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Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Community and Dartmouth's World
MARCH 4, 2013

AL-JABER: Today is Wednesday, March 4, 2013. I'm here at Rauner Library with Elizabeth Neill, who is a '13? Is that right?

NEILL: Mm-hm.

AL-JABER: So just to get us started, could you please tell me about your life before you came to Dartmouth?

NEILL: Sure. So I'm from Long Island, New York. I'm from Southampton, New York. I went to a public high school. I had not much of an idea that Dartmouth was a thing, but my cousin went here. She went to Tuck, and I got interested in Dartmouth that way. And she convinced me to give it a try. So I came up here, visited, fell in love, et cetera, et cetera, like everyone else.

Well, in high school I was a tennis player. I was interested in history, engineering, calculus, anything, really, under the sun. And, yeah, I have an identical twin who's also at Dartmouth.

AL-JABER: Oh, wow.

NEILL: Her name is Laura. She's also a '13. And our lives were—still are [chuckles] intertwined with one another, for obvious reasons. It's a big part of my identity before and during Dartmouth. And I guess I had a fairly [chuckles] normal life, very much based around Massachusetts. That's where all of my mom's family is. So I actually was born in Boston and for many years associated my identity with New England. My parents dragged me down to New York when I was in second grade. But I came back to New England for college, and I'm, maybe, sticking around for a little while.

AL-JABER: And so what are some of the things that your cousin told you about Dartmouth that made you interested in applying?

NEILL: Well, as I said, she's a Tuckie, but she really enjoyed the community. She was looking for more of a city experience, as was I, when she was applying, but finding Dartmouth as a community that is still in the New England culture and not that far from Boston and, of course, my family, that has so many resources was quite a surprise to me. But, as I said, I came and visited, and I didn't come for Dimensions, but I saw the [Herschel? 2:19] show the week before. And just finding so many other people who were interested in so many different things and had so much going on, even when it wasn't in an urban center was great. And, you know, I still like it.

AL-JABER: So can you talk to me about the process of coming into Dartmouth? What was it like integrating into the community? Was it easy? Was it hard? And was it easier because you had your sister with you?

NEILL: Well, no. Actually, I was extremely lucky. I was placed in East Wheelock freshman year, and our freshman floor was very close—and we actually still are—which is unusual. I know that a lot of people come into Dartmouth and have that freshman floor unit, and then it breaks apart as soon as you hit sophomore year. But, as I said, we just had a reunion last week, actually, and we were quite close, with the exception that my sister was on the same freshman floor as I was. She was actually my next-door neighbor. And it's my impression, from talking to other twins that are at Dartmouth, that ORL—the Office of Residential Life—does that purposefully. I hated it. [Chuckles.] I might have changed it, except that my sister and I shouted across the house to each other, looking up our roommate assignments concurrently on different computers, and our parents overheard and wouldn't let us change it. [Chuckles.]

AL-JABER: So she felt the exact same way?

NEILL: Yes. Yes. We wanted to go to different colleges, especially as identical twins who do look very similar, at least, you know, obviously to other people. It could be more difficult to form an identity. Obviously, I don't have the experience of not being a twin, but it is more difficult for people to remember your face when there are two of you, or remember which one you are. But it actually worked out. As I said, our

freshman floor was pretty close, and I immediately discarded any of my inclinations towards engineering and math and went for English, which was great. Actually, one of my first English classes, most of my freshman floor was in that class, and so we had this very tight-knit group.

I got heavily involved in Dartmouth Students for Haiti Relief, which was great. It felt like I had a purpose, you know, for the first time. I did community service work in high school but not on such a grand scale. And it was just—it was amazing. It was eye opening, and it has influenced my path throughout Dartmouth in trying to do more service projects and getting a more international view, because there is kind of that danger with the Dartmouth bubble, of course.

AL-JABER: Mm-hm. Which everyone talks about.

So you mentioned that you and your sister wanted to go to different schools, so what made you end up going to Dartmouth, both of you?

