

# Out of the Mainstream

**P**ardon the pun but you might say Nora Masler isn't exactly rowing in the mainstream.

A junior member of Dartmouth's varsity eight from Santa Monica, Calif., Masler is a psychology major tentatively planning on a career in architecture. For what it's worth, that happens to be a major offered at Yale, Columbia and Cornell among others – but not at Dartmouth.

"My interest in architecture has grown since I came to Dartmouth," she explained. "I came in knowing that I had an interest, but wasn't really sure what path I wanted to take."

Two years later she's discovered an intersection of her psych major and architecture that she hopes to continue to explore in graduate school for architecture.

"There is a new sort of budding field of pro bono architecture that really interests me," she said. "I am not really into math or engineering, but I am definitely interested in how people's environment can affect them, and how the built world can have a direct impact on mental state."

That understanding has developed in her role as a Dartmouth Presidential Scholar under Dr. Robert Santulli, the Dementia Programs Advisor for the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Aging Resource Center.

"Working with (Santulli) has helped me realize how aesthetics, visual things, can really affect people with Alzheimer's, just as it can with healthy people," she said. "That's the psychology side of it. Realizing the structures that we live in affect how we act, how we behave and what goes on in our life."

Masler hopes to concentrate on the budding field of pro bono architecture after grad school and to that end she's working hard to explore the field and build up her resume with guidance from Ali Hart, Dartmouth's Assistant Athletic Director for Peak Performance. Given no dedicated architecture program at the College and the relative dearth of classmates she's come across who are thinking about pursuing the field as a career, the rower has been networking in largely uncharted waters.

"There's an alumni Facebook group that one of my professors told me about, but you just kind of hear about it here and there," Masler said of student interest in architecture as a career. "I know one of the lightweight rowers was taking Architecture One this term



**Standing at the intersection of psychology and architecture, junior rower Nora Masler has found the alumni network to be extremely helpful in defining potential career paths.**

and I heard that he was interested in it as a career. But it's definitely not mainstream, which is why I've been in Ali's office so much."

While the network of alumni architects won't soon be compared with the alumni finance network, she's found those Dartmouth graduates in the field eager to be helpful.

"I called quite a few alums who were in architecture and met with one in Boston who owns his own firm," she said. "He gave me a tour of his firm and took me out to lunch. What I found was, once I talked to one alum, he would lead me to another and then another."

In fact, it was a young alum who helped Masler set up an interview with his firm in San Francisco. Ultimately, though, she chose to spend the winter interning closer to home in a small Los Angeles concern recommended by a family friend who had been an architecture school classmate of the head of the firm. Among her responsibilities during the winter was putting the skills she honed creating graphics for The Dartmouth school newspaper to work developing presentations for client proposals.

While she couldn't point to Dartmouth connections for helping her land the Los Angeles internship, it was a conversation with a young alum the Big Green rower has to thank for how she will be spending her summer. Not on the Charles River, but right next to it.

"He talked to me about how Dartmouth has a really broad education but a lot of times grad schools in architecture want a specific portfolio," Masler said. "So he did the Harvard Career Discovery program in their Graduate School of Design. I applied to that and will be going there this summer."

And come fall she will be back on the water, another kind of classroom. "What I have gotten out of rowing throughout my life is learning about how to persevere and how to work hard," she said. "I know those sound like clichés but once you push yourself to physical limits that you didn't think that you could, it doesn't feel quite as hard pushing yourself to study for a test or to get a project done."

Or, she might have added, to prepare for a career in architecture at a school without an architecture major. **DP**

**THE RECRUITING VISIT OF NORA MASLER '18 WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GENEROSITY OF FRANK & MARYELLEN HERRINGER '64 DP AND JOHN UNKLES, JR. '52 DP THROUGH THE ATHLETIC SPONSORS PROGRAM.**