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## June 8, 2012

## Transition Planning Update from President David Neidorf

The transition process for coeducation at Deep Springs College is proceeding smoothly. Since I last reported to the DS community in December, the Coed Transition Committee held a three-day meeting at Deep Springs in January, and has since continued its work via subcommittee. Initially we planned to finalize transition recommendations to TDS during the summer, but we have been struck by the usefulness and importance of the Student Body's participation. By extending the process into the upcoming academic year, we will be better able to involve members of the incoming class of 2012 in detailed discussion of the transition. It is this class that will, if all goes according to schedule, be second-years during our first coeducational year.

During our January meeting, the transition committee accomplished the two major items on its agenda: We established detailed agenda for the work of the subcommittees, on such things as admissions, recruitment, community expectations, health services, and staff adaptation. And we came to tentative agreement over our larger gateway questions. If you don't recall the makeup of the subcommittees and their structure, see my December report at <a href="http://www.deepsprings.edu/news%20and%20events/coeducation">http://www.deepsprings.edu/news%20and%20events/coeducation</a>.

In its discussion of gateway questions, the committee tentatively agreed (pending review when we finalize our report) on the following recommendations to TDS and the student body:

- That we establish a "transition period" of no more than three years, beginning with the matriculation of our first female students, after which we reevaluate policies established during the transition period.
- That the total number of students in a coeducational SB remain the same as in years past at Deep Springs.
- To continue as we do now considering gender in admissions decisions, making an effort during the transition period to reach rough gender parity in student numbers over a two-year period. We then anticipate a reexamination of whether or not to continue taking gender into account in admissions.
- That all students who wish to are able to reside in single-sex rooms and use single-sex bathrooms throughout their residence at the college, and that this arrangement be the default for the initial four months of each student's residence.
- That we make infrastructure changes to ensure that single-sex or private bathrooms are available in the dormitory and near ranch, farm and garden facilities at the lower ranch.

We have also had three visits from our admissions consultant, Ted O'Neill (former Dean of Admissions at the University of Chicago). Ted has taken a close look at all stages of our

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admissions process and discussed with us its quality, (he gave us high marks), and various ways of streamlining it without loss of quality if (as we expect) applications more than double over the next few years. As with the other aspects of transition planning, Ted's recommendations will be included in our final report to the Trustees this fall.

I have been very pleased with the quality and wisdom of the input contributed to this process so far by students, staff, consultants, and board members, and I look forward to working further with this group. Some alumni have asked why not all eras of alumni are represented on the committee – the answer is that we approached planning the transition as more a practical task than as a political opportunity to involve a broad range of supporters. In addition to board representation, we wanted to assemble a smoothly working group of people who would either participate in the transition, or else who had significant professional experience directly relevant to our particular case; residential coeducation with small groups in isolated and intense environments. So far this procedure has worked very well.

Several alumni have asked me also how they can help with the transition. I hope that those who are interested in doing so will let me know directly, but at this juncture there is little help needed. As we move towards recruitment that will change, and we will be back in touch. For now, we hope that alumni who are pleased by the transition will help us to register sustained community support by lending a hand in our ongoing development efforts.

Best wishes for the summer season, David Neidorf President, Deep Springs College