Parents News
A NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS OF TUFTS UNDERGRADUATES

SAVE the DATES!
Monday, April 18, 2011
is the President’s Marathon Challenge. Please see tuftsmarathonchallenge.com for more information.

Commencement is Sunday, May 22, 2011.
Please visit commencement.tufts.edu for more information.

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Fall 2010

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Dear Parents,

To our new families, welcome to the Tufts family! And to our returning families, welcome back! This is an exciting academic year, with a rich assortment of special activities and events that nurture both mind and spirit.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Institute for Global Leadership’s flagship Education for Public Inquiry and International Citizenship program. Be sure to read the article on pages 4 and 5 and visit the website www.tuftsgloballeadership.org for a deeper look at their programs. The Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service, a national leader in civic education that serves every Tufts student, is celebrating its 10th year. Learn more about Tisch at activecitizen.tufts.edu.

At this liberal arts campus, students can explore the Center for the Humanities, wander into the Tisch Gallery and view its exploration of Mexican art from the past century, or attend myriad lectures from notable speakers.

As members of the Tufts community, you are always welcome to attend the many events on campus or in your own locale. Please see our website parentsprogram.tufts.edu for a complete listing of coming events and set your email spam filter so that you can receive updates from our monthly Parents Program E-Newsletters.

Best wishes,

Nancy Morrison
Director, Parents Program

Get Your Motor Running Tufts Alumni and Parents Give Back

Tufts’ Formula Hybrid Team was one of 30 teams from engineering schools around the world to compete in the fourth annual Formula Hybrid Competition, at the Thayer School of Engineering at Dartmouth last spring. And while the team didn’t win, what they learned was invaluable.

This kind of ingenuity is what attracted the Hybrid Team’s sponsors, like Textron, Bosch Power Tools, SolidWorks, and several parents. Textron’s Vice President of Engineering Charles Neckyfarow, E71, EG75, says that he had been an annual donor to the university but connected with the development office about four years ago. “They were looking for support for a solar car project that the NERD girls were working on, and we saw an opportunity to invest in some scholarships and get involved,” he explains.

Senior Vice President of Engineering at Textron Jeff Picard, A12P, notes that as leading experts in the technology and defense business, Textron requires “the best of the best.

“We recognize that that in order to meet our needs, we need to have deep connections with engineering students,” he explains.

Neckyfarow is also involved with an advisory team with the mechanical engineering department and a recertification electrical engineering advisory group. “My personal contributions have been scholarships,” Neckyfarow says. “Tufts gave me an opportunity when I went to school and I like to give back.”
Mary Jo Pham and Anna Boulos came to Tufts because of its strong international relations reputation. Now the seniors are poised to enter the Foreign Service as recipients of the prestigious Thomas R. Pickering Undergraduate Foreign Affairs Fellowships, a program that provides financial support up to $40,000 annually for actual expenses for the senior year of college and the first year of graduate school. Funding is through the Department of State, administered through the Woodrow Wilson Foundation; 17 students were chosen from over 700 applications. After graduation, fellows participate in one 10-week overseas internship and one 10-week domestic internship within the U.S. Department of State and must also pass the Foreign Service Officer Test. Each successful candidate is obligated to a minimum of three years of service in an appointment as a Foreign Service Officer.

Pham says she is living the American Dream. The daughter of a single mother who fled Vietnam 21 years ago, the bilingual, bicultural student says that she heard the same refrain repeatedly from her mother: Work hard, do your best, know what you want, and you can achieve anything. James M. Glaser, dean of Academic Affairs, says that “Mary Jo is a dynamo with an incredible life story. The Pickering aims to identify and nurture our future diplomatic leaders. With her developing skill set, her spark, and her ambitions, Mary Jo was a great choice.”

Pham has studied with the Study Abroad in China program, worked with a nongovernmental agency in Vietnam, and has interned with the State Department in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

“I fell in love with how hard Tufts worked to make a prospective student feel welcome,” Pham explains. “Now I want to give back to the community. I’m so motivated by my peers—everyone I meet is doing something extraordinary.

