Dear Parents,

Did you notice a difference in your child after winter break?

Parents of first-year students often share that their children seem more mature after their first semester of college. Parents of second-, third-, and fourth-year students also see changes as their Jumbo makes decisions about majors, careers, partners, and places to live. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to personally meet so many Tufts parents to hear firsthand how Tufts has impacted your student while often discussing ways in which you can enhance this very experience. I understand that students come to Tufts to discover their own light on the hill, and I sincerely hope we’re living up to your expectations.

Tufts is committed to making sure that every student is having a transformational educational experience. We accomplish this by offering internships that are life changing; programs that reward entrepreneurship; having a student body that embraces our mission of making a difference in the world. Many parents recognize that learning and discovery happen because of their support, and for that I’m profoundly grateful. I’d like to personally thank the parents featured in this edition, Louis and Corrine Ricard, A14P, and Neill and Susanne Taylor, E14P, for their continued dedication and enthusiasm for Tufts.

If you would like talk about ways in which you too can support Tufts, please contact me directly at gina.desalvo@tufts.edu. I would be honored to talk with you.

Warm Jumbo wishes,

Gina A. DeSalvo
Gina A. DeSalvo, Director
Tufts Parents Giving Program

Sports Highlights

The Tufts winter sports season is wrapping up with some great success by Jumbo teams.

In an epic NCAA Championship second-round matchup between a pair of 27-win teams, Tufts senior tri-captain Liz Moynihan, A14, hit a desperation line-drive three-pointer at the overtime buzzer to give the Jumbos a 57–54 victory over the University of New England.

The men’s team also dramatically won home games against Colby and Bowdoin to gain a spot in the tourney.

Women’s swimming and diving was the first winter team to compete in the championship season. Senior Jenny Hu tied for the conference title in the 50-yard breaststroke, broke three school records, and swam two national qualifying times at the NESCAC Championships.

Both track and field teams have posted several record-setting performances heading into their championship season. Jana Hieber, A14, set a new 60-meter hurdles school record of 9.08 seconds at a home meet. Jamie Norton, A14, ran the mile at Boston University with a time of 4:06.38 to break a 41-year-old Tufts record.

Women’s fencing, with 13 team victories, is enjoying one of its finest seasons. Senior Greg Jenkins made 36 saves, as hockey earned a strong 1–1 tie at Amherst. Junior Paige Dahlman of the women’s squash team won the B draw finals at the Division III Individual Championships. The men’s squash team won two out of three matches in the E Division of the College Squash Association Team Championships.

—Paul Sweeney, Sports Information Coordinator

Senior tri-captain Liz Moynihan taking the desperation three-point shot to win the NCAA 2nd round game against University of New England

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Louis and Corrine Ricard, A14P

“Caroline,” Corrine Ricard says, “came for an admitted students’ visit, met with rowing Coach Gary Caldwell, and cancelled all her other campus trips on the spot.” Daughter Caroline’s early enthusiasm for Tufts—and some anxiety about sending their oldest child halfway across the country to attend college—motivated Louis Ricard and Corrine to become involved Tufts parents even before their daughter matriculated. Contacting Parents Giving Program Director Gina A. DeSalvo in the weeks following the admitted students’ day, the Ricards volunteered to host a gathering for incoming students and parents in their Minnesota home as a way to connect with other new Jumbo families.

“We knew that other parents were having the same thoughts that we had,” Louis explains.

As it turned out, the event was just the beginning of the Ricards’ involvement. Joining the Parents Leadership Council (PLC), the couple decided to become part of a dedicated group of parents who support Tufts at leadership giving levels and become ambassadors for the university.

“The Ricard family has truly inspired me over the years. Their dedication to Tufts through their participation in athletics and giving has seamlessly woven them into the Jumbo family forever,” states DeSalvo. Giving back came naturally for the Ricards.

“Early on we could see that Tufts was perfect for Caroline,” Louis says. Most importantly, the Ricards have seen Caroline—a premed student majoring in international relations and global health and minoring in Arabic—mature into a strong, enthusiastic person who is ready for the next stage in life.

Corrine cites Coach Caldwell as a terrific mentor for Caroline, who has been part of the rowing team for four years and was elected co-captain. “She’s blossomed into a leader. Her focus had really changed,” Corrine says. “As a leader, she doesn’t ask anyone to do anything that she wouldn’t do herself,” Caldwell states.

