CHANGES IN THE MIDDLE EAST: IS JORDAN DIFFERENT?
Editor’s Note: Winter 2011
JI HYE HA ‘11
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Happily, I would like to announce that this winter term issue is enriched by a variety of contributing writers. Those whose work appears in this issue include a professor, alumni ranging from ’88 to ’10, and a graduate student. We were also lucky to receive an article on the Egyptian protests written by a student from the Middle East!

I have been amazed by how global and international this seemingly “small” community is. When I first came to the United States 8 years ago, to a small town in Missouri, I remember people constantly asking me whether I was from North or South Korea. Throughout that year, introducing myself was a frustrating process because people had such a difficult time pronouncing and remembering my name. So, subsequently, when I moved to a private high school I decided to choose the English name “Esther,” to avoid such troubles in the future and to feel more American. I’ve stuck with Esther for the past 6 years; however, at the end of last year, I felt an urge to go back to my original name. Perhaps it is because I have encountered numerous people on campus proudly using their original names and displaying their internationality, and because I have been reading many articles about international students’ identity and culture in this very magazine.

So now I’m just Ji Hye. One great thing about the Dartmouth community is that people here do not seem to have difficulty pronouncing my name and remember it well. Even more astonishing to me is that some Americans, knowing Chinese, ask me what Chinese characters my name uses. I’ve been amazed by how global and international Dartmouth people are. Perhaps later, when I travel further to other different regions of the world, I may find people having great difficulty with my name. But for now, having found pride in my identity, I can be patient and teach them how to pronounce my name, if they are willing to learn it.

In short, be proud of who you are! I hope you enjoy our special issue.
Recent events in Tunisia and Egypt seem to be producing a chain reaction in other Middle Eastern countries. In both Tunisia and Egypt, people rallied against their top leaders. In Jordan too, demonstrators have demanded political and economic reforms. But in Jordan, protesters have generally refrained from attacking the highest political authority in Jordan – the King. Tunisians protested against Ben Ali, who had been in power since 1987. Egyptians demonstrated against Mubarak, who was the president for 30 years (longer than many Pharaohs). Jordanians, however, protested against the Prime Minister Samir Rifai. Rifai has only held this title since December 2009, and he was going to be replaced in a few years. Protesters chanted for the King, who has held power since 1999 and whose family has held power since 1921. Why have Jordanians thus far not criticized the King?

Jordan is a constitutional monarchy. While the Prime Minister is head of the government, effective power rests with the King, who is head of the state. The King appoints the Prime Minister, the Senate, and the judiciary. He signs and executes all laws. The only part of the government people elect is the Chamber of Deputies, but it can be dissolved by the King (and he did dissolve it, most recently in 2009). Since the King assumed the throne in 1999, the government (prime minister and cabinet) has changed 8 times. So Al Rifai, the Prime Minister against whom protesters rallied, was in power only a year and three months.

Three reasons explain why demonstrators have not attacked the King. First, the royal family claim to rule is viewed as legitimate by many Jordanians. While Tunisia and Egypt are both republics, Jordan is one of only two countries in the world that are named by and after their royal families. Jordan’s full name is the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The descendents of Prophet Muhammad is a valid reason for supremacy. Prophet Muhammad’s descendents were in fact the Guardians of the Holy Places for many centuries. Thus, Prophet Muhammad’s descendents were called Ashraf (nobles) and Sadah (masters) as they ruled in many places since the dawn of Islam. Thus, people regard them as worthy of leadership and authority. As for the political reasons, Jordan was created by the present king’s great-grandfather. Furthermore, while countries like Egypt and Tunisia pretended to be republics, Jordan, does not pretend to be anything other than a constitutional monarchy. This does not mean that people are happy with the status quo; many want a more democratic monarchy, more like present-day England’s.

The second reason why protesters did not rally against the royal family is because the royal family is seen as a stabilizing force in Jordan. Jordan has many lines of cleavage: Palestinians vs. Bedouin, north vs. south, secular vs. Islamist are examples of these divisions. If, say, a tribal leader from Al-Salt (in the middle part of Jordan) became Jordan’s leader, then tribes in the northern city of Irbid might not accept him. The fact that the Hashemite family originates from the Mecca allows it to stabilize the country, as they are external to many of the country’s main internal divisions.