NEILL: Well, we actually both were in I think a fairly common position, that we didn't get in to our first-choice schools. We were both wait-listed at our first-choice schools, which were actually not Ivies. We weren't into the Ivy idea very much. I actually thought Dartmouth was in Vermont [chuckles] when I first started thinking about it. I was quickly corrected, of course, by my cousin.

But my other school was U. Chicago, which is obviously [chuckles] very different from Dartmouth. But, actually, I knew several other '13s who were in that same position, and we were just talking about this the other day. And obviously it's a very different environment. It's, you know, it's Chicago. It's very urban, and it has this reputation of hard academics and not hard partying. And, of course, Dartmouth has this reputation of hard academics *and* hard partying, which, I will mention, was not a draw for me. I was a non-drinker when I entered, and I am still a non-drinker today, which has played an interesting role in my Dartmouth experience, obviously, because so much of the social culture can be—not necessarily, but can be revolving around drinking, in the Greek life.

Yeah. And I am actually a part of Greek life. I am in a sorority. I am a proud member of Epsilon Kappa Theta. But I waited. I didn't go through rush. I was off campus for two-thirds of my sophomore year because I went on two FSPs my sophomore fall and my sophomore spring, and returned to campus [chuckles], much to my dismay— *Who are these people?* Basically. And my sister was in Theta, and some of my best friends were in Theta, so it was kind of the natural place for me to end up. Kind of a snap decision, but not really because I waited a year.

AL-JABER: But did you have any reservations about joining a sorority?

NEILL: Certainly. I mean, obviously, as a non-drinker, I am just in general concerned about the Dartmouth drinking culture. But Theta is actually a place where I feel less pressure to drink, and I feel that it's kind of a trade-off because it's actually given me a non-drinker social space, which most people are surprised—“But it's a sorority. Isn't that what you do?” Well, yes and no. I mean, obviously, it provides a space for drinking, but it is not the aggressive space that the fraternity basements can be, which was a pleasant surprise for me [chuckles], but obviously, I knew a lot of people in Theta, and the ones that I have gotten to know, you know, as our new members joined—it's been a pleasant surprise for me that, especially in Theta, the people who do drink are not interested in forcing other people, pressuring other people to drink but, rather, enjoying themselves and having a safe environment in which to do so, which is very important to me. I couldn't be part of an organization that didn't have a safe space, whether for drinkers or non-drinkers. But I think that there is a nice balance. And we're trying to grow this even more, is to make a safe space for women on campus, because I feel there aren't nearly enough of those currently.

AL-JABER: So did you make it known during, like, the rush process that you don't drink?

NEILL: I didn't rush, actually.

AL-JABER: Oh, you didn't?

NEILL: Yeah. I was an open bid.

AL-JABER: Oh, I see. So, what—

NEILL: Because I knew so many of the sisters. And, obviously, my biological sister was in the house. So there's—you can skip rush completely, which was quite nice, I have to say. I've been part of the rush process on the sister side. And it's a good idea, but it can be very overwhelming for so many girls, and I just—I know a lot of people who dropped out and just couldn't decide because it's such an important decision that you're forced to make in such a short time that—I mean, yes, we do put on a good show [chuckles], and we have the best food. Lots of people say so. And I like to think that we have the nicest people, but it's so hard for anyone to make that decision in such a short time period. And, you know, all of the houses have their advantages and disadvantages. But rush is an interesting system that prioritizes a certain type of person, who can express themselves eloquently in a five- or ten-minute conversation about their goals, their needs, their dreams when, in reality, it's quite difficult to [chuckles] do that, especially when in a room with, you know, a hundred other people.

AL-JABER: So it sounds like you're relieved that you didn't go through that process.

NEILL: I am. I mean, I'm glad that I had the chance to go through it on the sister side, because I actually enjoy it. I enjoy being one of the voices that says, "No pressure." You know, it's, like, "It's okay. We all know it's completely insane, and, you know, it would be bad enough if you didn't have schoolwork, but of course you all do." And it's—you know, sophomore year can be kind of that chaotic place because freshman floor groups are breaking up, and you're getting back and realizing that, you know, maybe the person you wanted to room with isn't where you wanted them to be, and you didn't get into this one class that you really wanted, or you're pre-med and taking orgo [Organic Chemistry], which thankfully was not my experience. Pre-med was the one thing I never tried.

