

"Imagine the residential halls as incubators."

LOOK WHO'S TALKING

> **MIKE WOOTEN**, *Senior Assistant Dean of Residential Life*



What's the plan to reimagine residential life?

Some spaces will be dramatically re-configured. Others will need less work. Because residents will be associated with one "house" for the majority of their tenures—similar to the Yale and Harvard systems—they will build deep and more lasting relationships.

What are the nuts and bolts of any changes?

The incoming class of 2019 will be part of a new system, which will be in the process of being configured even as they come in. They will live in a continuous way in a house-like system beginning their first year, but not in the same space each year. All first-year students will live together and then, as a group, move to various locations within their house system. Their room choice options will be within their house.

What problems are you trying to fix?

Community and continuity, integration with the intellectual mission, high-risk behavior.

Caused by the D-Plan?

Yes. Junior and sophomore years there's such movement. It is wonderful, but it's hard to build strong community when you don't know your neighbors for more than 10 weeks. Creating a wider array of places to drop an anchor around positive connections, around creativity, around academic goals—that for us is really important.

How does residential housing relate to campus Greek life?

This is not a threat to the Greek system. In fact, we have a lot to learn from Greek life. Part of what is so powerful about the Greek system is that it provides an anchor in what is a fast-moving, D-Plan experience at Dartmouth. That's part of what we're trying to create in our system.

Ten years from now, will alums of today recognize the housing system?

I think so. I hope that you would have all of the right smells and recollections because of how we redesigned, that it would resemble and remind you of what was powerful about your time. There's something about the legacy, tradition and culture of a place that will remain, I hope.

—*Claire Groden '14*