

"...one of the most selective and innovative colleges in the world."

—The New York Times

DEEP SPRINGS COLLEGE



Deep Springs College, founded in 1917, lies isolated in a high desert valley in Eastern California, thirty miles from the nearest town. The school provides its twenty-six male students with full scholarships, valued at over \$50,000 per year, covering tuition, room, and board. Students immerse themselves in a unique and demanding educational project that unites a seminar-based liberal arts program with manual labor and extensive student self-governance. Students assume substantial responsibilities on the alfalfa farm and the cattle ranch, as well as in the administration and maintenance of the institution. After two years at Deep Springs, most students transfer to prestigious universities to complete their undergraduate studies, including Brown, Cornell, Stanford, Swarthmore, the University of Chicago, UC Berkeley, and Yale.

Deep Springs cultivates a union of character and intellect, of skill and purpose; students learn to feel at home in both the intellectual and the practical worlds without limiting themselves to either. The explicit mission of Deep Springs is to prepare its students for a life of service by endowing them with a sense of significant responsibility. In a culture of homogenous options for higher education, Deep Springs' unprecedented approach offers an educational experience unlike any other.



— Daily Life

Days at Deep Springs defy generalization. Participation in all three pillars of life – academics, labor, and self-governance – demands constant attention to responsibilities and the needs of the community and the college. Each pillar informs, shapes, and affects the others. Day-to-day activities are diverse and different for every student; each must pull his own weight in contributing to the vitality of Deep Springs life.

Hours before dawn, the two student dairy boys rise and head out under the clear desert sky. In the colder months they face the onslaught of a bitter wind on their way to the dairy barn; in the warmer months they catch the sunrise on their way back. Meanwhile, other early risers wake to review the previous night's reading one last time before class. In the kitchen, a student cracks a cookbook and plans the first meal of the day. Shortly before breakfast, the feed man emerges from his hay-littered room and drives down to the lower ranch to feed the horses, cows, pigs, sheep, and chickens. As he returns, the breakfast bell draws a small but loyal cadre to the boardinghouse for biscuits and gravy, a fruit salad, French toast, and the ranch's fresh milk and eggs.

Classes are held throughout the morning, between breakfast and lunch. Students grab books and binders from their dorm rooms and jog across the lawn for class; painting students carry their canvases to the studio behind the main building; the larger Plato group meets to discuss the difference between rhetoric and sophistry in the *Gorgias*; a handful of biology students gathers in the science lab to test water samples from the upper reservoir, a favorite Student Body swimming hole, to find out why the algae has grown darker this year; a pair of math students spread their books and notes across a table in the dorm to go over the previous night's homework for multivariable calculus; at one professor's home, students follow in Foucault's footsteps and debate the origins and legitimacy of scientific authority in modern society.

When the lunch bell rings, many discussions continue at the lunch table and often into the afternoon's labor. As late-rising stragglers join the hungry assembly, the entire community gathers in one place for the first time in the day. Staff, faculty, and students all eat together and the conversations go far beyond academic subjects alone. At the meals, everything from world news to Student Body politics to personal anecdotes to pop culture is welcome at the table. In a close community like Deep Springs, everyone is involved in everyone else's lives in some way.

While a few students clean up after the meal, a score of students head out for an afternoon of labor. The general labor crew repairs a fence around one of the fields, where the student

cowboy will soon bring a herd of cows to graze. Meanwhile, the members of the farm team scatter around the ranch to move irrigation lines and the mechanic's assistant works to rebuild a tractor engine so that the farm team can later plow the alfalfa fields for a second planting. The grounds/orderlies complete maintenance jobs around the main circle, the cooks prepare salads made entirely from ingredients the gardeners brought back from the garden that morning, and the butcher begins working on a fore-quarter of beef.