But, yeah, I mean, Greek life is obviously a big part of Dartmouth. But it can mean many different things to many different people, and that's difficult to express during rush.

AL-JABER: So do you live in the house?

NEILL: I have in the past, but I'm currently in Gold Coast.

AL-JABER: And, like, you and your sister are in the same house. Was that—do you try to avoid situations where you're involved in the same communities, or are you fine with that? How do you navigate those spaces?

NEILL: Well, it's less of an issue now as Laura is actually no longer part of Theta. She is also a non-drinker and does not enjoy being part of anything that endorses drinking culture, so she withdrew herself from the house. But we do have similar interests. We are both into theater in quite a big way. But we have found our own spaces, I think, and even when they do overlap, it's not that anyone necessarily thinks we're the same person, although it does happen. It happened quite a lot freshman and sophomore year, especially sophomore year, as I was gone fall and spring, so I wasn't much of a presence on campus, and especially the '15s thought there was only one of us, which was a little bit [chuckles] disappointing for a while. But once I reestablished myself as a presence on campus, then it became less of an issue.

AL-JABER: So how would you define your Dartmouth community?

NEILL: I would say I don't have one Dartmouth community. I would say I probably have three major communities. There's Theta, obviously. There is my non-Greek friend group, which does sometimes mix with my Greek friend group but not as often as you might hope, which are mostly friends from freshman year and sophomore year. And then there is my Classics friend group. I went on the 2011 FSP to Greece, which was *fantastic*. Like, pretty much my best term at Dartmouth. I hesitate to say that because I've had so many good terms at Dartmouth. But it was just absolutely fantastic. And I am now part of the Dartmouth Classical Society, which is a fairly new society formed in the fall that brings together all those interested in classics and socializing with other classics majors, which, again, is an interesting mix of the non-drinking and drinking cultures at Dartmouth, but much more the non-drinking side.

AL-JABER: So has your sense of community changed over time?

NEILL: I mean, freshman year I had absolutely no idea I was going to join a sorority. I was very anti-Greek life. I was fairly sheltered in high school. I didn't have my first drink until sophomore year of college. And I didn't like it [chuckles], so I discarded that idea anyway. But I came in—I went on trips, and I had this very idealistic view of Dartmouth, that, you know, everyone went off and played in the woods and, you know, got raided at midnight [chuckles] and sat up until three a.m. playing Mafia.

And I got here, and I kind of realized that that wasn't exactly how it worked, but, you know, it was pretty close. I made the very dubious decision to join a senior comparative literature seminar my freshman fall. I still do not know why [chuckles] the professor let me into that class, but it was definitely a learning experience and not just because it was very interesting academically but, being part of a truly college environment—some of the introduction classes can be more impersonal. You know, they're not in a seminar format; it's a lecture, and basically, you know, you do the work independently. But the seminar that I joined—and I was in two other quite small classes as well—showed me what the whole liberal arts education thing could be like. And I liked it very much. I was very happy, especially as I did go to a public high school, and there weren't that many opportunities for being challenged academically. I mean, we had advanced placement classes, but there was nothing beyond that. And I was gratified to find that I was not the smartest person at Dartmouth, which I understand can be a challenge for many freshmen, but I enjoyed it. And I still do, because it means that I can learn from my other students and not just from the professors. And I think that makes for an even better learning environment.

AL-JABER: So how would you define the broader Dartmouth community? Does it include students, administrators? How do you see it?

NEILL: I'd say at least my personal experience in the Dartmouth community has involved students and professors primarily. Obviously, my work here at Rauner Special Collections has involved a good deal of staff, and I enjoy that immensely, but my Dartmouth academic life revolves around relationships

with other students and relationships with professors. And there are certain professors who I have kind of co-opted. We've built friendships over the years. And especially my thesis adviser—we have a close relationship. We went to Greece together, and obviously now we are suffering through the senior thesis together.

