Parents News
A NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS OF TUFTS UNDERGRADUATES

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Dear Parents,

It’s been an exciting winter semester at Tufts! The Institute for Global Leadership (IGL) hosted a symposium that examined conflict in the 21st century with more than 50 military strategists, academics, and advocates; a new university-wide Center for the Study of Race and Democracy was established to stimulate research and debate on race and democracy in the United States and around the world; and NBC’s Brian Williams will be on campus in April to discuss politics and election coverage as part of the Edward R. Murrow Forum on Issues in Journalism.

The continuous transformation of Tufts is a testament to the strong support from parents and alumni over the years who honor their Tufts experience with gifts. Your generosity ensures that the university will continue to offer extraordinary educational opportunities.

If you haven’t yet done so, mark your calendars for Parents and Family Weekend, October 19–21, 2012. The date is the same weekend as Head of the Charles and hotels will fill up soon. Be sure to visit our website, parentsprogram.tufts.edu, for helpful information on Parents and Family Weekend, Commencement, and other events and lectures parents are welcome to attend as part of the Tufts family.

Best wishes,
The Parents Program Staff

Sports Round-up

The Tufts winter sports season was one of the most successful in years. The women’s basketball team advanced to the NCAA “Sweet 16,” where they played the University of St. Thomas. The Jumbos hosted the first two rounds of the NCAAs at Cousens Gym, marking the first time that NCAA Tournament basketball was played on campus. Tufts had a 23–6 record for the second-most victories in team history. The Jumbo hockey team secured a home-ice berth into the conference championship tournament by placing fourth in the competitive NESCAC. The men’s basketball team enjoyed its most successful campaign in several seasons with a 16–9 record and also hosted a conference tournament quarterfinal game. The men’s track & field team sent seven athletes to the NCAA Indoor Championship meet, while the women’s team had four athletes qualify. In swimming & diving, two men and four women are on their way to the national championship meet later in March. The men’s squash team played into the finals of the Conroy Cup D Division at the national team championships. Women’s squash and women’s fencing also enjoyed productive seasons this winter. Women’s basketball’s Carla Berube, hockey’s Brian Murphy and women’s swimming’s Nancy Bigelow were all named conference Coaches of the Year.

—Paul Sweeney, Director, Sports Communication
**Bridge to Success**

**Bridge to Engineering Success at Tufts Helps Ease College Transition**

When Sandro Renteria-Garcia, E15, got his acceptance letter to Tufts, he was ecstatic—even though it came with a catch: he would have to join several other talented students the summer before school began in a program designed to help ease the transition into the School of Engineering. The School of Engineering and the Center for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Diversity created the six-week intensive program, Bridge to Engineering Success at Tufts (BEST), to assist nominated underrepresented students in preparing for the rigors of engineering. The summer program gives the students opportunities to take two credits of math and science and participate in academic and college life workshops. Tuition, room, and board are provided to students through the Diversity Fund and the School of Engineering. A similar program, The Bridge to Liberal Arts Success at Tufts (BLAST) will launch in July at the School of Arts and Sciences.

“Our mission is to help students who might not have had the access to all the classes and opportunities that others have had,” says Travis Brown, program manager at the Center for STEM Diversity, noting that BEST is not a remedial program.

Brown works directly with the Admissions Committee to identify promising candidates. There is no formal application process to the BEST program, Brown explains. “Students who participate are often the first ones in their family to go to college, and all of the students are on financial aid,” Brown says.

For Renteria-Garcia, the classes in physics and calculus were intensive but a welcome departure from the overcrowded high school he attended in Freedom, California. “The academics were good if you found them, but there wasn’t an AP physics class offered,” he says. Like many of the students in BEST, the chemical engineering student is the first person in his family to go to college.

“It costs about $10,000 per student to cover expenses,” Brown explains. “This has been an incredibly successful program. All of our students perform well academically and there is no doubt that all will finish,” he says, noting that many make the Dean’s List.

“Tufts was my dream school,” says sophomore Edwin Diaz, who calls the program “great.”

The electrical engineering major from Harlem in New York City engaged in the classes and activities. “The workload was intensive, but when classes started, I knew I could handle the increasing difficulty,” he says. He also points to professors like Valencia Joyner Koomson in the electrical and computer engineering department, who is now his advisor, to always be available. “I can just knock on her door at any time and talk to her,” he says.

Initially, Amanda Rock, E15, was not keen about giving up her last summer before college. “But I come from a really small high school and I was unsure how prepared I would be,” Rock says. The mechanical engineering student was urged to pursue her chosen field by high school teachers because of her math abilities. “While both of my parents attended college, I’m the first person who will graduate,” she says.

Rock also cites the close-knit friendships created during the program. “It’s one of the greatest benefits,” she says.