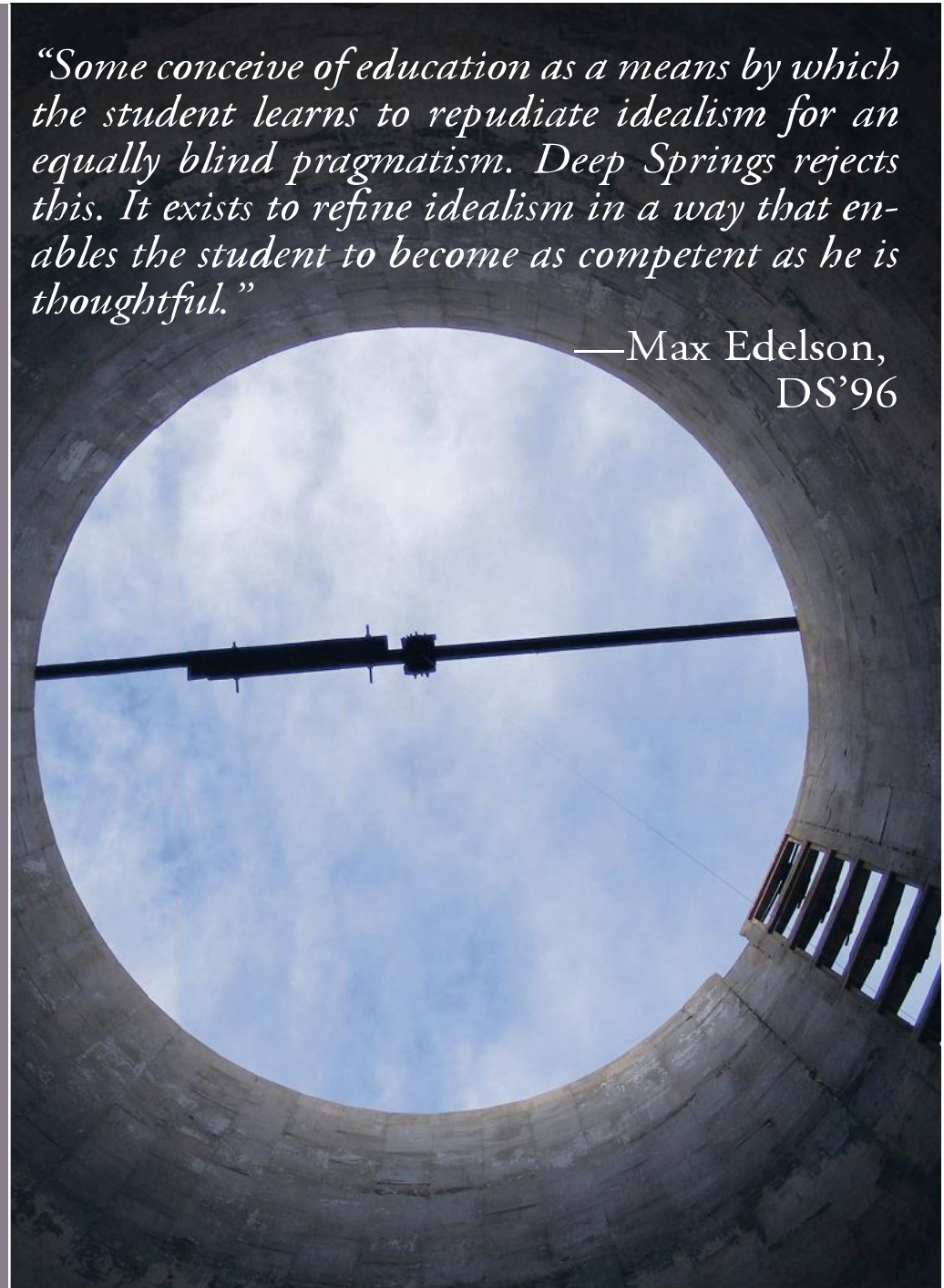
The half-hour before dinner is unofficially reserved for soccer. When the dinner bell rings at 6 pm, the score is forgotten and the next goal wins. By now the boardinghouse is full again, restocked with fresh milk from the dairy boys' afternoon run. The main course is spare ribs from the previous weekend's slaughter, fresh vegetables the gardeners have brought in, and cheese the dairy boys have made with extra milk. It's a meal not to be missed—except, of course, for the glory of the winning goal. Just before sunset, the athletes at last come in to eat.

Evening events vary from one day to the next. On Tuesdays, the community comes together for public speaking, the only course that students are required to take during both years at Deep Springs. On Fridays, the Student Body meets to discuss issues ranging from the role of technology at Deep Springs to the potential hiring of a new faculty member. Throughout the week, committees meet to tackle the more specific and involved work. Occasionally someone will screen a movie in the main room and, if they make popcorn, lure passersby into watching it with them. Otherwise, there is usually someone in the boardinghouse willing to discuss philosophy or the next day's reading.

At sundown, the feed man closes the door to the chicken coop, protecting the fowl from desert predators during the night. Reading lamps flicker on around the main circle while the sound of Debussy drifts from the Steinway in the main room. Hours later, a pair of night owls wanders over to the boardinghouse for coffee before continuing their studies. As they, too, finally succumb to sleep, one of the dairy boys wakes the other. Groggily, they make their way to the dairy, heralding the morning with the squeak and pivot of the milk cart.

“Some conceive of education as a means by which the student learns to repudiate idealism for an equally blind pragmatism. Deep Springs rejects this. It exists to refine idealism in a way that enables the student to become as competent as he is thoughtful.”

—Max Edelson,
DS'96





Academics

A diverse curriculum of small, discussion-based classes presents the student with a rigorous environment in which to sharpen his own powers of inquiry, and furthers the intensity of the educational project. The discursive skills gained from self-governance and the ethics and responsibility from labor inform the students' approach to academics.

Classes at Deep Springs are small, intensive seminars. The average class size is six or seven, although enrollment can range from just one student to the entire Student Body. Like all things at Deep Springs, the success of classes rests on students' shoulders. Expectations are high and anonymity is not an option. Students devote considerable time and energy to their assignments, often reading texts several times and meeting in small discussion groups to shape and refine ideas before class. It is rare for a student to come to class unprepared and it is painfully obvious when it happens. These rigorous academic standards allow courses at Deep Springs to achieve a depth uncommon at the undergraduate level.

The exploration and discussion of ideas are at the heart of every course. Classes are built around varied and demanding reading lists. Neither students nor professors are interested in the dispersal of dogmatic interpretations and groundless claims, and professors tend to guide more than they lecture. Discussions explore both the practical and philosophical implications of texts and change direction as ideas collide and evolve; they are an opportunity to work through problems together. Everyone is accountable to everyone else: professors challenge students, students challenge professors, and students challenge each other. Classes at Deep Springs both demand and foster critical thinking, lucid speech, and the ability to pursue productive threads of discussion.

The curriculum and course offerings at Deep Springs are radically different from those of other colleges and universities. There are two required courses: composition and public speaking. Composition is a fast-paced writing course that all students take during their first semester. Public speaking occurs throughout the entire year: all students are required to give three speeches per semester during their two years. Every Tuesday night the community gathers to listen as about a half-dozen students speak on a wide variety of topics, often incorporating the students' Deep Springs experience. The speakers meet with a professor afterwards for a critique.