But I think it's great to have a constant dialogue between professor and student, and I have to say some of the worst classes I have taken are those where the students don't engage with the professor and the professor doesn't engage with the material or the students. And some of the best classes that I have taken involved the professor and the students looking at something—you know, putting something on the table and adding our expertise all together and the professor saying, "Why don't you look at it this way?" And then everyone goes, "Whoa! I never noticed that. That is really cool."

But outside of the classroom, my community is academic and social and everything all at once. But I'd say that the primary relationships are between students and professors. Yeah.

AL-JABER:

So did it take a while for you to establish your sense of community, or did it just—some people come here and they already—like, they immediately make friends and sort of solidify their position in the Dartmouth community. How was that like for you?

NEILL:

In hindsight I think I see it as an easy process. It probably wasn't, but, as I said, I was really lucky with my freshman floor. And living in East Wheelock, which I still fully support, which I'm not currently doing, I was part of Cluster Council, which meant that I was able to organize some community events and really get a sense of community within the residence halls but is definitely not apparent in some of the upper-class dorms, where I don't really speak to my neighbors. The only reason I know who's on my floor is that I already knew two of them.

But freshman year was certainly an interesting experience because I was meeting people who had never met Laura, my twin, and we were both trying so desperately to establish

ourselves as different people but, at the same time, being interested in the same things, which is an interesting balance. I mean, Dartmouth seems large, especially compared to my high school, where we had a class of I think 180, my senior class of 180, and here, you know, it's over a thousand, but over a thousand quickly becomes much smaller, especially because my sister decided to run for a class position and friended everyone on Facebook, which is an entertaining story now but at the time was a little bit annoying because everyone thought I was her. But, as I said, that has definitely resolved over the years, and I have found that it is a lot easier to deal with it if you're not indignant every time someone calls you the wrong name.

AL-JABER: So initially did you go to separate events? Did you try to sort of distance yourself from one another?

NEILL: We did want to, but, as I said, we at that time we had the same major. We were both English major, we were both interested in theater and we lived on the same floor. So as much as we might try to differentiate ourselves, we would always end up kind of in the same places most of the time, which is fine because I think we got different things out of it, and she did a lot of work with her Shakespeare company, and I did a lot of work with the Haiti relief. But we still had that place to come back to, our fourth floor Morton group.

It actually turned out to be a good thing that we were on the same floor because she got swine flu.

AL-JABER: Oh, my gosh!

NEILL: So I ended up taking care of her. So I guess ORL had great foresight there. But, yeah, I think that especially now that we are viewed as such different people, even within the smaller parts of the Dartmouth community that we belong to, it is easier for me to look back on that and say that it wasn't that difficult, but it probably was. [Chuckles.]

AL-JABER: I'm not really sure you can really answer for her, but does she feel—have you spoken to her about how she feels having her sister here affected her?

NEILL: Yeah. Well, she is definitely the more visible of the two of us. Especially her work for the Shakespeare company puts her out there. But, yes. Well, she does get mistaken for me at some times, but I think I'm more cautious about forewarning people that I am a twin than she might be sometimes, especially freshman year. She didn't want to mention it. But, yeah, I don't think I can really speak for her on that, except to say that as an identical twin at Dartmouth it can be very difficult to establish your own identity, especially when everyone is meeting so many new people and faces and names are already a blur, and then you add to it you look very similar, with the same first letter as well to the name. It can get a bit frustrating at times.

AL-JABER: But you mentioned you spoke to other twins on campus.

NEILL: Yeah. Yeah, there is a twin blitz list.

AL-JABER: Oh, I see.

NEILL: It's pretty easy to find. You just find everyone [chuckles] with the same last name. And, yeah, I think there—or at least—we haven't done anything really in recent years, but sophomore year we had a get-together, and I think there were about forty of us hanging out on campus. So Dartmouth seems to be one of the schools that likes twins. At least that's the conclusion that we've come to.

AL-JABER: So when you were getting together, were you, like, discussing the issues that you were facing on campus, or was it just more of a social—

NEILL: No. We were just hanging out. [Laughs.]