“I came to live here because of American goodwill. If not, I would have grown up in a refugee camp. Being part of the Foreign Service is part of sharing peaceful goodwill to build a safer future,” she says.

Growing up in southern Maine, Anna Boulos knew that she wanted to pursue international relations. “I always knew that I wanted to work in foreign diplomacy, but I didn’t even know the Foreign Service existed before I came to Tufts,” she says. She received an email from the international relations department encouraging her to apply.

Professor Kelly Greenhill, Boulos’ advisor, states that “Anna was a natural choice for a Pickering. Not only is she academically talented—highly intelligent, hard-working, and ambitious—but she is also a truly delightful person to know. She is destined for a terrific career, and her myriad admirable attributes promise to serve both her and our country well.”

Boulos cites Programs Abroad as the best part of a Tufts education; she spent a year studying with the competitive Tufts in Oxford program.

Laura Doane, program director for Advising and Scholarship, says that Tufts undergraduates amaze her daily. “The students who go for competitive scholarships and fellowships are not merely ambitious; they are invariably accomplished and confident in their ability to change the world. Though all of these awards are long shots, an unusually large number of our talented students and alumni win them every year.”

Doane notes that even when students don’t win, they find the process invaluable. “That perspective—that every experience is successful in some way—is what allows Jumbos to indeed effect change in our world,” she says.
In the quarter century since Education for Public Inquiry and International Citizenship (EPIIC) was launched on campus, hundreds of Tufts students have traveled across the world studying the complexities and consequences of injustice, poverty, human rights abuses, and human loss. An integrated, multidisciplinary group, EPIIC is the signature program at the Institute for Global Leadership (IGL), a distinctive, cross-school program of the university. Students accepted into this rigorous program, begin, among other things, an intensive, year long academic colloquium; a global research and internship program that includes multiyear integrated internships and capstone honors theses; individual programming; and participation in an international symposium, for which a different theme is chosen each year.

Sherman Teichman, the visionary and energetic director of IGL, calls EPIIC the “trunk root” of the myriad programs now offered at the institute. “It’s our core, our flagship,” he says. Other programs at IGL include ALLIES, which links undergraduates and U.S. military academy students to create a bridge for shared understanding; EMPOWER, a poverty alleviation and social entrepreneurship program; EXPOSURE, a photojournalism and documentary filmmaking course; and Inquiry, a global issues simulation program.

Last year, for example, EPIIC students examined conflict, complexity, and change in Southeast Asia. In 2009, students and scholars investigated the future of cities, and in 2006 EPIIC gathered 59 practitioners, policymakers, scholars, journalists, artists, and musicians to explore, discuss, and debate the politics of fear.

“We have created a compelling network of programs, which reflect the global imperatives and the intellectual passion of our students,” Teichman says. “We have not started a single project that has atrophied, and we have been instrumental in integrating many different parts of the university.” Alumni now serve in the U.S. military, are directors at the United States Institute for Peace, direct foundations, write for the New York Times, author scholarly books, write for GlobalPost, and direct films.

Provost and Senior Vice President Jamshed Bharucha states that “EPIIC has transformed the lives of hundreds of Tufts students and set them on paths that they might never have imagined before joining the program. It is truly unique in American higher education and ahead of its time.”

The community impact is enduring. Case in point: Abiodun Williams was Teichman’s first teaching assistant and mentee while a student at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. In 2001, as director of the Office of the Strategic Planning Unit for the Executive Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan, Williams reviewed briefing papers submitted by Teichman’s students, who were examining global inequities. This year, at Williams request, Paul Hughes, executive director of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States, will oversee students’ research papers for the current EPIIC colloquium on the nuclear age that will be presented to the commission.

“EPIIC inspires, educates, intrigues, and challenges. Its impact is life long. It has evolved from a fascinating experiment into one of Tufts University’s priceless jewels. Its fundamental message has an abiding significance: values and ideas must be translated into action for the common good,” Williams says.

Shafiqul Islam, E12P, professor of civil and environmental engineering, says that he is awed by his daughter Maia’s growth at Tufts, particularly her active engagement in EPIIC’s South Asia program when she was a sophomore.