In addition to composition and public speaking, there are usually eight or nine regular classes offered per semester. Though few in number, the selection of courses covers a broad range of topics and individually are often more focused than typical undergraduate courses. Students are involved in the curriculum at every level: they hire professors and select the classes they will teach, and they maintain a dialogue with the professors throughout the semester so that they can evaluate

and adjust classes as they go along. Students often pursue independent studies to engage with topics not covered by regular classes. This customized and flexible system allows Deep Springs to offer courses that students would not have an opportunity to take at any other undergraduate institution.

The college employs a faculty “chair” in each of three core subject areas: one in the humanities, one in the social sciences, and one in the natural sciences. Each of these professors teaches two classes per semester for two to six years. The president and dean of the college also teach one or two courses per year. In addition to these long-term faculty, Deep Springs hires several short-term faculty on a semester-by-semester basis. Having both long-term and short-term faculty allows the college to have stability and variety in its academic program. Faculty come to Deep Springs with degrees from the most prestigious universities in the world.

Campus facilities include a science lab, an art studio, a darkroom, a forge, a wood shop, a saddle shop, a bicycle shop, a performance space, a 26,000-volume library, a computer lab, a music studio featuring digital recording equipment, and an array of musical instruments including a Steinway grand piano. A music instructor visits the campus weekly to teach piano, guitar, and music theory, as well as almost any other musical instrument of interest to students.



“We depend on each other for much of our education. Academics requires a voracious appetite for discussion and reading. Classes thrive on an air of open, constructive and mutual criticism.”

—Casey Sanchez, DS’96

“At Deep Springs, I learned to pick out what’s relevant in a discussion, express myself concisely and cogently, sense how the sentiment of a room shifts and—most importantly—learned to really listen to, respect and allow myself to be changed by the insights of others.”

—Oliver Morrison, DS’00

Deep Springs is fully accredited and the quality of its educational program is well-known among top-tier college admissions offices. Ninety percent of Deep Springs graduates transfer to their first-choice schools. Over two thirds of alumni have earned graduate degrees and more than half have received doctorates.

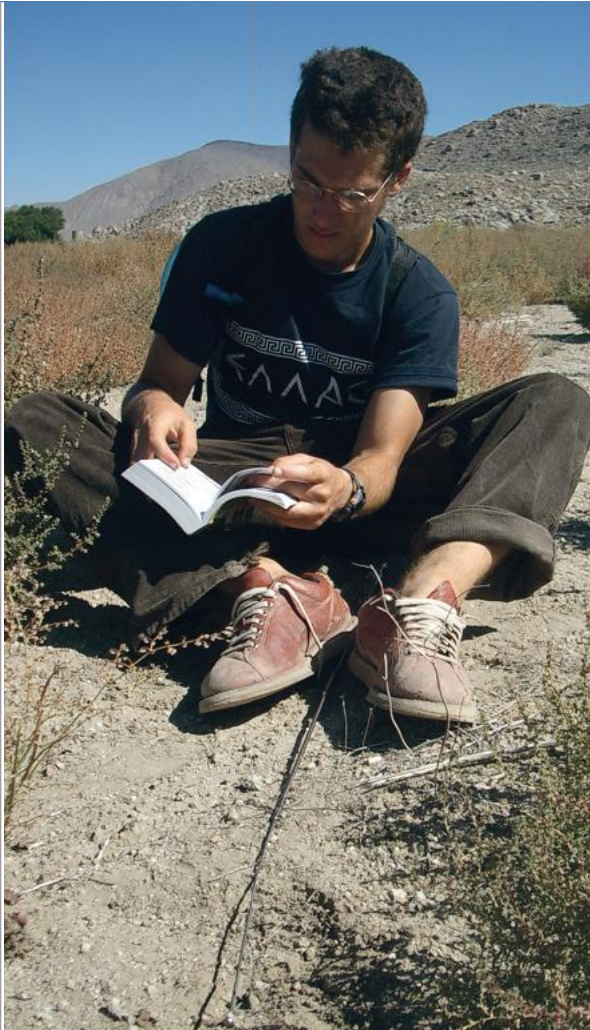


Recent Course Offerings

Agricultural Economics
American Historical Poem
Anthropology of Science
Art and Archetype
Arts at Black Mountain College
Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics
Aspects of Modernity
Calculus
Civil Society and Social Capital
Creative Nonfiction Writing
Discourse and Deliberation
Drawing
Divided Cities
Feminism
Homer's Iliad and Odyssey
Iconography in Renaissance Art
Landscape Ecology
Mathematical Concepts and Logic
Origins and Emergence of Life
Painting
Kinematics
Plato and the Divine
Poetry Workshop
Psychology
Scandinavian Literature
Thermodynamics
Thucydides
Theodicies
Tocqueville's Democracy in America
Transcendentalism
Writings of Friedrich Nietzsche

Independent Studies

Ceramics
Don Quixote
Hegel
Literature of Evil
Locke
Linguistics
Macroeconomics
Spanish



"Though unknown to many academics and college administrators, Deep Springs is deeply respected by admissions directors at top schools. Deep Springs students are in almost every case qualified, and often 'super qualified' to transfer to the University of Chicago."

—Ted O'Neil, University of Chicago Dean of Admissions

"I think there may be no undergraduate institution other than Deep Springs where such a high level of intellectual skill is complemented by so much enthusiasm for learning."

—Kinch Hoekstra, DS'82, professor at UC Berkeley, and former visiting professor, Deep Springs College



— Labor

The daily demands of the labor program help develop in each student the character, skill, maturity, accountability, and leadership that is essential to the school's mission of educating students for lives of service.

The labor program exists to help students develop self-discipline, self-reliance, and an awareness of their responsibilities to the immediate community of Deep Springs and the larger world beyond it. Its purpose is not to teach a specific set of skills. Moreover, the skills gained by undertaking certain tasks are subsidiary to the broader goals of giving students a stake in the college's physical plant and a sense of responsibility to this small community. At the same time, labor makes tangible the dedication expected of each student in every pursuit: after all, the way one approaches the problem of a broken fence is not so different from the way one scrutinizes a difficult text.

