on it as much as they can. It's such a fantastic thing that we have the opportunity to interact with our faculty members so much more than, you know, in Norway or I think everywhere in Europe. You would *never* talk to your professor. Your professor would not know who you were. You would be one in—you know, a drop in the ocean in a class of 200 people, and your professor would lecture, and his job would be done. It's such a great value to be able to interact with experts in the field on a more personal level. And, of course, they're—most of them or the vast majority are such interesting and great people, too. And Dartmouth is a great place for that. You don't get that opportunity many other places.

And, yeah, advice to freshmen. I suppose try to go to as many guest lectures, as many meetings—there are so much interesting stuff that's going on here that it becomes overwhelming, you know? But don't miss out on those things because there's so much outside the classroom that—you know, I daresay that I might have learned more from informal lectures or my peers than from actual classes. And there's

always so much going on that you can spend your entire time in different kinds of activities or guest lectures.

So, in short, seize the day, I guess. There's more that's going on here than we can bite off and chew at a time.

WOMICK: So thinking about the future just one last time, what do you see your role as an alumnus of the college being?

VOLL: Well! That's interesting. I suppose I haven't given that very much thought before. But, I mean, I will never forget this place. It'll be with me for the rest of my life, certainly. And I hope I can stay in touch somehow. I'm not sure how that would be, but, I mean, I'll try to make it [chuckles] to the 10-year reunion.

And I suppose I would really like to—especially if I live in Norway, I would very much like to do—to become an interviewer, pre-admissions interviewer, if possible, for instance 'cause—well, there was a person who lived in Britain who came to interview me, and that sounds like a great way to kind of keep connection and get to talk about Dartmouth, 'cause I love talkin' about Dartmouth. I guess I love this place, and I think I could do a good job convincing other people that it's a great place, I think.

WOMICK: Mm-hm.

VOLL: Yeah, I hope I can do that. If I get rich, I'll—if I get rich enough, I will try to pay back my financial aid award. That can be my—but if I ever earn enough.

WOMICK: [Laughs.]

VOLL: I won't make any promises, but I'll try.

WOMICK: Gotta get that first job.

VOLL: Yeah, yes, first things first.

WOMICK: So is there anything I haven't asked you yet or that we haven't talked about that you would like to mention?

- VOLL: [Pause.] I should think of something really catchy now, shouldn't I?
- WOMICK: [Laughs.] You don't have to have anything.
- VOLL: Ummm, hmm. Yeah. I don't know. I suppose the red thread today has been, "God, I love Dartmouth." But maybe I'm getting a bit sentimental because I'm starting to realize that I'm going to leave soon. But, no, I do—I love this place. And it's a great community, and it's a very rewarding and intellectually stimulating place, and I can hardly imagine what better place I could have spent these four years than right here. Could have been a bit warmer in the winters maybe.
- WOMICK: [Chuckles.]
- VOLL: But apart from that, I can't think of many things I would want to change here. Maybe I'm just boring or conservative, but I think Dartmouth is a great place.
- Any last words or any last additions?
- WOMICK: That's great.
- VOLL: Do you feel like there's something I didn't delve deep enough into?
- WOMICK: No, absolutely not.
- VOLL: Anything you'd like to know more about?
- WOMICK: Well, I exhausted all of the questions that I have on my paper here. I think this was a great interview, so thank you for taking the time.
- VOLL: Thank *you*.
- WOMICK: If there's nothing else you want to add, I can turn the machines off.
- VOLL: Sure. No, I've... Well, I—no. Dartmouth community. I'm trying to see this, and I'm trying to think of what the greater picture with these interviews will look like eventually and see if I can add something, but I suppose we've talked a lot

about the Dartmouth community and what I think about it and my situation in it, so—but thank you. I mean, this has made me think, too. And, yeah, I thought of a couple of things I hadn't thought about before.

WOMICK: Thank you for taking the time.

VOLL: Sure.

WOMICK: I'll turn this off now.

[End of interview.]