Finally, the Jordanian monarchy is not as corrupt as other...
The Way I Live at Dartmouth

KANGHOON JUNG
GRADUATE STUDENT

January 2011: our town, Hanover, is all in white. When I came from South Korea to Hanover last September, people who I met welcomed me to “Hanover, the small town”. Honestly, it took only around half an hour to look around the whole campus. Since eating is one of the biggest pleasures of living in a small town, I walked to check out all the restaurants in town. As you could probably guess, I finished that within an hour; for someone like me who is studying abroad for the first time and clumsy at cooking, I was glad to find a Korean restaurant at last. As all of you know, there isn’t much entertainment around. And my weak cell phone service here reminded me of Dartmouth’s motto, ‘Vox Clamantis in Deserto’. ‘A voice crying in the wilderness’ really wasn’t too far off from the truth.

After 5 months here, I am now used to the atmosphere of Dartmouth and Hanover. I have eaten at almost all the restaurants in town, and I’ve even improved my cooking. What helps me most is the calm and pleasant atmosphere of our school. This rural town helps me focus on myself, letting me escape from the everyday traffic jam of my hectic life. Hanover is a town that is a far cry from the traffic jams; I haven’t seen any taxis, and the public bus doesn’t even run on weekends. The life here provides me with more time for making a walk and being absorbed in meditation. Walking on the snow makes me reminisce about my childhood, when I played in fields covered with it. On winter mornings, the sun reflects off the snow on the way to classes, and I can see bright stars in the sky at around 4 pm, not too long after lunch. After early sunset in the winter, the long night here begins. On silent nights that I spend at home, my longing for the people that I love grows stronger as time goes by. Absence makes the heart grow fonder, especially to someone who comes from so far away. It makes me think of the choices and how these factors are established and changed over time.

When I think of why I came to Dartmouth, I believe again that the time that I will spend here will broaden my horizons and encourage my growth. Sometimes we all suffer from the pressure of a competitive atmosphere and feel anxious about our seemingly obscure futures. Whenever I face these problems, I think of the decision that drove me here and realize that I am doing what I really want. It’s like casting a spell on myself so that I find the real me. This is what motivates my life at Dartmouth.
457 Days in Morocco

DANIEL MEGILL
ALUMNI '07

766 days after I graduated from Dartmouth, I left for 457 days of living and working in Morocco. As it turned, I learned that your plans are much less likely to work out while travelling overseas; the displaced, lonely feeling of moving to a new place is worse when you don’t speak the language; and religious persecution still happens, though it may take months and Wikileaks to understand why so much so suddenly. These represent some of the low points of my time abroad, but I am glad I went nevertheless. I experienced high points as well. Below are snapshots of two such parts, the first of which competes with my weekly trip to McDonalds for the “most American part” of my time abroad, while the latter tells of a friend from a country I probably still could not pick out on a map.

One of the social hubs of the English-speaking community in Rabat, where most of my Moroccan tenure was spent, is the Marine house. Rabat is the capital of Morocco and thus a magnet for embassies, and with the US embassy comes a detachment of 5-6 Marines. These Marines, in addition to their official duties, would sometimes grace the games of softball, ultimate Frisbee, and “water polo” at the American school (another social hub, though it helped if you had kids) with their presence, and clue in lone Americans far from home as to where reasonably priced beer and a high level of mutual intelligibility could be found. I first made the acquaintance of the Marine house during NFL season, when it felt like a quiet sports bar with very consistent clientele. Depending on your interests, you could play pool, watch the games, or eat, drink, and talk. Attendees generally consisted of several Marines, embassy personnel, and Americans who lived in the area, a grab bag of Europeans, and a few Moroccans, but it was never wholly predictable. High-ranking military personnel passed through, as well as some true globe-trotters. I spent one night staring hard at a newcomer from across the room before striking up a conversation and learning that yes, it was the tour guide from Meknes who I had met once six months ago. When the end of football season left a hole in my social universe, I grew to appreciate the Marine house for its parties. These started around 7 pm, and at that time I would find myself talking primarily to youth from the church group I ran or kids whom I tutored. They dressed to fit the theme, and the event was a quiet, family-friendly mixer. As the night went on, though, the under-18 crowd and their parents headed home, and a different demographic took over. Tables cleared to form a dance floor, the music grew louder, and I found my way to the bar, to observe and talk. Most nights this was gradual, but the most striking case was my last: The Peace Corps was debriefing a “class” of volunteers, people mostly fresh from college who had spent two years on their best behavior in remote, rural parts of Morocco, and that night they were set loose upon us. They descended en masse, and the party was never the same. Talking with one curiously flushed gentleman, late that night, he questioned what I did, and, learning that I lived in Rabat, protested. “Do you tell your friends you’re in Morocco? You can’t tell them that. This isn’t Morocco.” Sitting in the Marine house, drinking beer, speaking English, it was hard to argue with him.