The success of the labor program, like the success of academics and self-governance, depends almost entirely on student initiative. An elected student labor commissioner works with the staff—the ranch manager, the farm manager, the garden manager, the cook, the dean, and the office manager – to figure out what needs to be done and how to organize student labor to do it. He assigns students to labor positions at the beginning of each term, leads the general labor crew in pursuing specific projects over the course of a term, and organizes labor parties for the larger undertakings.

Students work at least twenty hours a week. Some work every day, like the dairy boys, the feed man and the boardinghouse crew. Others work during afternoons on weekdays, like the general labor crew and the grounds/orderlies. The labor program offers boundless opportunities for initiative, and many students take on special labor projects or chores in their spare time. Each student holds seven or eight different positions during his time at Deep Springs.



Community is at the core of labor. Students work not in repayment of the scholarship they have received, nor for the acquisition of greater talent or physical prowess, but rather for the constant improvement of the institution and the shared ideals of communal life.





The staff members are an integral part of the labor program. They oversee most student labor and offer advice, guidance, and help when necessary, while trying to give students as much independence as possible. The staff set a standard of upkeep and maintenance and encourage students to take on projects to improve the college. Sometimes staff even offer to teach technical courses, such as welding and horsemanship.

The labor program complements the other elements of the Deep Springs education. It challenges students by requiring their physical effort in addition to their mental effort. Most of all, the labor program establishes a tangible connection between students' work and the sustenance of the Deep Springs community. Students discover their mutual interdependence by doing the work that makes the community and school possible. They learn the sense of responsibility that comes with such interdependence. Day after day, students confront new situations that force them to struggle with something, to fail, and to succeed. Students learn to set and evaluate goals, and they learn the satisfaction of achieving them. The labor program provides an opportunity for practice in the service of humanity through the service to our community. Labor orients students toward the community's well-being and thereby roots the Deep Springs education in an experience of obligation and selflessness, ideals of service that are also educational ends.





“Labor at Deep Springs has taught me a sense of process; how to look at a thing and see it as a system, then break it down to its component parts to isolate a problem. This way of looking at things applies as much to economics as to a car engine.”

—Eric Vandenbrink, DS’02

“Cooperation and trust are necessary to the labor program. We are forced by our work to become patient with, critical of, and responsible for each other—to become real members of a community.”

—Ted Hoffman, DS’96



Students receive labor assignments from a labor commissioner selected by the Student Body. Positions typically last one or two terms. Students can expect a variety of more and less desirable positions during their tenure. Oftentimes positions are created for specific and temporary needs of the college.

Labor Commissioner	1 student, 2 terms
General Laborer	2-6 students, 1 term
Student Cook	2 students, 2 terms
Feed Man	1 student, 2 terms
Dairy Boy	2 students, 2 terms
Gardener	2-3 students, 2 terms
Student Librarian	1 student, 1 term
Mechanic’s Assistant	1 student, 2 terms
BH Crew	3-4 students, 1 term
Butcher	1 student, 2 terms
Grounds and Orderly	2 students, 1 term
Office Cowboy	1 student, 1 term
Farmer’s Assistant	2 students, 2 terms
Farm Team	4 students, 2 terms
Baker	1 student, 1 term
Student Cowboy	2-3 students, varies

Self-Governance

Student self-governance allows students to fully engage in democratic and committee-based decision-making. Students debate, legislate and act upon practical and ideological issues of immediate and profound significance to both the institution and the individuals that compose its community and Student Body.

Students at Deep Springs are entrusted with self-governance; they have the power to shape everything from daily life to the curriculum to college policy. The Student Body meets every week and discusses issues, both large and small, that affect the college as a whole—topics like elections, the college budget, or whether to allow a student to bring a pet into the valley. Discussions include the effects of technologically mediated interaction within the valley, the role of the labor program, and the extent to which the Student Body can govern the conduct of its members.

Self-governance is not limited to Student Body meetings. Important issues are discussed informally during labor, in dorm rooms, and at the dinner table. This serious ongoing deliberation contributes to the respect given to Student Body opinion in all aspects of the college. Student concerns are represented on the Board of Trustees through two Student Body trustees, in the community through the Student Body president, and in the labor program through the labor commissioner. In addition, students assume administrative roles by serving on committees.

Four standing committees address the more specific and involved issues that require background knowledge and experience. Each committee is composed of six to eight students, a faculty member, and a staff member. Most students only serve on one committee during their time at Deep Springs, but it is not uncommon for someone to serve on two committees or switch committees between years.

The **Applications Committee**, ApCom, oversees the admissions process. Early in the year, the committee discusses admissions standards and revises the application form and essay prompts. As applications start rolling in, the committee organizes community readers for each application. The readers evaluate not only the strength of the applicant's academic record, but also (and primarily) the quality of the applicant's essays. The committee then invites a small group of applicants to visit campus in the winter for interviews. ApCom recommends an in-

"The students in attendance receiving the benefits of the educational work being conducted hereunder are the sole beneficiaries of this trust, constitute the Student Body, and are to be considered as the beneficial owners of all the property at any time."

—L. L. Nunn, Founder



"I learned how to communicate effectively—formally through the intense writing and speaking programs, and casually through constant debate with classmates over philosophical, cultural, and political values. In my tenure as Student Body Trustee, I learned how to negotiate. In those days, the board was dominated by men of a long ago era—there was passionate struggle about what we wanted Deep Springs to be. This initial encounter in personal and philosophical conflicts in a small community prepared me for the very practical side of life. Deep Springs is a building block that has been a major foundation of my life."

