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Save the Date!

Commencement will be held on Sunday, May 19, 2013.
Visit commencement.tufts.edu for complete information.
Hotels with room blocks for Tufts parents can be found at parentsprogram.tufts.edu
Dear Parents and Families,

It was my pleasure to meet so many of you during Parents and Family Weekend in October. The excitement and enthusiasm felt by all in attendance was intoxicating. It was wonderful to see parents enjoying firsthand lectures by the university’s president, deans, provost, professors, and directors; visiting our many successful multidisciplinary programs; and being entertained by our incredibly talented students during our arts festival. If you were not able to join us, I’m sorry to have missed you, but please check the Parents Program website to view the opening address and literature from some of our lectures.

An exciting new addition to campus this academic year can be found on College Avenue. Hopefully, you have had the opportunity to visit the beautiful new Steve Tisch Sports and Fitness Center, which has opened to glowing reviews by the Tufts community. We are very grateful to Steve Tisch, A71, and the many parents, alumni, and friends whose generous contributions to the center have allowed us to create a space where students can continue to focus on health and wellness while building a stronger Tufts community. If you haven’t stopped by yet, it’s truly a must-see.

While some of you may have already had the opportunity to meet him either on campus or on the road, I would like to personally welcome Craig O’Donnell, the new associate director of the Parents Program. I’m thrilled to have Craig as the newest member of our team, and he tells me he’s looking forward to meeting many parents in the upcoming months.

My role here at Tufts offers me the true pleasure of getting to know many parents. I know how much it matters to you to have the strongest university possible for your students. Having entrusted Tufts with educating your child is an amazing gift, and we are so grateful for that gift. Through the generous philanthropic support many of you provide, you are able to make an immediate impact on the daily lives of your students to help create the most outstanding student experience possible. Every gift matters, and from the bottom of my heart, I thank you for your generosity. Please know, I am always open and available to talk with parents about their giving to Tufts. I can be reached at gina.desalvo@tufts.edu or 617-627-0644 to talk about the impact you can make.

I look forward to meeting many of you in person the coming year.

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season.

Warm Jumbo Regards,
Gina A. DeSalvo, Director, Tufts Parents Program
Dan Cohen, A74, A13P, blazed his own academic path as a Tufts undergraduate, choosing to major in theater and oceanography. Today he is helping academically talented, underrepresented students from New York City who need financial help find their own roads to success by establishing the Sulzberger Scholarship. Established in 1997, the scholarship, named for his late mother, philanthropist Dr. Judith P. Sulzberger, assists students who would otherwise not be able to attend a prestigious school like Tufts while also helping to increase diversity on campus. The scholarship is now one of the university’s preeminent financial aid vehicles, supporting two students per year.

“Giving back is important to me,” he explains. “For many years I’d been involved with the Frederick Douglass Academy Charter School in East Harlem. From the beginning, I wanted to give some students an opportunity to attend Tufts, and I remain as committed today to helping young people follow their dreams.”

For many years, Cohen has quietly supported many students. The former TV producer of reality shows and senior vice president of advertising for the New York Times acknowledges that he wasn’t initially eager to set up an endowed fund at Tufts, but after meeting Brigette A. Bryant, senior director of development for Arts and Sciences, he had a change of heart. “She explained that it made sense to put money into a fund that (under careful management) would grow,” he says.

For Bryant, meeting Cohen was more than a dialogue about advising him on philanthropy; it was the beginning of a friendship that transcends campus boundaries.

“Dan is a wonderful person, and very passionate about his desire to support New York City students,” Bryant says. “I’m from NYC and was the type of student who would have benefitted from a scholarship like this. He understands the impact of this kind of financial support.

“The scholarship is a way for Cohen to honor his late mother, who during her lifetime also graciously supported it,” Bryant continues. The impact of the scholarship was broadened further by a matching gift program Tufts had a few years ago, which provided a 1-to-1 match for all financial aid gifts designated to the undergraduate colleges.

“We are so fortunate to have launched another matching program—this time called the Tufts Financial Aid Initiative—which will double the size of gifts of at least $100,000 designated to new or existing endowed scholarships; all new term scholarships of $25,000 or more are also matched,” Bryant explains.

Cohen has never lost sight of why he chose to create a scholarship and why it is so important. To that end, he has only one request from his scholars: the chance to meet them. “It’s important to me to meet with the students who are named Sulzberger Scholars,” he explains, adding his remembrance of an extraordinary event that touched him deeply. “Brigette arranged a delightful surprise on my birthday, bringing four of my scholarship recipients together in NYC to meet me and my wife, Leah. It was incredible.”

Keli Young, A12, recognized as a Sulzberger Scholar during her junior year, says she was ecstatic to receive the award. Young is now studying at New York University School of Law.

“I was deeply honored to receive the Sulzberger Scholarship,” Young says, and adds that she plans on being an involved alumna.

For Cohen, Young’s story is what he was looking for when he established his scholarship. “Tufts looks for unique students who emerge as leaders. My hope is that this scholarship will help them achieve their goals,” Cohen says.