AL-JABER: So just going back to the Dartmouth community, do you think its location affects the sense of community?

NEILL: You mean being in the middle of the woods?

AL-JABER: Mm-hm, basically.

NEILL: Yeah, I would say so. We have at least a centralized campus, which—I mean, no matter how much we groan about how long it takes to go to the gym from frat row

[Webster Avenue], it really does not take that long at all, and it does make different parts of campus more accessible. So, you know, if I want to go to a Shakespeare production—which I did last night—in East Wheelock, then it’s not going to take me very long to get there. But, you know, if I want to go to a party at Alpha Chi, I can also get there quite easily, and it’s this juxtaposition of such different events right next to each other that makes it interesting.

I know that some people hear “isolated, rural New Hampshire” as “ouch!” You know, “There can’t be too much going on there.” But I think that that unifies us in some sense, in that we are kind of in the middle of nowhere, but—and that’s part of our Dartmouth identity, I think. I mean, “Vox clamantis in deserto” is the idea, and I think we’ve kind of taken it away from the biblical sense—you know, very much so.

But also, no matter how much we form our identity around being a rural school, especially with the Hop and with Rocky [Rockefeller Center] and [chuckles] Dickey, we’re really not in the middle of nowhere, or if we are, the world comes to us, which I think—one of my greatest regrets about Dartmouth is that in my first two years I didn’t take advantage of all the opportunities presented to me. There was just so much, and it was so overwhelming that I was just, like, *Eh*. You know, it’s difficult to decide, you know, which of five lectures you would like to go to this week.

But it can be the most interesting if you decide, you know, *I am going to see that string quartet from Georgia*, you know? And having that kind of entertainment available, even though we are in a rural setting, helps us continue our education without leaving the middle of nowhere, although, of course, you can because it’s quite easy to get to Boston.

AL-JABER: But was it an adjustment when you first came here, adjusting to a rural setting?

NEILL: No, it was freedom for me. My parents are lovely but very over-protective, and it was wonderful to enter a community where I didn’t have a curfew or a bedtime or anything and I could do whatever I wanted, which—it took me a little while to figure out what that was, but I’m definitely now much more

used to, [chuckles] you know, living on my own. I mean, of course, my sister is just across campus, but—you know. But being able to choose exactly what you want to do—you know, not just what classes you want to take but, you know, which get-togethers you want to go to, lectures, but also parties and—there are so many choices that hit you freshman year that I think nobody could be prepared to react to fully. [Chuckles.]

I will say that coming to Dartmouth as a freshman, I was surprised to not find a strong advising group. My initial—my freshman year adviser I'm sure is a very nice person but was not very helpful. And I've heard similar complaints or suggestions over the years that there could be a little more framework as you're entering this middle-of-nowhere, suddenly-choosing-your-life-path kind of environment.

AL-JABER: So how has Dartmouth changed over the past four years that you've been here? Has it changed to you, or is it more or less the same?

NEILL: Well, yes and no, and I know [chuckles] that you want a better answer than that. It's changed—yes, certainly, at least I have gravitated towards different parts of campus, so I no longer live in East Wheelock, I'm no longer an English major and now my focus is kind of on four parts of campus. Obviously, I'm a member of Theta, and I work at Rauner, and I have my thesis and I have my service work. And those are very different from my priorities freshman year, except for the service. But, of course, now I am captaining a Relay for Life team instead of fundraising for relief for the earthquake in Haiti.

But, yeah—I mean, Dartmouth has changed, and obviously as I moved from freshman to senior, I changed, myself. Especially going on two foreign study programs in the same academic year, I came back and I was just, like, *I am a completely different person.*

AL-JABER: So you mentioned Greece. Can you talk—it sounds like that was a very important part of your Dartmouth experience. Can you talk more about it?

NEILL: Yeah, sure. So the foreign study program to Greece is run by the Classics department, and I'm a classical archaeology major, modified with history. And I decided to go to Greece because I took a class freshman spring with—the professor who's now my thesis adviser, Jerry Rutter, and I was instantly hooked. Archaeology was fascinating in a way that nothing had else had ever been really that fascinating before. So, you know, I took a couple more classes.