 “[EPIIC] has not only helped to sharpen her intellectual identity (she was one of two engineering students in the class), but also helped her to define a trajectory for her future pursuits. As a part of an EPIIC project, she has developed international partnerships with scientists and health professionals in Bangladesh to explore the
origin of gender asymmetry in infectious diseases in developing countries. It was gratifying to see that her research in Bangladesh was featured in two leading newspapers,” he says.

Rabbi Jeffrey A. Summit, AG88, AG95, A03P, A05P, Neubauer Executive Director of Tufts’ Hillel, says that his daughter Ariela’s work with EPIIC “trained and empowered her to think in the largest terms about her life work, interacting intensely and collaboratively with a community of developing scholars and activists.

“She had the opportunity to meet and work with an international cadre of extraordinary teachers and leaders,” Summit says. “This involvement not only defined her Tufts experience: it shaped her current career path in sustainable agriculture and biodiversity conservation. The contacts she developed at the IGL led directly to a post-college fellowship working on resource management with Hindu and Muslim women in northern India. I know Tufts well, as a faculty, staff member, and alumnus, but I’ve learned that one really comes to understand the university when one is a parent of a Tufts student. It is then when we become acutely aware of how an institution nurtures and responds to the individual.”

At Tufts, Elizabeth “Biz” Herman partnered with Tufts students, professors, and global thought leaders in her efforts aimed at understanding how politics shapes everyday learning, here in America and abroad, explains her father, Ira M. Herman, professor and director, Program in Cellular and Molecular Physiology, Sackler School of Graduate Biomedical Sciences, and director, Center for Innovations in Wound Healing Research, Tufts University School of Medicine.

“Her honors thesis strongly suggests that a nation’s identity and its people’s history have actively shaped what’s written in textbooks.” Herman says.

“I truly believe that had it not been for the intensive and immersive scholarly pursuits that she was engaged in at IGL, her Tufts experience would have been significantly different. Now, Elizabeth is an envoy of the U.S. State Department in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The students were supported in their research by 2010 IGL INSPIRE Fellow Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of the Dhaka-based think tank Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC). Dr. Rahman was the lead drafter of the poverty reduction strategy of the government of Bangladesh.

Anna Gilmer, A12, inspecting a pumpkin crop in Rangpur Province, Bangladesh. The students were supported in their research by 2010 IGL INSPIRE Fellow Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of the Dhaka-based think tank Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC). Dr. Rahman was the lead drafter of the poverty reduction strategy of the government of Bangladesh.

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Health Matters

When a Child Comes Out

College is a time of identity development and exploration. For some students, college may be a time when they begin to think of themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT). “Coming out” as LGBT is a distinct experience that often involves new conversations between parents and children. While some parents will feel comfortable with this, others may need more information and guidance to help open the dialogue with their son or daughter. Tufts Parents Program asked Tom Bourdon, director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Center (LGBT); Michelle Bowdler, senior director of Tufts Health & Wellness Services; Julie Ross, director of the Counseling and Mental Health Service, and Marilyn Downs, director of outreach at the Counseling and Mental Health Service, to answer frequently asked questions.

Q: My child just told me he’s gay. How do I respond?
A: First, it’s important to listen carefully to what your child is saying and focus on him rather than focusing on your own concerns, or worrying about how other people will react. Research tells us that the way families respond to this news plays a huge role in a young person’s adjustment and ultimate happiness. Second, educate yourself. There are lots of good resources for parents and families of LGBT people, so take advantage of what’s out there. Third, try to be respectful of the language your daughter or son uses. It’s important to keep in mind that students are typically not nearly as conscious of labels as parents, and that labels constantly evolve. The term “queer” was once considered derogatory, but has now been reclaimed in a positive way by many in the LGBT community.

Q: What if I’m having a hard time accepting this?
A: Sometimes, part of the reason parents have a difficult time accepting that their child might not be straight is because they worry they might not be able to have the futures they themselves had, including marriage and children. However, there are abundant examples of same-sex couples who form committed and loving relationships, and healthy, happy families. Other fears can arise when parents have incomplete or false information. An important step for many families is to become educated about LGBT people and about the coming-out process. One good resource is the national organization Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), which provides a wealth of information and support for loved ones.