Getting language practice was a constant dilemma for me. The first language of Morocco is an Arabic dialect, but French works almost as well. I knew enough to get around and to exchange pleasantries, but it was hard for me to grow close to anyone with whom I had such fundamental doubts about my communication, particularly when Anglophones were readily available. One neighbor who I was grateful for was Pedro, an Equatorial Guinean, who hailed me in broken English soon after I moved in. We were not having much success, though, so I ventured that we could try French. He lit up and launched into a long stream of French, of which I understood the word “good.” He was persistent, though, and we became friends. His dream and goal in life was to live in England and, to my surprise, I learned that he had been accepted to a program at a prestigious college there. Over the months of our acquaintance I would explain to him what, according to letters he received, the problems with his visa applications were, trying to help him despite my own ignorance on such things. Through it all, my French improved, but the doubt of imperfect communication was ever present. Once he asked if he could attend church with me, and I happily consented, stating that I would knock on his door at 9:10 AM. I did as promised, and was surprised to be greeted by Pedro in his underwear, quite unprepared and equally unhurried. I attributed this to my lack of skill with French and tried to be clearer next week, but the scene played out exactly as before. For the next week I proposed that he knock on my door. He was never late again, though some weeks later, after a late Saturday night at the Marine house, he woke me. It’s a small thing, but a prime example of a misunderstanding that could be cultural, linguistic, or just personal, and I am not sure I will ever know. I last saw Pedro a year ago when he knocked and asked me...
to pray for him, since he was setting out to his home country to get his visa application through once and for all. I have tried to contact him since then, but without success. So I cannot end this story properly, in the way I had hoped it would end. The Internet has been a blessing for scattered friends—my standard parting line was “We’ll always have Facebook,” and I just finished losing two games of risk to my youth from church—which makes Pedro all the more anomalous. 20 years ago we might have lost touch, but in the modern world it should not happen, or so it feels.

The blessings of the modern world mean that, for me at least, in a large city I am never far from home since I still have the Internet, expatriate communities, and, of course, McDonalds. I am glad for these things, and it is hard to imagine travelling without them. But without friends like Pedro, it is hard to see the point of travelling in the first place.

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The Dartmouth Family

KAREN L. MORTON
ALUMNI ’88

Beginning with the first acceptance letter that welcomes you into the Dartmouth campus family, and culminating with graduation day, which ushers you into the multi-generational global Dartmouth family, the metaphor of family is an elusive and yet strangely powerful concept. As a Dartmouth alumna from the class of ’88, married to a fellow alumnus from the class of ’89, I have frequently reminisced with my husband about our first college memories. Many still make us laugh and smile today, but one pervading sentiment frequently taints each memory: loneliness.

Whether you arrived at Dartmouth from another country or from the Midwestern states of Wisconsin and Michigan as we did, college life separates you from lifetime friends and close family relations. Some freshmen leave their familiar surroundings for their first international flight. Some leave behind their high school love, with whom they shared their deepest teenage sentiments. Some leave the comfort of the family table where rich foods and conversations were dished out and consumed nightly. And, even though communication methods have improved greatly since the late 80’s when we were students, physical closeness to people who have known you through your maturing years cannot be replaced by your cell phone or laptop connection. For international students, these initial lonely months are compounded by language challenges, the lack of healthy socializing not involving copious amounts of alcohol, and brusque interactions with others.