If you would like to join Cohen in making an impact and learn more about the Tufts Financial Aid Initiative for Undergraduate Students, please contact Gina A. DeSalvo at gina.desalvo@tufts.edu or call 617-627-0644.
Bruce Grossman, A85, A16P, may not have begun his highly successful career with degrees in finance or business, but armed with an economics degree, good grades, a strong work ethic, and perseverance, he ultimately became the founder and CEO of Dillon Hill Capital. Grossman is the lead donor for the Tufts Finance Initiative (TFI), a program that will provide students with further education, training, and guidance that will better position them for successful careers in financial services. As an alumnus and parent, Grossman is determined to create an easier way for a new generation of Tufts students interested in careers in finance. A long time supporter of the university, he is hoping that a few generous donors will join him and other parents and alumni donors in making leadership gifts to provide the remaining $700,000 needed for this $1.8 million program.

“The Initiative is an offshoot of the Tufts Financial Network (TFN),” Grossman explains. Created in 2008, TFN sponsors panel discussions on topical issues and networking events to help young alumni generate career ideas, including the popular Wall Street Crash Course, a one-day conference held on campus where top-level finance parents and alumni lead a number of sessions in the field of finance.

The Tufts Finance Initiative is a five-year pilot program that will be housed in the Department of Economics and will create two new Professors of the Practice positions, bringing “real world” experience to the classroom and connections to other finance professionals. The first professor will start this January, according to Jeffrey Winey, director of Principal and Leadership Gifts in the Office of University Advancement.

James Glaser, dean of Academic Affairs for Arts and Sciences, sees TFI as something that will make a big difference for a large number of students interested in careers in finance. “We recognize that students come to Tufts for a first-quality liberal arts education, but these curricular changes also will allow them to develop more of the skills required in that field,” he says.

One of Grossman’s goals for the new program is to create opportunities for Tufts students who have no previous ties to the financial world. “This could be very helpful to the student who is starting on his own,” he says.

“It’s exciting, because the pieces of the puzzle are starting to fall into place,” Winey states. “This summer we should be able to fund a few unpaid finance internships.” However, a critical component to the success of the program and for which funding is still needed is a new position in the Office of Career Services dedicated to supporting students and alumni pursuing finance careers and/or MBA programs, Winey explains.

Although Grossman did not follow the typical academic finance track, he embraces the well-rounded education a liberal arts background gave him. “Tufts provided a great learning environment and gave me the confidence to trust my instincts,” he states, noting that he is urging his son, a freshman, to take full advantage of a liberal arts education.

“Much of the energy behind this initiative comes from some very dedicated alumni,” reflects Glaser. “They have given us the guidance and financial support to improve Tufts in very tangible ways. Bruce Grossman, in particular, has helped us imagine and soon realize this very exciting initiative.”

To find out more about the Tufts Finance Initiative contact Gina A. DeSalvo at gina.desalvo@tufts.edu or call 617-627-0644.
How to Think Like an Engineer

Engineering’s First-Year Experience Courses Help Students Answer the Question

When artists create or musicians perform, they draw on their inner selves as much as, if not more than, their brains,” says Eric Hines, professor of the practice in civil and environmental engineering and a past winner of the Henry and Madeline Fischer Award as Teacher of the Year in engineering at Tufts. “To be a virtuoso only in your mind is a very difficult proposition.”

The same goes for engineers. “Students tell me, ‘we just need to get our hands on the stuff to get an idea,’” Hines says. “I want to give them the opportunity to delight in making something out of nothing, to create something that’s more than the sum of its parts—to make magic.” That’s what Hines does in the First-Year Experience course he teaches for new engineering students. Those in his Structural Art course this fall will build a 30-foot bridge span out of wood and test its strength and durability at the Wind Technology Testing Center in Charlestown (a building Hines himself helped design). The teaching assistants are Scholl of Engineering seniors who share their own practical experience while serving as “mentors at eye level.” The message to these students: Welcome to engineering school.

This philosophy inspires the First-Year Experience program. One-credit courses offered in each of the six engineering departments (biomedical; chemical and biological; civil and environmental; computer science; electrical and computer; mechanical) expose new students to engineering practice across all disciplines.

Entering students are required to take two courses in separate disciplines over their first year. The aim is to engage these new students creatively while motivating and challenging their understanding of fundamental principles of engineering. In addition, the opportunity for seniors to help teach the course makes leadership and responsibility a seamless part of the curriculum. As part of this pilot initiative, a significant cross section of faculty members in the school are bringing their disciplinary perspectives to bear in the development of the following expanded introductory courses:

• Bridge Engineering (Brenner, CEE)
• Global Product Development (James, ME)
• Innovation and Innovators in ChBE (Georgakis, Lee, Panzer, Matson)
• Intro to Computational Design (Hassoun, CS)
• Music and the Art of Engineering (Hopwood, ECE)
• Simple Robotics (Danahy, CS)
• Structural Art (Hines, CEE)

“I want to give them [the students] the opportunity to delight in making something out of nothing, to create something that’s more than the sum of its parts—to make magic.”