—Bill vanden Heuvel, DS'46 and Former U. S. Ambassador to the United Nations

coming class to the Student Body and then the president.

The **Communications Committee**, ComCom, handles public relations. It composes and sends out recruitment flyers and brochures (including this brochure), organizes alumni recruitment efforts and college fair visits, solicits and negotiates media requests, maintains the website, designs college merchandise, releases college and Student Body publications such as newsletters and literary journals, and responds to inquiries about the college.

The **Curriculum Committee**, CurCom, is the oldest student-run committee. Alongside the dean and president of the college, CurCom hires faculty and manages the curriculum. The members discuss academic standards and ensure broad course offerings, advertise open positions and interview potential faculty, and make hiring recommendations to the Student Body. CurCom also moderates course selection and class enrollments, and runs course evaluations twice each semester.

The **Review and Reinvitations Committee**, RCom, is responsible for evaluations of students and the renewal of scholarships for a second year. Throughout the year RCom solicits evaluations of each student from the Student Body, staff, and faculty. The committee writes each student regarding his presence, starting dialogues concerning life at Deep Springs. The committee makes recommendations to the Student Body about the renewal of each student's scholarship for a second year. The vast majority of students are invited back for a second year at Deep Springs.

Committees are granted a large degree of autonomy, and their recommendations are usually honored. Committees often bring ideological discussions to the Student Body before forming policies to guide committee decisions over the course of the year.

In addition to the committees, many students serve in elected positions. Four students are elected to chair the four committees; two are elected to act as Student Body president and labor commissioner (elected every two terms); and two as student trustees (with one trustee elected at the beginning and end of each year for the following year). These students serve more specialized functions than the committees do, and they represent Student Body interests to the administration and greater community.

Students learn to participate in the entire process as articulate and pragmatic thinkers in deliberative settings. Each year the Student Body must decide how to govern itself, which includes choosing the standards it upholds, which bylaws it follows or amends, and how it delegates and manages responsibility for all that happens at Deep Springs. The students' participation in Student Body politics is not merely an exercise; involvement in self-governance lies both at the core of the college's management and its educational mission.



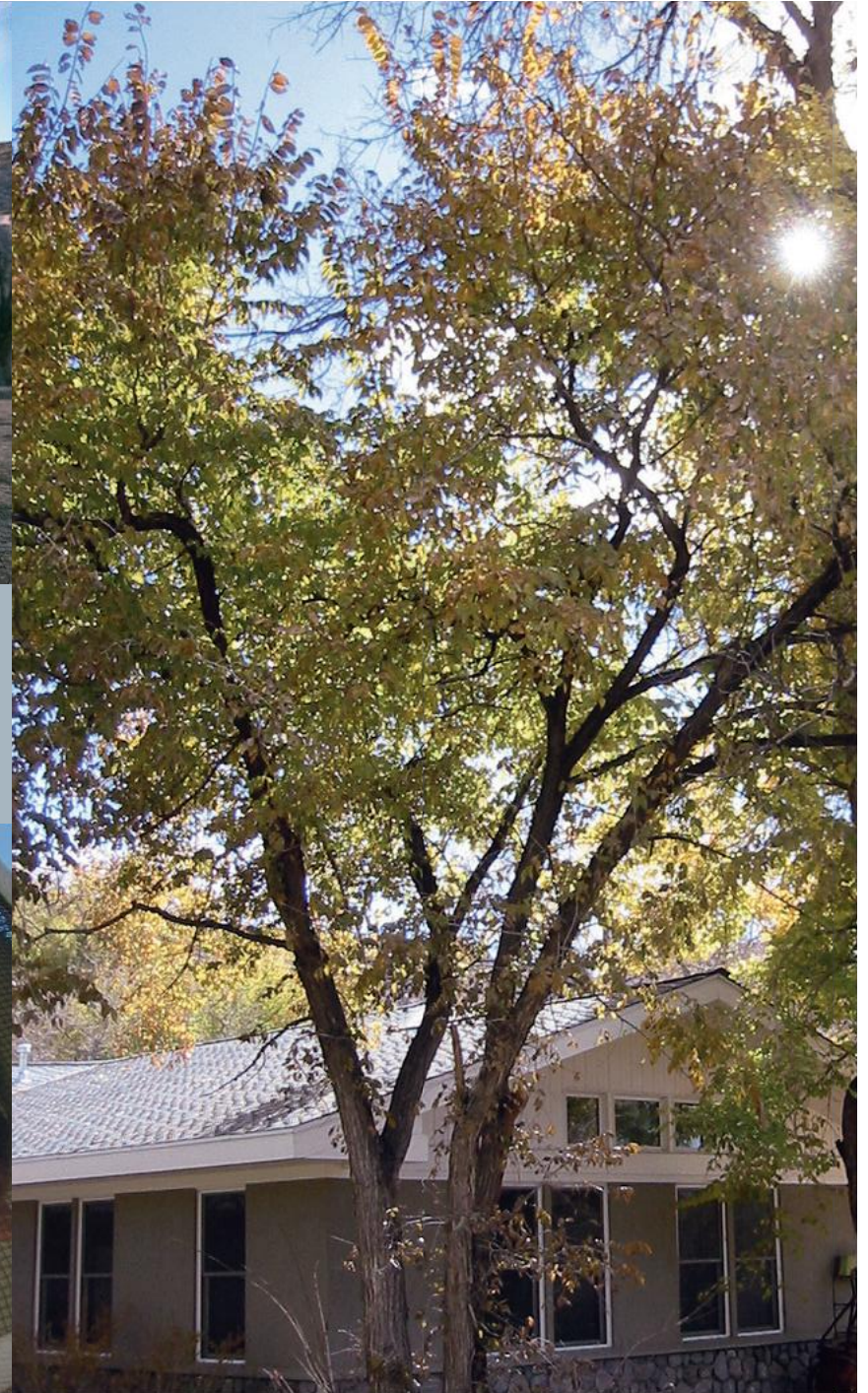
Students are elected to the following positions by the Student Body. Most positions last one or two years, although some, like Student Body President and Secretary, are shorter.