Q: Should I be concerned about my child’s well-being and safety?
A: All parents, regardless of their child’s sexual orientation, should make sure their student knows the importance of always practicing safe sex. It is also important that your daughter or son has access to health care providers who are sensitive to and knowledgeable about how to address your child’s health needs and concerns, and with whom your child feels comfortable. The Tufts University Health Service and the Counseling and Mental Health Service strive to provide a safe environment where students of all genders and sexual orientations can receive high-quality health and mental health care.

Parents may also worry that their children’s lives will be much harder as a result of being LGBT. The recent news about bullying of gay teens is a stark reminder that stereotypes and discrimination against LGBT individuals persists, and these experiences can be very challenging. Yet young people also suffer when they feel they cannot be themselves, especially with the people closest to them. You cannot protect your child from every pain or every difficult experience, but you can help them face those challenges more effectively by reminding them that you are there to support them and advocate for them whenever they need it, and by loving them unconditionally for who they are.

Tufts’ LGBT Center provides a safe and supportive environment where students can feel comfortable meeting with peers and discussing issues that are unique to the LGBT person. The center is a thriving community of students, faculty, staff, and alumni. It offers regular support and discussion groups as well as numerous other events.

For a longer version of this article and resources, please visit parentsprogram.tufts.edu and see Resources. See also ase.tufts.edu or ase.tufts.edu/healthservice.
Our Epic Jumbo Lacrosse Championship

P.T. Barnum must have been grinning from ear to ear in the "great beyond" when he learned on May 30, 2010, of the Tufts lacrosse team clinching the Division 3 National Title in Baltimore. As a founding trustee of Tufts—responsible for making Jumbo our mascot—Barnum always made sure people were entertained. And on that championship Sunday, in a sea of blue and brown at Ravens Stadium, Tufts players, coaches, families, friends, alums, and fans witnessed one of the greatest shows on earth.

The level of energy and enthusiasm for the Jumbos was unsurpassed in my 35-year association with Tufts. Simply stated, everyone connected with the Tufts family on that momentous day soared to another dimension. Head coach Mike Daly had shown us the true meaning of leadership and his team had helped everyone realize what it takes to win as an underdog. And let me emphasize that all the alum lacrosse players there that day to provide support were no less a part of the championship team than the active team members.

This was the first Jumbo athletic team in our school’s 158 years to win a National NCAA Team Championship and the first title for the lacrosse team in 80 years of play at Tufts. Astoundingly, only eight teams have ever won the Division 3 Lacrosse National Championship since the tournament began 30 years ago. So imagine the pure exhilaration of the Tufts community on that hot Memorial Day weekend when our team conquered perennial champ Salisbury to win the coveted national title.

It is fair to say that as Tufts alum parents of players, Jody Durst, E78, A12P, (coincidentally, a classmate of mine), Ellen Bruce Atkins, J79, A10P, and I experienced a heightened sense of pride for our sons on the team and for our alma mater. Who would have thought that decades after graduating from Tufts that we would see our sons win the National Lacrosse Championship? Forever, our sons and all the players will be able to say they were part of this Tufts championship team. As parents and alums, we will always be grateful to the team for bringing the school such honor and glory. With a record of 20–1, they achieved perfection in all of our eyes.

“He who knows only his generation remains forever a child.” On that championship day we all crossed generations—grandparents, parents, siblings, cousins, and children; alums; friends and fans; and coaches and professors. We were all committed to this team unconditionally and had experienced one of the most important days of our lives together. All as one, we were united as Jumbos on May 30, 2010, at an athletic event like no other in our 158-year school history and we are fortunate that this day will live in our hearts eternally.

By Joe Findaro A78, father of Mark A12, member of the 2010 Division 3 national championship team.

“Forever, our sons and all the players will be able to say they were part of this Tufts championship team...”
– Joe Findaro, A78, A12
Elizabeth (Biz) Herman A’10 participated in the EXPOSURE photojournalism workshop in Ajmer, India. Here she is photographing in the village of Kankarda, exploring the impact of a railway project that is both physically and generationally dividing the village. See pages 4–5 for the complete article.