Louis notes that it’s bittersweet to see his daughter graduate. “The year is going by too quickly, but Caroline has developed relationships with Tufts and friends that will endure.”

Neill and Susanne Taylor, E14P

Susanne Taylor recalls pulling up in front of Cousens Gym a week before matriculation with her son Dave so that he could participate in Tufts’ Wilderness Orientation Program.

“I heard the music, and students gathered around our car like a swarm of bees. Dave turned to me and said, ‘See you later.’ He loved Tufts from the beginning,” she says, laughing.

An electrical engineering major, Dave has found community in multiple places, Susanne says, noting that Dave is now a leader in the Wilderness Program, a choreographer for Tufts’ Dance Collective, and a member of the Ultimate Frisbee Team.

Deciding to actively support the university, the Taylors joined the Parents Leadership Council (PLC), becoming ambassadors for Tufts and participating in events for leadership donors with key administrators and other PLC members. They also hosted a successful incoming student reception at their Chatham, Massachusetts, home.

“Neill and I saw how happy our son was. He’s the youngest of our three children, and we felt it was important to become involved. There wouldn’t be many more opportunities like this,” Susanne explains.

Giving back is the right thing to do, Susanne notes. “It’s our philosophy that you get what you give in life, even if it’s just politeness. Share what you have. It doesn’t have to be huge amounts of money—even smaller donations make a richer experience for everyone.”

You learn more about yourself when you give, Susanne says. “Becoming part of the Tufts family has opened up doors, conversations, thoughts, and allowed us to meet great people.”

“Although Dave will be graduating this May, I’m confident we will maintain a lifelong relationship with the Taylors as they have truly added something special to Tufts and the PLC,” says Program Director DeSalvo. “Once you become a member of the Jumbo family, you’re always a Jumbo.”
Plans, Pitches, and Dreams

Tufts $100K New Ventures Competition Gives Start-Ups Opportunities

When Sharad Vivek Sagar, A16, founded Dexterity Global in his rural Indian village, he imagined connecting young people through offline and online platforms in developing countries in a way that would foster entrepreneurship and leadership in schools. Today, over 100,000 high schoolers in 46 countries participate in Dexterity Global’s programs, and his acumen has resulted in serious recognition. In April 2013, he was awarded second place in Tufts’ annual $100K New Ventures Competition, earning him $15K in cash and in-kind services (see accompanying profile on following page).

For students with a dream for a start-up and who have a business plan, Tufts’ Gordon Institute’s $100K New Ventures Competition could help propel their careers. Celebrating its tenth anniversary, the $100K Competition is coordinated through the Entrepreneurial Leadership Program at the Gordon Institute, part of the School of Engineering, which focuses on engineering management and entrepreneurship. Businesses geared towards creating “private value” enter the classic track, while those with a mission to create and sustain “social value” enter the social track, explains Inge Milde, $100K Manager.

“We received over 65 submissions from the Tufts community,” Milde says, noting that ten finalists will ultimately make it to the April decision. Winners in both tracks as well as runners-up will share $100K in cash and in-kind gifts from sponsors who offer their expertise. Sponsors include Allied Minds, Burns & Levinson, the Capital Network, Cooley LLP, Cummings Properties, MassChallenge, LaunchPlan, Lowenstein Sandler LLP, and Loupe Consulting.

While the competition is open to graduate students, recent alumni, and Tufts faculty, Milde points out that undergraduates are often winners and finalists. “These students have taken entrepreneurial leadership studies classes and have had exposure to writing business plans,” she says.

Screeners, who include faculty, alumni, and parents, carefully review and score all the applications, providing each entry with valuable feedback. Finalists are then chosen and guided by expert mentors, such as angel investors, successful entrepreneurs, and venture capitalists, Milde explains.

J. Becket Linn was a senior when his company TeemPlay, a videogame platform that aimed to use crowdsourcing as a way to create new games, took second place in the 2013 competition.

“The Tufts $100k did exactly what I had hoped it would by serving as a stepping stone on accelerator programs and real world pitches,” Linn says.

This year, teams that have promising ideas but need more guidance can submit to the Tufts Ideas Competition, which will have three winners receiving $1,000. “We want to reward good ideas with mentorship, guidance, and a little funding,” Milde says.
Saving the World, One Student at a Time
Sharad Sagar, A16, Founder of Dexterity Global

Sharad Sagar, A16, leans forward, brown eyes sparkling. “I have a dream to democratize education and connect every young person in the world,” he says. If the sweeping statement sounds, at minimum, fanciful, consider Sagar’s story. Homeschooled until he was twelve, Sagar grew up in the Indian state of Bihar, where 84 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. At the age of 12 he founded his first non-profit doing social impact projects, including providing feeding program in the slums.

