

# DARTMOUTH

## Ad Hoc Council on Work-life Issues ANNUAL REPORT FOR AY 2022-2023

### Membership:

School, Department, Office Membership: Name:  
represented:

Geisel	Geisel Faculty	Erika Moen
Tuck	Tuck Faculty	Lorin Parker
Thayer	Thayer faculty member	Kim Samkoe
Guarini	Graduate Student	Galini Poimenidou
Guarini	Postdoc	Nadia Lafrenière
Staff, IDE	Staff	Chloe Poston*
Staff	Staff	Courtney Rotchford
Staff	Staff	Jake Kransteuber
Provost (or representative)	Provost	Heather Drinan
Executive Vice President	Executive Vice President	Rick Mills
Chief Human Resources Officer (or representative)	HR	Cheryl Guerin
A&S	COP (Faculty of A&S) Sciences faculty member	Devin Balkcom *
A&S	COP (Faculty of A&S) Social Sciences faculty member	Treb Allen
A&S	COP (Faculty of A&S) Arts & Humanities faculty	Petra McGillen

\*Denotes Council Co-chair

### Charge and Membership assigned to the ad hoc council:

To provide guidance to the Provost and Executive Vice President in addressing the challenges of work-life issues as they relate to the recruitment and retention of employees and graduate students, with particular attention to how such issues affect diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Number of meetings during the past academic year:** The council met four times this year

### Activities for the past academic year, and how they address the charge of the council:

This is the second year of COWLI. In the first year, the objective was to identify challenges that the community (particularly including staff, faculty, and postdoctoral scholars) faced in work-life balance. That committee, through community surveys and other mechanisms, identified several key problems and potential solutions, grouped roughly into the areas of housing, childcare, and community-building.

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The objectives for the second year were focused on institutional response to the identified challenges:

- 1) Encourage transparency regarding the problems faced and the actions that will be taken.
- 2) Better understand current institutional plans to address the challenges.
- 3) Encourage more rapid and impactful institutional response to the identified challenges.

COWLI formally requested that the prior year's report be made public; this has now happened. COWLI also requested through a formal memo that the Provost and Executive Vice President publicly respond to the recommendations. The Provost and EVP responded in memo form and met with the Council.

The response highlighted several ongoing activities and outlined some approaches and challenges, discussed below in the "insights and recommendations" section.

Part of the institutional approach includes collaboration with community actors, including, for example, the Vital Communities organization, which has teams working on enhancing childcare and housing in the broader Upper Valley. COWLI met with representatives from Vital Communities.

Within Dartmouth, Co-Chair Poston met with the Steering Committee of the General Faculty to discuss the recommendations from the prior year, and actions that needed to be taken to satisfy those recommendations. Co-Chair Balkcom met with the Council on Institutional Priorities.

## **Key insights or recommendations:**

We know that organizational change is difficult and slow moving—especially when attempting to address challenges that are national in scale. With this in mind, we think it is vital that the administration make a concrete plan that details the next steps that Dartmouth intends to take that includes a proposed timeline for this change. The report from the prior year provides a very clear starting point for such a roadmap.

While the memo which responded to the report was helpful in delineating ongoing conversations, it has become clear throughout our meetings that COWLI membership (as well as the staff and faculty that they represent) hopes for a stronger formal commitment to direct action. Such a document would put in sharp relief the potential timescale and scope of the institutional response.

Discussions with the Provost and EVP explored the context of problems faced as well as possible responses. COWLI finds that the proposed and current actions are thoughtful and make a good start, but as described, are not yet adequate to meet the significant current work-life challenges faced at Dartmouth.

Child-care is scarce across for the entire upper valley, not just for Dartmouth employees, and shortage of trained daycare professionals makes it difficult for providers to expand to meet the need. Both Vital Communities and Dartmouth administration highlighted the need for a community-oriented solution to attract and train more daycare professionals. COWLI agrees, and this was a component of last year's report. We are glad to see that Dartmouth has contributed significant funding to projects with Vital Communities to better understand how to address early child teacher training.

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However, we also note that Dartmouth has an opportunity to lead by example. We recommend that in addition, Dartmouth take direct action to expand and enhance DCCCC, as also recommended in last year's report. For example, Dartmouth has an opportunity to lead by setting a new standard for pay for childcare providers in the Upper Valley.

Similarly, COWLI recognizes that housing scarcity is an Upper Valley-wide problem, reflecting larger national trends. We agree with the administration that attracting developers to build housing in the upper valley is important, and we understand that consultants may be helpful in developing an approach. We also recognize that work done by organizations such as Vital Communities can be helpful in addressing barriers such as the diverse zoning regulations across a largely rural community.

Nonetheless, the Council recommends that Dartmouth consider direct investment in staff and faculty housing. The faculty housing that Dartmouth does have is considered an important resource for faculty hiring and retention, as it eases transition to a new community, and indeed, provides opportunities to create community. There is great demand for expanding these options for both faculty and staff, and taking direct action to expand does not preclude working with other actors to address the broader community housing shortage.

We note that there is an approved position for a staff member whose position formally addresses work-life issues, including enhancing availability and accessibility of childcare, housing, and community-building. This is a great start, and COWLI would like to see this position to grow into a designated work-life office. We note that there is need for a high-level position for someone who can interface with community groups such as Vital Communities, various town planning and zoning boards, etc. There is also a need for direct day-to-day action to build community in ways recommended by the prior report. COWLI membership expressed willingness to help in recruiting candidates for positions in such an office.

## **Recommended topics of the council to consider in the coming year:**

We propose that the Council continue as a group but convene less frequently—perhaps on an ad hoc basis to address specific needs related to the suggested institutional plan.

This could include providing feedback, participating in interviews, and serving in an advisory role for the newly formed work-life position. It could also include providing input to consultants and serving as official representation on some of the committees convened by Vital Communities.

**Report Completion Date: June 15, 2023**