—Eric Hines
Professor of the practice in civil and environmental engineering
Not Just Child’s Play

Professor Marina Bers Designs and Evaluates Educational Technologies Aimed at Helping Children

It’s a hot summer day, still a couple of weeks before students begin arriving on campus, but Professor Marina Bers hasn’t slowed down. Emerging from a conference, she hurries down the hall and into her office, talking passionately about how new technologies can transform education—and Tufts undergraduates are helping her with the research. Bers, an associate professor at Tufts’ Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development and adjunct professor in the Computer Science Department, also heads the interdisciplinary Developmental Technologies Research Group (DevTech Research Group), which designs and evaluates technologically rich educational programs and technologies aimed at helping children develop in positive ways.

“We’re interested in seeing how new technologies can play a positive role in children’s development and learning, and we especially focus on the components of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math),” she explains. In its National Science Foundation—funded “Ready for Robotics” project, for example, DevTech Research Group is looking at how robotic tools can help children understand concepts of math, science, and technology in a fun and creative way. The group also created Zora, a Virtual Communities of Learning and Care (VCLC) project that engages pediatric transplant patients in a virtual community; VCLC is used at Tufts Floating Hospital for Children and Boston Children’s Hospital. Bers’ work has earned her, among other awards, the 2005 Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, the highest honor given by the U.S. government to outstanding investigators at the early stages of their careers.

“Our student researchers are not just those majoring in child development,” she says. “Our work is interdisciplinary and that is reflected in our students who come from everywhere in the university.”

Bers and the DevTech Research Group partner with area schools, and last March a group of 30 undergraduate and graduate students spent a week at the Early Childhood Discovery and Design Magnet School in New York City. There, elementary school children learned about engineering through Lego pieces, arts and crafts materials, robotic parts, and computers, culminating in an expo where students’ robots came to life.

Child development majors Amanda Puerto, A13, and Mollie Elkin, A14, are two of the undergraduates who participated. “Technology is a tangible component,” says Elkin. “Children can hold it and understand concepts.”

Both students say that working with graduate students has provided them opportunities not usually found at the undergraduate level. “Tufts students are very dedicated,” Bers states, noting that four students had been in the lab late the night before despite the still-summer day. Given the opportunity, they can accomplish anything.”
A Passion for Gastropods

Tufts Junior is Honored with Astronaut Scholarship Award

Coming from land locked Vermont, Sam Bashevkin, A14, had no idea that he would find his passion in marine biology at Tufts. Starting as a work-study student washing dishes in the biology department and eventually assisting in the lab of Jan A. Pechenik, professor of Invertebrate Zoology and Marine Biology, Bashevkin states he “became really interested in marine biology.” That might be an understate-ment—his research examining the resistance to desiccation stress of the embryos and juveniles of an intertidal animal recently earned him a prestigious Astronaut Scholarship. Nationally, the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation awards 28 $10,000 scholarships; Bashevkin is the 17th Tufts student to receive the award.

Working on a piece of a larger research project developed by Pechenik, Bashevkin looked at the gastropod Crepidula fornicata, and discovered that the invasive snails likely need to hide in shade when the tide goes out because they are not as resistant to desiccation as expected. Although native to the Atlantic Coast, “These snails are found everywhere, including the West Coast, Europe, and Japan. They were probably introduced along with the import of American oysters,” Bashevkin says.

“The research is important because these snails may negatively impact the survival of other shellfish. It’s not really understood yet how they’ve changed the ecosystem, but we could potentially figure out why this species invades and take measures to prevent it,” he explains.

Bashevkin will travel to Chile next summer to look at the juveniles of a related gastropod species with Pechenik and a graduate student, funded by the new International Research Program for Tufts Faculty and Students in Arts and Sciences. A generous gift from an anonymous donor permits the School of Arts and Sciences to pilot this innovative program to fund student-faculty teams conducting scientific research internationally.

“Not only did he do wonderful work on the project, but he played a major role in helping to design the study... Even more importantly, he thinks about what he is doing, and why he is doing it, and he’s never afraid to ask if he’s at all unsure about something.”

—Jan A. Pechenik
Professor of Invertebrate Zoology and Marine Biology

learns quickly, is highly reliable and completely responsible, works carefully, is well organized, and keeps an excellent lab notebook. Even more importantly, he thinks about what he is doing, and why he is doing it, and he’s never afraid to ask if he’s at all unsure about something.” Pechenik also noted that his student received a grade of A+ in his first marine biology course, a grade that Pechenik’s given only a handful of times in his 33 years at Tufts.

A Tufts education has meant being part of a welcoming, academically challenging place. “The professors are always available, enthusiastic, and helpful,” Bashevkin says.

For Pechenik, his protégé’s future is clear. “He is destined for a productive and successful career in research,” he states.
Civil and Environmental Engineering Professor of the Practice Eric Hines takes one of his classes on a tour of the building projects his company is working on in Post Office Square. (See page 5 for story.)