Perhaps this loneliness is what Dartmouth staff and students desired to combat when they introduced the Dartmouth “family” vocabulary. Usually, however, language barriers and cultural traditions are not an obstacle to creating a natural family; neither are prejudice nor ignorance of your siblings’ past. So, how can such a family atmosphere be created in the college environment, where these very obstacles present themselves every day? In an attempt to recreate the family unit, at least partially, over 200 college affinity groups have been birthed to gather interested students: fraternities, salsa dancing groups, outing clubs and international groups. These groups can foster a family environment and can alleviate some of the loneliness. However, one intrinsic characteristic of every college group is the uniform age of 18-22 years of all its ‘siblings’, a characteristic which can be considered both a strength and a weakness.

As members of the Upper Valley community for many years, and having continued our interactions with Dartmouth students, particularly internationals, my husband and I have seen the value in multi-cultural and multi-generational communities. We have become involved in teaching ESL to the wives and husbands of graduate students, through a program at our church conceived by a Dartmouth staff member from Beijing and a church administrator in the 1990’s. We have connected students to families for holiday dinners and family outings, having many in our own home for meals and games. We have seen the value in children, college students and seniors worshiping together in a church setting. Fostering the growth of a healthy family involves spending time together in both meaningful and light-hearted ways, from deep conversations on politics and religion to comical games where each bares his or her insecurities. A close friend of ours from Ghana who graduated from Harvard and then became a Thayer graduate student babysat our children so we could attend a weekend-long wedding in Princeton. Several years after his act of kindness, we reconnected with him on Facebook and offered to travel to Ghana to care for his new offspring, if he would have us. These interactions, crossing generational and cultural lines, truly foster the Dartmouth family and can be a big part of alleviating loneliness.
A family can be created anywhere, and needs to be nurtured everywhere. It is a source of security and rest, where people come together unconditionally to share meals, problems, criticisms and, ultimately, time. When my husband and I left our respective birth homes over twenty-five years ago to become freshmen at Dartmouth, we had no way of knowing that we would never return to live with, or even near, those relatives. Out of necessity, we had to fit into new families in various communities from Spain to Germany to Lebanon, New Hampshire. As Christians, we often looked for a community of similar-believing friends in a church. Becoming a part of a family, whether it is with similar-aged college students, your first workmates in a corporate job after graduation, or your neighbors in a new urban or suburban home, is a powerful source of security and protection against the loneliness that can result from being transplanted into a strange, new environment.

East is East & West is West?

PROFESSOR JAMES B. MURPHY
DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT

In my 20 years teaching at Dartmouth, I have seen a steady rise in the ethnic diversity of my students. Yet this growth of diversity has been very uneven: the number of students coming from South and East Asia has changed the most. Obviously, it is very dubious to lump “Asian” students together, given all the huge cultural and religious differences on that immense continent, not to mention deep enmities. The whole notion of “Asia” was, I have read, a creation of Japanese imperialists, who created an “Asian co-prosperity zone” to counteract Western imperialism. I grew up with a Chinese nanny who frequently referred to Japanese “barbarians,” so I have no illusions about Asian unity. Still, some broad contrasts of Asians with Americans exist.

To be honest, I often don’t know if my Asian students are genuinely international students, who are foreign nationals studying here, or first-generation Americans. Usually, even the foreign nationals speak excellent English. Whether foreign nationals or Americans, my international students always add new challenges and opportunities to my courses. I am constantly struck by how truly global education has become. Partly because of European and American colonialism, and partly because of the spread of international curricula, like the International Baccalaureate, ambitious students everywhere in the world are learning a similar body of knowledge. Indeed, many Asian students have a more rigorous command of European history and culture than my American students. In the case of European classical music, this is dramatically true. My Asian students are in many ways like Americans were 50 years ago, when it was expected of middle class kids that they learn to play piano or violin. Asians are now the only hope for classical music.

Even though my Asian students are in some ways more “Western” than my American students, in other ways they are interestingly non-Western. I love it when we discuss arranged marriages in my course on “Love, Friendship, and Marriage”: a South Asian student will sometimes say that her parents “had an arranged marriage.” We learn hugely from these exotic experiences. Or when we are talking about family authority, my American students talk about their parents as their friends, while my East Asian students will sometimes say: “I am afraid of my father.” This leads to wonderful discussions. My conversations with my Asian students lead me to affirm Tocqueville’s keen insight about Americans from back in the 1830s. Tocqueville said that no one is more welcoming of foreign nationals, but less curious about their native culture than Americans. We Americans figure that people come here because they don’t like their native culture, so why should we? That is a huge loss for us.