Academic Affairs Trustee
Annual Giving Committee Representative
Archivist (2)
Applications Committee Chair
Budget and Operations Trustee
Communications Committee Chair
Curriculum Committee Chair
Deep Springs/Telluride Liaison
Emergency Medical Technician (2)
Expeditions Committee Chair
Fire Team Chief (Dragon Slayer)
Jr. Fire Team Chief (Fire Squire)
Historian
Technology Systems Administrator (Gundalf)
Jr. Technology Systems Administrator (Frodo)
Labor Commissioner
President
Parliamentarian
Jr. Parliamentarian (Robert)
Review and Reinvitations Committee Chair
Secretary
Treasurer
Withdraw Commission Representative (2)



“My classmates at Deep Springs remain to this day people whose friendship I value and whose judgment interests me more than most. Deep Springs was a social environment that forced me to confront who I was, and where I stood in relation to the rest of the world. We all watched each other go through the process. Although we had the room (and the obligation) to make our own choices, we learned as much from others’ choices as from our own.”

—Dr. Michel Gelobter DS’78



Community

People of diverse backgrounds compose Deep Springs' intimate community. The ranch staff, faculty, administration, and their children, unite with the students in the project of Deep Springs. All work and live together, forming close and informal relationships.

Life at Deep Springs cannot be compartmentalized. The intellectual, social, and physical lives of all community members revolve around the same people and the same places, and they cannot but shape one another. Professors and students leave classrooms and continue discussions over coffee in the boardinghouse. The entire community eats meals together. Students and other members of the community assemble to play music. Work is delegated, shared, and completed; papers are written and books are read; things get broken and are fixed; and the mail comes every day. The whole community shares in the cycle of the seasons: in the hot summer months spent working and irrigating alfalfa, in the golden fall afternoons filled with harvests, in the crisp, grey winter evenings gathered around large fires in the company of hot drinks, and in hiking through the desert's newly bloomed wildflowers after spring's bright weathering April windstorms.

Life at Deep Springs can be hard—people demand much of themselves and of others—but the constant work and cooperation is that of a well-integrated life. The sacrifices and commitments made at Deep Springs are ultimately liberating rather than restricting; the desert and the school have a profound effect on anyone who spends time here.



Ground Rules

The Student Body maintains two “ground rules” during academic terms. The first, the drug and alcohol policy, prohibits the use of mind-altering substances. The second, the isolation policy, stipulates that students neither accept visitors nor leave the valley except for academic field trips, college business, religious services, or emergencies.

Taken together, the ground rules help to produce an integrated experience for each student in the valley. Removed from a campus culture of drug and alcohol use, students experience unmediated relationships and prioritize constant accountability to their immediate responsibilities. This fosters a deep trust between the Student Body and the rest of the community, allowing for an effective engagement with the vast responsibilities pertaining to the school. Undisturbed by visitors, students can focus their energies on the community. A healthy distance from the distractions of city life forces students to grapple with their responsi-

bilities and confront the institutional and individual challenges that they encounter at Deep Springs.

