



COMPTON APPOINTED INTERIM DEAN

N JULY, Dartmouth President Phil Hanlon and Provost Carolyn Dever announced the appointment of Duane Compton as interim dean of the Geisel School of Medicine. The appointment became effective on July 15.

Compton, a professor of biochemistry and senior associate dean for research, takes over for Chip Souba, who served as Geisel dean for four years and decided not to seek reappointment to a second term. Compton's appointment is for three years, with a national search for a new dean planned for the third year of the appointment.

Compton has been at Dartmouth since 1993. He received his PhD from the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston in 1988 and completed his postdoctoral training in cell biology at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. His research on the mechanisms of chromosome segregation has earned widespread recognition, including a 2013 MERIT Award from the National Institutes of Health.

Above: Duane Compton has made his name as an accomplished researcher in the field of chromosome segregation, but he has also been closely involved in medical education and administrative leadership.

Charles Barlowe, chair of the Department of Biochemistry and a longtime colleague of Compton, was excited by the news. "Duane knows Dartmouth inside and out," Barlowe says. "I think he brings a very balanced perspective to the dean position. He genuinely wants to find the best answers to a given question and works tirelessly to reach shared goals."

Compton spoke to *Dartmouth Medicine* editor Amos Esty about his new role and the future of the medical school.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO TAKE ON THE ROLE OF INTERIM DEAN?

My first faculty position was at Dartmouth, and I have been involved in education and research programs since I've been here. In that time, I've come to appreciate the strength of our student body and our faculty. We have amazing students—both medical students and graduate students, as well as postdoctoral fellows—and their boundless energy really impresses me. We also have an amazing faculty. So when Phil Hanlon asked me if I would want to take this on, I said that it would be my honor.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT?

I'm excited to try to be the representative of all the great things that we do here. I have great respect for the people here. They do a lot of good work, and I'm excited to help them do that.

Flying Squirrel Graphics



For the past three years, Compton has balanced running his lab with his administrative duties as senior associate dean for research, a position he says has helped prepare him to serve as dean. Above left, he speaks to the graduating students at the 2013 Class Day Ceremony. Above right, a few of the members of the entering Class of 2018.

WHEN PEOPLE OUTSIDE DARTMOUTH ASK YOU WHAT IT'S LIKE HERE, WHAT DO YOU TELL THEM?

I tell them it's a unique place. I don't know of any other institution in the country where you have this high level of science and inquiry but also this beautiful, rural setting. I think it's completely unique.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES THE MEDICAL SCHOOL FACES?

Right now, the overarching goal is to stabilize the medical school's budget so that we can resume investments in our core missions. There's also the issue of ensuring that we are good partners with Dartmouth-Hitchcock, Dartmouth College, Thayer, Tuck—making sure that we integrate with those partners. We have so many connections in so many different areas with those various partners, and I want to shore up those relationships and make sure they're really strong.

For better or worse, the budget situation right now does shine a light on us that some would see as not a positive light. So I want to make sure people understand the value that Geisel brings to Dartmouth. For Dartmouth-Hitchcock, we add the academic part to our academic medical center. I think that's important for them in raising the quality of the faculty they recruit and increasing patient volumes in particular areas. For Dartmouth College, we have joint graduate programs, we provide experiential learning experiences for the Dartmouth College undergraduate students, and we participate in a limited way in the undergraduate courses. We have joint education programs with Tuck, and we have faculty that collaborate very closely with faculty at Thayer. There are a lot of connections across these entities.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE GREATEST STRENGTHS OF THE MEDICAL SCHOOL?

I would start by saying the strength is in the people—the faculty, students, and staff. The people are what make this institution strong. As far as programs, I think we have some real strengths in our basic sciences and in how those basic science programs interdigitate programmatically and in the space of health-care delivery science. We have a fantastic cancer center, both in clinical care and in all facets of research, from basic science to translational science and even into clinical trials. We're very strong in health

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policy with The Dartmouth Institute and The Dartmouth Center for Health Care Delivery Science, as well as the work of the High Value Health Care Collaborative. We have strengths in neurosciences, and I think that's an area we can bolster further. We have a real strength in the immunology and inflammation space. Finally, I think our graduate and medical education programs are outstanding. Our faculty are very dedicated to providing the best possible educational experiences for our students.

The thing that's great about having such a good faculty is there are always new strengths bubbling up. If you get good people, good things will happen, and we have some really good people on the faculty. I expect new strengths to start building.

YOU HAVE BEEN WORKING IN THE ADMINISTRATION FOR A WHILE NOW AS SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR RESEARCH. HAVE YOU LEARNED A LOT FROM THAT ROLE THAT YOU'RE TAKING INTO YOUR WORK AS DEAN?

That was really helpful. You get to have an understanding of some of the activities that are going on. You get a glimpse—you don't live in the house, but you get to see in the window.

I IMAGINE IT'S QUITE A BIT DIFFERENT FROM RUNNING A LAB, WHICH YOU HAVE DONE FOR MANY YEARS HERE.

There are some similarities. I look at the budget challenge that we have and my nature is to approach that from a scientific perspective—it looks like an interesting problem to try to figure out. I think about it that way: let's break it down into its component parts and see which pieces we can manage and which we can't. You try to solve it like a puzzle that way, which isn't all that different from what I do in the lab. It's just a different medium.