I often see my Asian students struggle between a professional and a truly liberal understanding of their own educations. Many of my Asian students feel intense familial pressure to see college as a preparation for a successful career rather than as preparation for a happy life. They are often relentlessly focused on what they think will be professionally useful courses in the natural or social sciences. To some extent this focus is based on false information: many professional schools and businesses don’t actually care what major you pick. But, more importantly, a vocational approach to college will lead to a diminished life. Genuine happiness in life generally will have more to do with an appreciation of music, art, philosophy, and literature than with a mastery of technical fields in college. Students cannot be expected to know this: we adults need to be better mentors.

Finally, some Americans are fearful of the challenge posed by hard-working and disciplined Asians. Yet a conversation I had with a South Asian student convinced me that there is nothing to fear. She said that when her family moved to America, her parents told her “No TV, you must do your homework carefully!” But then she added, “But now they let my little sister watch TV.”
Introspection
HEIDI TAN ’10

I was clearing out some shelf space in my room recently, when I stumbled on a hard copy of my Dartmouth admissions essay. Reading it engendered a mixture of nostalgia and amusement. But it also made me realize: 1) that I have learnt and grown so much during my time at Dartmouth and 2) that I have really not changed. The dreams and desires I have now are essentially the same as those reflected in my essay from four years ago. Yet they are also colored by a more matured and nuanced perspective.

Entering Dartmouth, I made sure that I was involved in things that I was interested in, such as music and service, but invested most of my time into relationships and my faith. But because these are matters of the heart, they made separation from Dartmouth more difficult. Leaving Dartmouth after just three years due to a government scholarship I was on, there was a lot I did not want to leave behind. There were also things that I knew I would be missing by skipping senior year. While many seniors were ready to take on the “real world,” I was not exactly keen on leaving as a junior. And while they went home or to places like New York or Boston to work, my heart straddles a 12-13 hour time difference, a 24-hour long journey, and almost 10,000 miles from Dartmouth.

Eight months on, I still believe that Dartmouth was one of the best things that happened to me. At the same time, I now believe that leaving Dartmouth was probably just as good a thing. I think I have just started to learn a little about forgetting what lies behind and pressing forward to the things that lie ahead. I’m not discounting the lessons learned, the mistakes made, or the amazing memories and friendships formed (I still keep in very regular contact with friends at Dartmouth). But life is more about being able to look at the good and bad things that happened in the past. It is about recognizing these things without regret or longing to go back, while getting to know yourself better and moving on towards your bigger goals.

“In a weary world plagued with such deep-seated insecurities, I dream of changing lives. It’s true we all start out small, but I believe it is through being generous in the little gestures that we are prepared for a greater purpose ahead.” Idealistic as it may sound, I do believe the precollege, 17-year-old me got some of it right. Dartmouth’s motto “Vox Clamantis in Deserto,” or “a voice crying out in the wilderness,” is actually a quote from the Bible that refers to John the Baptist. John certainly had an impact of his own, but his central life purpose was to prepare the way for Jesus, someone John himself recognized as being so much greater than he would ever be. “He must increase,” said John, “and I must decrease.” John spent many years in a wilderness in the middle of nowhere preparing for this life purpose.

In the same way, I’ve learned that Dartmouth is a place of small beginnings. It is also primarily a place of transition, equipping and preparation. While the experience is great and should be enjoyed, we have to always remember that it points to a purpose much greater. That professor may be dry or difficult, but his central life purpose was to teach, it progresses until I can also become a teacher and on my way to getting fully certified. Yet, I have realized that while the journey starts where I learn to teach, it progresses until I can also teach to learn.

And there is no end to learning. I have been presented the chance to make an impact first on the children in my classes and then in my country. There is still so much that I know I am lacking, but I’m still dreaming bigger. I don’t always know where exactly I am going or what lies ahead. I know I will never be fully prepared and there will always be places of preparation that will be either hard to stay in or hard to leave. But I also know that in spite of what circumstances may seem, I have been, and still am, constantly being prepared for challenges I face now, and those greater purposes ahead.
I’m American But...
The Challenges of a Singular Identity
STEVEN A. TEBBE ’13

For as long as I can remember, my friends and classmates have told me that I’m different. By different, they don’t mean that I am the son of a celebrity or that I have this really cool birthmark. They have never been able to put their finger on it, but I have often heard that I see life through a different lens—one more appreciative of pluralism and of the world. And they’re mostly right. Even though the biggest move my family ever experienced was from the city of Chicago to one of the suburbs, we always ventured abroad to different parts of the world as I was growing up. I have been kicked out of Stonehenge for playing tag when I was 10, shared a meal with a tribe of the native people of Panama, and suffered from food poisoning on a mountaintop in China. Those are just a few of the memories I have gathered through my excursions to the about twenty countries I have visited across all continents. Yes, that includes Antarctica. These experiences have helped shape me and will stay with me for the rest of my life.