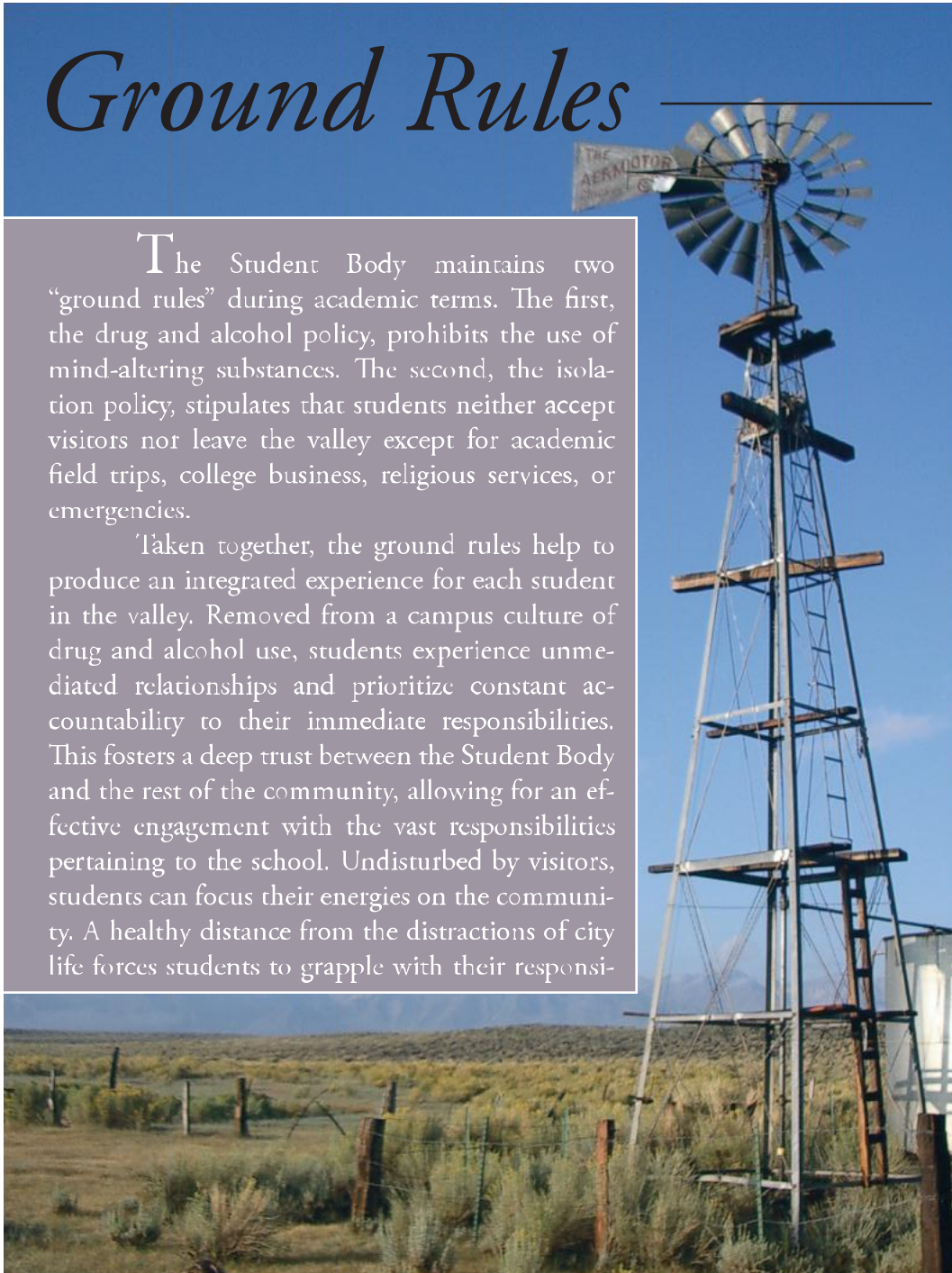
Isolation at Deep Springs is geographical and physical; the members of this community are the only human inhabitants of Deep Springs Valley. A single paved highway runs the length of the basin, from mountain pass to mountain pass. The emptiness of the desert invites students to reflect on their life here as they traverse the rugged terrain. Students hike to the peaks that rim the valley, run to the lake at the valley end opposite the college, ride on horseback across the desert floor, and watch meteors shoot across the clear, starry sky. Physical separation from the outside world inevitably turns the student’s gaze inward, to the self and the community.

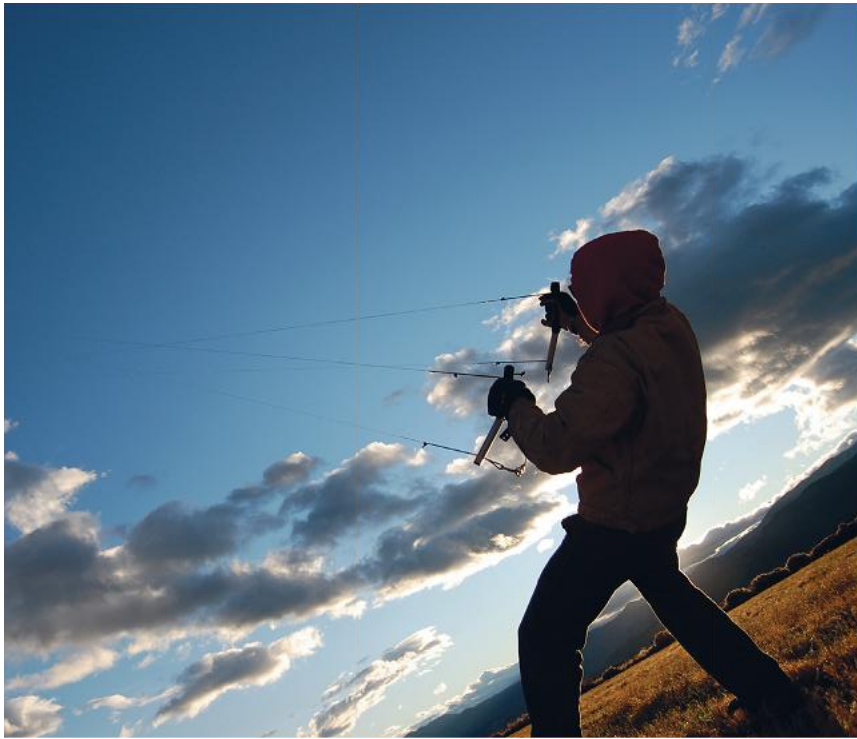
Relationships at Deep Springs are remarkably strong due largely to the community’s interdependence and small size. Individuals pursue personal interests while engaging in the shared project; with the amount of work to be done for the college, however, there is little room for solipsism.

Students are entirely responsible for upholding the ground rules. As a Student Body, they have annually renewed their commitment to the rules since 1917.

“Deep Springs possesses purpose as well as process. Far from confining Deep Springs to a pre-established past, the founding dicta of L.L. Nunn face a continual re-evaluation in the context of the present and the future. Through this, Deep Springs escapes anachronism to become a true vanguard in American higher education.”

—John Mangin DS’96





The Scholarship

The founder of Deep Springs, L.L. Nunn, believed that the opportunities Deep Springs offers should be available to any qualified student, regardless of his socioeconomic background. Since the institution's founding in 1917, therefore, each student has received a full scholarship, covering tuition, room, and board, currently valued at over \$50,000 per year, which is supplemented by a need-based fund for class materials. The scholarship, made possible by the generosity of the many alumni and foundations that support the college, helps create an environment in which this experiment in self-governance can proceed without the constraints of hierarchy that economic differences might bring into the student body. As the students are preparing for a life of service to humanity, they engage fully in the daily operations of the college and the ranch, thereby earning beneficial ownership. Through this deep engagement in both mind and body, students create for themselves a unique education whose value cannot be measured by money.