Actually, a key part of the story is when I was in London on the history FSP, which was also a great program—it's at University College, London, and there's an independent research project. Basically, you take two classes and then you do an independent research project. But there's a lot of free time in that program. Education in the U.K. is much more independent and decentralized. And we were living in close proximity to the British Museum, and I realized that I was gravitating towards the archaeological collections there, which I have actually since returned for thesis research, to do thesis research with the Greece and Roman department, but that's a different story.

So while I was in London, I went to a conference at the British Museum on Cypriot archaeology, notwithstanding that I was still an English major at this point. And that was kind of the key point where I realized that that was what I wanted to do.

So when I got back to campus, I changed my major, and I already knew I was going on the Classics FSP, primarily because my high school history teacher is best friends with one of the professors in the classics department [chuckles], which is a bizarre coincidence.

So we took—well, I took two preparatory classes for that FSP in the winter, and that was it, one of which was Classics 19, which is the hardest class I ever took at Dartmouth, by far, culminating in a 50-page research paper.

AL-JABER: Oh my god.

NEILL: Yes, it was quite a harrowing experience, I think I can accurately say but also in hindsight I appreciate, although at the time I was just going out of my mind.

AL-JABER: Yes, I can imagine.

NEILL: But we got to Greece, and basically we never stopped traveling. About every two or three days, we go to a different city, which means—or, you know, a different site, usually multiple sites in one day. But the long and short of it is that you are climbing mountains and then getting a lecture on an archaeological site, and then climbing back down the mountain [chuckles], which is amazing. I mean, I love the outdoors. I am not heavily involved in the Outing Club. I wish I was. But just being challenged both physically and academically at the same time in a foreign country was such an eye-opening experience for me. And living in such proximity to thirteen other people—it tells you a lot about yourself. I mean, it was great.

It was, you know, quite bizarre at points. We would, you know, show up to this rural site in the middle [chuckles] of nowhere and just get so excited about the fact that there is wood from an ancient bridge, like, right in front of us. Or, you know, this place is where an ancient traveler had stopped and sketched or, you know, wrote a description about this thing that we can still see today.

It was wonderful for me to be in an environment where getting completely excited about these things was acceptable and encouraged. [Chuckles.] And it was just a—I know that I'm using way too many positive adjectives, but it was really a truly wonderful experience. Just dealing with living in such close quarters at the same time as completely broadening my idea of what Greece was, what archaeology was and what I wanted to do in life—because that really solidified—like, *Okay, this is it.*

AL-JABER: So coming off such a wonderful experience, was it hard coming back to campus?

NEILL: It was, actually. And I got back sophomore summer, and, as I said, I kind of had a *Where is everybody? Who is everybody?* moment, 'cause I had been away for most of my sophomore year, which is a time when a lot of people solidify their identities, especially through rush and, you know, joining Greek houses. So I got back, and I was happy to

have a chance to rest, certainly, but I missed having that very close-knit—there were only 14 of us basically in the country who knew, like, what was going on and shared everything about our lives together. And, you know, when you think about that, Dartmouth doesn't seem very small anymore, which of course it is.

So I got back, and I needed some other sense of community. I needed a place where not everyone was expecting me to drink, because sophomore summer is [chuckles] one of the more party-ish terms, at least for some people. And I came upon Theta as an option. You know, scouted it out for a week or so and then—you know, it had been kind of like hanging out in my mind since sophomore winter, when one of my best friends had actually joined Theta and my sister had joined Theta and one of my other best friends had joined Theta. So there's this kind of—

AL-JABER: Snowballing.

NEILL: Yes, that's a good word for it. It was a snowball effect.

AL-JABER: That's interesting, because that's how a lot of people explain it. Like, their friends would join, and they feel sort of that they—not pressure, I would say, but they're encouraged to join through their friends, who do rush.