When people ask me, “What nationality are you?”, I almost hesitate to say “American.” In psychology, there is a cognitive process called out-group homogeneity bias, which suggests that we view other groups as homogenous, while viewing our own group as more diverse. This bias often results in stereotyping, as we think people of a certain nationality are rather similar (just think of a Brit, an Aussie, or a Mexican and you’ll see what I mean), yet always talk about how diverse Americans are.

“Part of one’s identity is how one has lived and the experiences one has had.”

When I traveled abroad, I have experienced the effects of such stereotyping, as people have made assumptions about me simply because I’m from the US. I spent this past summer living and working in Cape Town, South Africa. When I made phone calls for work, people would say, “Oh, you’re an American?” and slightly chuckle. I had never before been judged for my accent, and this experience slightly disheartened me. While I cannot hide my “accent,” I became aware of the assumptions people make about me because I’m American—some that are not true at all.

So, if I am not simply American, then what am I? Although the 20 years I have spent in the United States have shaped me significantly, they are not all that I am. It’s hard to fit my identity into a singular category. I believe I obtained part of my identity during my experiences abroad. For example, my summer in South Africa helped me recognize certain American cultural norms that I had falsely assumed to be universal. Simply saying that I’m American doesn’t necessarily capture who I am now. Part of one’s identity is how one has lived and the experiences one has had.

It’s quite easy to classify people, but I would advise against it. Everyone’s identity is unique, affected by multiple different influences, and the joy exists in discovering this identity, bit by bit. Some people may identify with a single culture, but when people ask me what nationality I identify with, they’d better get ready for a bit of a mouthful.
Think BIG!
CHRISTABEL DORCAS N. MAKOKHA ‘11

About twelve years ago, while in 6th grade, my friend lent me a copy of “Think Big,” a book about Dr. Ben Carson who rose from the bottom of his 5th grade class to the top and went on to become the first person to successfully separate craniophagus twins (twins conjoined at the back of the head). Immediately after finishing the book, I looked for his first book, “Gifted Hands.” From then on, my quest for knowledge became insatiable; I wanted something bigger for myself although I did not know what quite yet. In retrospect, my academic career (from my high school in Kenya, to the United World College in Wales, and finally to Dartmouth) has been driven by the belief that we all have an inner guru that just needs the right environment to be unleashed.

Like most Dartmouth students, my experience here has been anything but ordinary. I immersed myself in a lot of activities; freshman year I was working three jobs, singing in an a capella group, participating in the Leadership Development Program, and did a thousand other things just like any other “over-eager freshman.” By my second year, however, I was becoming more conscious of how my socio-economic upbringing set me apart from the majority of Dartmouth students; hence, I got more involved with programs that encouraged dialogue on issues of diversity. I also became an undergraduate advisor and got more involved with the student chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers. By junior year, I had become more comfortable and had successfully curved out a space for myself at Dartmouth, and so my involvement on campus was more focused on my academic pursuits and on ways to help other Dartmouth students figure out their Dartmouth experience. Although I have enjoyed most of the activities I’ve been privileged to partake in, I never really took the time to reflect on how my Dartmouth experience has shaped me until I went to Germany my junior fall on a research internship. During my time abroad, I had time to reflect on the choices I had made both academically and in extra-curricular activities. Being a part of the Rockefeller Leadership Fellows Program has also given me the opportunity to think more about how my Dartmouth experience has shaped my leadership skills, my understanding of my role as an African student in the Diaspora, and my career path. The more I think about it, the more I realize that although I have changed a lot at Dartmouth, my personal philosophy still remains the same; it’s a mantra I borrowed from Dr. Carson’s Think Big:

- **Talent:** We all have been endowed with intellectual talent and we need to develop it and think critically about ways to use our talents in our career choices.
- **Honesty:** Being honest with one’s self is probably one of the hardest things to do but is the one thing that allows us to make sound decisions regarding our emotional, social, spiritual, and even academic life.
- **Insight:** In the grand scheme of things, our experiences allow us to grow, but this can only happen if we constantly take time to reflect on our undertakings.
- **Nice:** “If you’re nice to people, then once they get over the suspicion of why you’re being nice, they will be nice to you.”
- **Knowledge:** “When people need you, they pay you, so you’ll be okay in life.”
- **Books:** “They are the mechanism for obtaining knowledge.”
- **In-Depth Learning:** “Learn for the sake of knowledge and understanding, rather than for the sake of impressing people or taking a test.”
- **God:** After six years of questioning, doubting, and engaging in conversation about God, religion, the question of theodicy, and other life’s “big questions,” I’ve become comfortable with the knowledge that I cannot have answers to everything and I still believe that, for me, beyond science there has to be faith.

I could write a whole essay on mistakes to avoid during your career at Dartmouth (I’ve definitely made more than my fair share of poor decisions), but I think in a place like Dartmouth where it is so easy to lose yourself in a quest to “find yourself” — what you are passionate about, ways to change the world, and how to achieve your highest potential—the most important thing you can ever do is to figure out the mantra that governs your life and stick by it. This does not by any means guarantee a smooth sail but it will make you think critically about decisions you make and help you become more proactive and strategic in pursuing your goals.

I graduate in June with an AB and BE in Engineering Sciences with a concentration in Biomedical Engineering and will be working as an associate consultant in Boston. Although I look forward to the next phase of my life, Dartmouth holds a special place in my heart because it is in this place that I have been challenged, edified, learnt a lot about myself and grown into the person I am today. I can honestly say without a shadow of doubt that Dartmouth was the best fit for me, and that, the cold weather notwithstanding, I have found a second home in this place.
Winterim Fun!

MIRIAM J. KILIMO ’14

I remember the sadness I felt when I left Hanover for Boston on Christmas Eve last year. My two weeks at Dartmouth during interim were a blast; I made new friends, cemented old friendships, and, for a brief moment, captured the fun that I used to have back home in Kenya.

Steve Silver did an awesome job of ensuring that those who had opted to stay over for interim were well taken care of. We had movie nights and luncheons by the Dickey Center, the President’s Office, OPAL, and Computing Services. There were plenty of job opportunities on campus, and almost everyone who stayed behind got one, like my one week of full-time employment with the Campus Life office. Fewer people around also meant more food for those left behind! The flipside though was not having access to all of the buildings. Those of us who had vowed not to have phones found ourselves buying them anyway. We literally had to plan our every move—forgetting your ID in your room could cost you dearly (note that I’m speaking from the point of view of a freshman).

My favorite memories included one of our monopoly nights and a senseless dinner discussion we had about uniqueness (Interim people!!!). I enjoy playing monopoly—I used to love chess, but stopped playing with more talented people so I could keep my winning record. My opponents were Ala, Stassia, Mehdi and Collin. Collin didn’t have much luck, and had to make an early exit. Stassia soon became the resident billionaire, while Mehdi, Ala and I struggled to make a living. Ala then lost all his money to Stassia, and Mehdi and I were left to fight her off. Eventually, no one seemed to be winning—we all alternated between living on the verge of bankruptcy and then of wealth. We called it a truce, and lived to fight another day—the day of the “senseless dinner discussion”.

I remember the argument clearly: are we unique or not? My answer: an emphatic NO! If you’ve taken Karen Gocsik’s class, then you remember Kundera’s argument in Immortality that none of us is unique. Still fresh from my Writing 2 class, there was no way I would let other people convince me otherwise. Needless to say, we argued for almost four hours, invoking numerous examples, mathematics, philosophy, the dictionary, and even various analogies. Of course at the end of it all, we had to call a truce, just like the monopoly game.

All this “fighting” and “healthy competition” made my interim great. I know Collin is shaking his head—he doesn’t quite believe that my kind of competition is healthy. Still, I’ll remember those days with great nostalgia—a great deal of fun packed in two amazing weeks! I look forward to my next break with the same gang, or even a new one.