The All-Male Policy

Deep Springs was founded in 1917 as an all-male institution and it has remained all-male in accordance with its deed of trust. Throughout Deep Springs' history the all-male policy has been, and remains, controversial. There is ongoing discussion and debate, both heartfelt and complex, on the merits of living in an all-male environment for two-years and on the possibility of a coeducational Deep Springs. The Student Body formally discusses coeducation every year, and it conveys the substance of its discussion to the Board of Trustees. Although the discussion continues, the policy is currently stable; the entering class of 2010 will enter and graduate from an all-male institution.



-History

“Character does not grow in a night. It may be quickly inspired but it matures slowly.”

Lucien L. Nunn (1859-1925), proved himself an innovator and pioneer in all his pursuits. He began as a mining operator in the 1880s then became a pioneering leader in the hydroelectric power industry before gradually turning this spirit towards a passion for education. He envisioned an educational setting that would instill in young men a sense of higher purpose and dedication to a life of service. Over ninety years after he established it, Deep Springs College still provides a unique and innovative approach to higher education and continues to pursue the ideals Mr. Nunn established.

L. L. Nunn founded Deep Springs College in 1917 and fully devoted his energies to educational work. For his new college, he selected an isolated location in the desert so students could work uninterrupted by the distractions of society. By isolating the college, he helped those at Deep Springs to live in accordance with the ideals and duties of their community. To instill a tangible sense of ownership and service towards the college and ranch, he further instituted the labor program. In fact, the first students to attend provided much of the labor to build the campus, living in tents until the buildings were completed. Nunn also entrusted the Student Body with democratic self-governance. Through self-governance, dialogue, and debate, students soon assumed greater authority and responsibility than initially afforded them. L.L. Nunn remained deeply involved in the school until his death in 1925.

Deep Springs continues to instill a distinctive sense of ownership and service in its students. Some roles have expanded over the years – today two students serve as trustees on the college’s board. With faculty and staff support, students lead deliberation of admissions and curriculum decisions, and students manage the standing committees that handle much of the college’s administrative business. As with the first class, the Student Body continues to contribute to the improvement of the school’s physical plant. Students provided much of the labor to establish and maintain the school’s phone and internet systems, the hydroelectric plant, and the extensive solar power array that allows the school to be more electrically self-sufficient.

The school’s dedication to service and responsible action in one’s community puts into practice Nunn’s maxim that the greatest leaders are servants first. Despite having only 1000 students over its 90 year history, Deep Springs has produced many notable alumni who made significant contributions to society. Among them are: James Olin (U.S. Congressman), William J. vanden Heuvel (U.S. Representative to the United Nations), Julian Steward (anthropologist), Robert L. Sproull (President, University of Rochester), Ed Wesely (Director of C.A.R.E.), Dave Hitz (software entrepreneur), William T. Vollman (author and recipient of the 2005 National Book Award), Ted Rust (sculptor, Director of the Memphis Academy of Art), and Ray Jeanloz (geophysicist) & Erik Mueggler (anthropologist) (both recipients of the MacArthur “genius” Fellowship).

Admissions

Admission to Deep Springs is highly competitive. Over the past several years, the college has accepted between 6 and 11 percent of its applicants. Deep Springs is not for everyone. Life here is demanding, but also extremely rewarding. All should apply who are interested in building a community, in testing the limits of their mental and physical strengths, in engaging with rigorous academics, and in preparing for a life of service.

If you are inspired by the challenges of two years at Deep Springs, and feel driven to meet the difficulties that accompany life here, we heartily encourage your application.

Candidates for admission are required to take the SAT or ACT and complete a two-part application. The deadline for the first part is November 15th. In early December, roughly 40 of the strongest candidates are invited to continue the application process. Those invited must submit the second part of the application by January 15th and arrange for an on-campus visit and interview. A scholarship fund is available to students in need of financial support to make the visit. From this group of forty, eleven to fifteen candidates are chosen to comprise the incoming class. There is no application fee. Final decisions are mailed by mid-April.

Most applicants demonstrate high scholastic achievement and outstanding qualities of character. Test scores demonstrate very little in the way of one's ability to succeed at Deep Springs; the Applications Committee considers the essays and interview to be the clearest indicators of one's potential for success at Deep Springs.

Deep Springs is committed to equal opportunity in employment and admissions. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, sexual preference, religion, financial status, or (with admissions excepted) gender.

Please review our website for additional information:
www.deepsprings.edu/admissions



The philosophy behind Deep Springs is simple: when highly motivated students are given great responsibility, they rise to the challenge. As “beneficial owners,” we consider the college our own within the limits of practical realities such as academic accreditation, fiscal limitations, legal considerations, and long-term planning. However, the fact that we’re given so much responsibility doesn’t mean we succeed in everything we do. Beneficial ownership gives us room to fail, and it’s through these failures that we learn the most about ourselves and our responsibilities to the community.

—Peter Erickson, DS’00

————— *Address*

Applications Committee
Deep Springs College
HC 72 Box 45002
Dyer, NV 89010

————— *E-mail*

apcom@deepsprings.edu

————— *Phone*

760.872.2000

"Gentlemen, for what came ye into the wilderness? Not for conventional scholastic training; not for ranch life; not to become proficient in commercial or professional pursuits for personal gain. You came to prepare for a life of service, with the understanding that superior ability and generous purpose would be expected of you, and this expectation must be justified. . . . The Desert speaks. Those who listen will hear the purpose, philosophy and ethics of Deep Springs."

— L.L. Nunn, Founder



DEEP SPRINGS COLLEGE
HC 72 BOX 45001
DYER, NEVADA 89010

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