Sagar decided it was time to launch a broader platform that could take young people to the next level. At 16, Sagar founded Dexterity Global (dexglobal.org), a nonprofit that designs and leverages online and offline platforms for high school students to democratize access to information, opportunities, resources, and platforms.

DexChallenge is the company’s flagship platform. It creates co-curricular activities for students to compete and learn. DexGlobe connects students to information.

“Our idea is that several million young people don’t know that competitions exist. We provide a real-time stream of opportunities, like information about scholarships, competitions, leadership events, sports, and conferences,” he says. A student sitting in a remote country in Africa, Sagar explains, could access opportunities with NASA, Microsoft, and Google.

The company has garnered international attention, including multiple UN awards. Recently, the Rockefeller Foundation listed Dexterity Global as one of the top 100 innovators of the next century.

The Dexterity School of Public Speaking, Leadership, and Entrepreneurship (DexSchool) was created to give the top students in developing countries a place to interact with the world’s best innovators in a week-long school setting, Sagar says. “These students are seeing leaders and using elevator pitches for the first time.”

Armed with his own computer, Sagar was able to access information about universities, scholarships, and contests. The sophomore attends Tufts on a full university scholarship and says he applied for early decision because of the university’s International Relations major and the Entrepreneurial Leadership Program. In addition to his second place finish in the $100K Competition, Sagar is also the recipient of Tufts’ Paul and Elizabeth Montle Prize for Entrepreneurial Achievement.

Applying to Tufts “was the best decision I ever made,” he says. “Everyone here has taken a real interest in me, including President [Anthony] Monaco.”

“One of the most exciting aspects of my role,” Monaco says, “is getting to know our exceptional students—young people who have a great impact on one another here at Tufts, and on the world. Sharad exemplifies our ambition to generate bold ideas and encourage active citizens. Growing up, he was energized by seemingly daunting challenges. As a sophomore, he has already made a tremendous difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of young people around the globe, and he’s just getting started. I’m grateful that generous donors funded a full scholarship that allows Sharad to attend Tufts; our whole community benefits from his vitality and creativity.”

Like a proud parent, Sagar is excited about the difference he is seeing with the 100,000 students who have engaged with Dexterity Global in the past five years. “A DexSchool graduate was named one of Newsweek’s Top 25 Under 25 young women in the world. We also graduated an international math Olympiad qualifier, a UNESCO Multimedia Youth Award winner, and two national Taekwondo champions,” he says.

“I would never get this support elsewhere. I belong to Tufts,” he declares.
The biggest challenge Camila Silva, A14, faced during her summer internship at Florida Congressman Joe Garcia’s office in D.C. was pulling together a meet and greet for a group of DREAMers, lobbyists for immigration reform. “I had less than two hours,” the international relations major says. “The hardest part of the experience was knowing how important this was to the Congressman; he’s a passionate advocate for immigration reform. With very little assistance I stayed focused; the event was successful, impressing the Congressman and his staff.”

Silva was one of 44 Tufts students who received a $3,500 grant to work in an otherwise unpaid internship, says Jean Papalia, director of the Career Center. She says, “About 100 students apply through a competitive application process.” Funding comes from the university, generous parents and alumni, and the endowment fund.

Silva is grateful for her exposure to the legislative experience. “By assisting citizens through their elected representative, I understood the true beauty of public service,” she says.

Donna Esposito, senior associate director of the Career Center, states the center is available to help students network and locate internships, but many find their own.

As part of the application process, students write essays about the organization, what their responsibilities will be, and their goals, though the job does not necessarily have to advance career plans, Esposito explains. “We are interested in career exploration, skill development, and academic learning.”

As an intern in the Office of eDiplomacy last summer, Neena Kapur, A15, an international relations major with a minor in computer science, did outreach and technology-tool development, organized events created to help diplomats carry out their missions more effectively, and helped with the front-end development of eDiplomacy’s micro-tasking platform. But the job of which she is proudest is organizing a panel event featuring women in technology and innovation at the State Department. “It’s a topic I’m passionate about, and it created an opportunity for more discussion and community around women,” Kapur says.