NEILL: Yes. And, I mean, it's comfortable. And it's not that I needed to join a sorority—because I don't think I did; I think I would have been perfectly happy if I hadn't—but it added another dimension, and it allowed me to be part of the Greek community while not excluding the non-Greek community, which is kind of a difficult thing to do on Dartmouth's campus, depending on where you are in Greek life.

AL-JABER: So is there one community that you identify with more?

NEILL: Huh. No, I don't think so. I know that some people worry about excluding their non-Greek friends when they join Greek life, but I haven't found that to be my experience.

AL-JABER: And so a lot of what this project is about is trying to figure out where students fit into the Dartmouth community, so would

you see yourself more of as a Dartmouth insider or have there been times where you felt like an outsider?

NEILL: I think it depends on which Dartmouth community you would talk about. Certainly there are parts of the community that I don't belong to. I mean, especially as a non-drinker, I think I am, at least nominally, an outsider to the hard partying side of campus, for obvious reasons. That doesn't really bother me because even though I suppose people would term me an outsider in that aspect, I don't know if I would want to belong to that group, and obviously I have chosen not to belong to that group.

I'm not the face of campus. I'm sure there are many '13s who don't know who I am, and that's fine. I am not as visible as some other '13s, but I do belong to a bunch of different communities, and I do feel included in a bunch of different communities. And I think I'm in a good place. I mean, I don't usually feel excluded or, you know, unwelcome on campus, although [chuckles] I will say that writing a thesis does draw divisions [chuckles] between those who are writing theses and those who are not, especially as we get to the deadline stage. [Laughs.] So I was definitely an insider in that aspect—an outsider in that aspect. But that would be the strongest division, aside from drinker and non-drinker, that I have sensed on campus, at least in my current environment.

AL-JABER: So there has been some unrest on campus recently with these racial incidents. So what are your thoughts on that, and have you had a chance to process it as you're leaving campus?

NEILL: I was completely shocked. I mean, I guess I'm kind of an idealist, but it just—it horrifies me that that is still a thing. And, yeah, I was in disbelief when I heard about it. And, yeah—I just—it's hard to wrap your head around the fact that we can have such a great community, especially such a great academic community, and still have such medieval notions hanging out in our social spaces. I mean, obviously I would do anything I can to combat that, but what can you do? It's kind of a difficult thing to do battle against.

AL-JABER: So I think to wrap things up, could you just briefly talk to me about how Dartmouth has changed you as a person? [Chuckles.] Which I know is a big question.

NEILL: It is a big question. Dartmouth has definitely given me more confidence. I was not a confident person when I arrived here. I mean, you know, with my identity as a twin but also just as a person. And through my foreign travel, through my courses, even the random ones that I don't even know why I decided to take but I did, I have discovered so many different things that are just fascinating to me. I mean, it has definitely shaped me as a person. I have a strong and abiding interest in community service, which, again, especially with my work with Haiti freshman year, has continued throughout my four years at Dartmouth.

I think the strongest change or influence that Dartmouth has had on me is shaping my research interests. I am now very dedicated to interdisciplinary work, and I think that's something that actually isn't seen enough on campus, but, I mean, especially in the larger fields that I work in, and I've had several crazy, kind of out-of-the-blue experiences working with historical scientific instruments and contemporary aboriginal art and just, you know, everything under the sun that has made me realize how much there is out there, and how wonderful it is to have all these things in one place, where you can be exposed to all these things at Dartmouth and hopefully prepare you for a career when you graduate, although I still have my fingers crossed on that front.

AL-JABER: So I think we've covered all the questions, but is there anything you think I neglected to ask you or anything you want to add in terms of how you see the Dartmouth community or where you fit into it?

NEILL: Well, I would just add that there are so many very different communities on Dartmouth campus. I know that there are many people who come here freshman year and just don't know which one to pick. I think that that idea of choosing a community is integral to more high school life, especially if you come from a very clique-y high school, but that at Dartmouth you don't have to choose if you don't want to. I think if I had known that freshman year, I might have had a

bit of an easier time of it, but I think it's great that we do have so many different communities here, and I wish that everyone would realize that.

AL-JABER: Okay. Thank you. I'm going to turn off the recorder now.

[End of interview.]