Gavin Immer, A14, who received one of the ten diversity grants, spent the summer working at FactSet Research System on the database development team. Immer, who is majoring in economics and Asian studies, found his work a great fit. “I loved the office. I spent a couple of weeks researching China and felt prepared because of my courses at Tufts and the time I spent studying in China as a sophomore,” he says.

Rose Mendelsohn, A14P, prepared public policy briefings, helped organize a conference, and worked on legislative efforts to prevent housing discrimination for the National Fair Housing Alliance in D.C. “I was one of two interns, which was great because NFHA really used our help,” Mendelsohn says. “We worked on pushing through legislation that would have expanded protection in states against discrimination for sexual orientation, source of income, and marital status. The act was not passed in the time that I was there, but we saw concrete results by identifying new cosponsors.”

The Career Center provides extensive assistance, Director Papalia notes. “We have a Tufts Internship Profiles book (TIP), which provides internship profiles filled with advice from classmates, and the internship section of the website has thousands of job possibilities,” Papalia says. “Parents are encouraged to post positions available in their companies on Jumbo Jobs” (careers.tufts.edu/employers/).
What can a Tufts graduate do with a philosophy degree? Or one in anthropology? It's a question we at the Parents Giving Program are frequently asked, so we decided to ask six friends on the cusp of their fifth reunion to meet at an online Google Hangout and discuss life with a liberal arts degree.

There is much excitement as the Jumbos see each other on the screen streaming across from Wisconsin, North Carolina, Philadelphia, and Boston. Ashwin Phatak, A09, laughs when asked about the value of his philosophy and political science degrees. A third-year Harvard Law School student, Phatak was named best oralist, was a recent finalist in the Ames Moot Court Competition, and will spend two years clerking for judges in Atlanta and D.C. before working at a D.C. law firm. “There are a lot of possibilities,” he says.

Arguing in front of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Ginsberg last fall, Phatak cites his liberal arts background and senior thesis for giving him the skills to defend his opinions. “Without Tufts, it would be impossible to be in the position I’m in now,” he says.

Kate Cohen, A09, is where she envisioned herself from the beginning—a first year medical student at the Medical College of Wisconsin. An anthropology and community health major, Cohen worked at Children’s Hospital in Boston where she was first a project manager for patient safety and quality. Cohen points out that her path to becoming a doctor wasn’t always direct. “There are benefits to taking a somewhat different journey,” she says.

Officially, Rachel Dolin, A09, received degrees in history and political science. “But your real major was neurotic newspaper editor,” Cohen interjects.

“It’s true,” Rachel sighs. “The Tufts Daily was a huge part of my life. I learned skills that many don’t learn until after college.”

Now the former editor is a National Science Foundation recipient and PhD candidate in Health Care Quality and Access at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

After graduation, Dolin worked at L&M Policy Research in D.C., a public and private health consulting company, where she joined Bill Pajerowski, A09; both worked as research associates.

An international relations, economics, and Chinese tri-major, Pajerowski is pursuing a PhD in health policy economics at Wharton and is also a National Science Foundation recipient.

“The classes I took really prepared me for work and now in graduate school,” he says.

A business analyst with Dell Services Federal Government, Katherine Santoro, A09, credits Tufts for helping secure her first job with the Institute of the Study of War, a D.C. think tank. “Being a Tufts student helped me get my internship at the State Department, which helped me land my first job.” Santoro, who majored in International Relations and Italian Studies is pursuing a Masters of Public Administration at George Washington University on scholarship while working full time.

Alyssa Levin-Scherz, A09, states that her classes in creative writing and politics made her a more well-rounded person. A community health and political science major, Levin-Scherz is a second-year Tufts medical student. “I’m still in touch with some of my professors,” she says, adding that they were helpful in writing recommendation letters.


“I agree,” Dolin states. “After college five out of the six of us went to D.C. and all supported each other. It was a much easier transition, like having a family.”

Pajerowski and Levin-Scherz also found each other. In June of 2013, the two were married. Kate Cohen was maid of honor and Ashwin Phatak, future law clerk, officiated.

“It’s wonderful that we get to mark these milestones together. Ashwin’s wedding is in the spring, and we’ll be there to celebrate together,” Dolin says.

Alyssa Levin-Scherz is the daughter of assistant director Linda Levin-Scherz.
Halligan Hall

Students listen to a lecture from Associate Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering Mai Vu in the newly renovated Halligan Hall