For more information, see http://stemdiversity.tufts.edu/.
Though it’s not listed as an ingredient, Tufts compost can be bought at some Whole Foods stores. The Medford campus annually composes 200 tons of waste, which is just one of the ways the university is working on leaving a smaller carbon footprint. Leading the efforts for a more earth-friendly campus is the Office of Sustainability (OOS), which serves as a resource, catalyst, and advocate for environmental sustainability at Tufts.

Tina Woolston, program director at OOS, proudly shows off the silver STAR award on her office window, a symbol of the university’s sustainability efforts under the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS), a new program that measures and encourages sustainability in all aspects of higher education.

The university is not a newcomer to campus sustainability. In 1990 Tufts developed the first university environmental policy and launched the international Talloires Declaration, a 10-point action plan for incorporating sustainability and environmental literacy in teaching, research, operations, and outreach at colleges and universities. It is now endorsed by 433 university leaders worldwide.

President Anthony Monaco has made advancing sustainability at Tufts one of his top priorities, working with the university-wide Council on Campus Sustainability. The group is tasked with examining Tufts’ environmental impact, energy and emissions, water use, and waste management.

Campus sustainability is interwoven throughout the university, Woolston notes, pointing out that water use is down 10 percent since 1990, dining services offers more organic and locally grown food options, and renewable energy powers the new Sophia Gordon residence hall.

Another popular OOS program is the placement of 10 eco-representatives (eco-reps) in dorms with first-year students. Students chosen for the position receive a $1,000 stipend and attend a training retreat to help raise awareness about ecological issues by encouraging environmentally responsible behavior like recycling, conserving water, attending eco-rep events, and making eco-friendly dietary choices. Eco-reps also can certify a dorm room green after residents fill out a checklist. “I have two students running the program, which provides excellent leadership development for them,” Woolston says.

On Woolston’s wish list is to have a fund for students’ proposals. “Some schools have funds to which students can apply for grants through a selection committee. I would love to be able to do something like that,” Woolston states, noting that money could empower students to come up with their own ideas.

Senior Hannah Kahler, an OOS intern, sees sustainability around campus “really taking off.”

“The library only prints on both sides of paper, there are composting bins at large events, and there is a new recycling machine in the campus center,” Kahler says.

Both Kahler and Woolston cite the student group Tufts Sustainability Collective for implementing a number of action steps on campus, including a popular bike share program.

Kahler, who is double majoring in anthropology and environmental science, notes that the university has a number of courses for students interested in studying issues around the environment, climate change, and sustainability.

Woolston points out that environmental studies is one of the focus areas at the School of Engineering, but students can also learn more about the subject in the English department, for example, and at the Ex-College. “Sustainability is part of Tufts’ culture,” she states.
Profiles in Excellence

The Bridge Doctor

Think of Alyssa Kody as a bridge doctor. The civil engineering junior notes that the majority of bridges in this country were built in the 1950s, are at the end of their life span, yet most inspections are only visual.

“If you go to the doctor for a thorough exam, he or she will do more than just look at you,” Kody says. “We can do a more thorough exam of a bridge’s structure by using sensors and gauges.”

Kody, who worked with Assistant Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering Babak Moaveni as part of the Summer Scholars Program, sought to simulate structural damage on the Dowling Hall footbridge without compromising its integrity.

“I placed accelerometers and temperature gauges in several points under the bridge to see how quickly the bridge was moving. Natural vibration frequencies are always occurring, but if there’s damage to a bridge, there will be a loss of stiffness in the modal frequency,” she explains.

Kody had 5,000 pounds of concrete blocks delivered to campus, bribing several graduate students with a free lunch to help her unload and place them on the bridge.

“The results were really successful,” Kody says of the experiment. “I left the bricks for three days and observed a decrease in natural vibration, which simulated damage to the bridge,” she says, adding that Dowling Bridge is structurally sound.

“It’s rare that undergraduates can do research like this,” Kody says. Opportunities like this are why Kody “fell in love” with the university. “I knew I wanted engineering, but I also like liberal arts. I have a heavy civil engineering course load, but balance it with classes in history, art, and education.”

One of Kody’s proudest achievements is helping to reinstate a dormant Tufts branch of the Order of the Engineer, an ethics pledge engineers take before going into the workforce. “In 1907, the Quebec Bridge collapsed, killing 75 people and injuring others. The oath asks engineers to uphold the standards of the profession and serves as a reminder of the impact your work has on people,” she says.

Synaptic Scholar Explores Beyond Campus

Benjamin Perlstein knew before entering college that studying the Middle East would be his focus. The political science junior, who is now spending the semester in Israel working as a special assistant to the CEO of the Jerusalem International YMCA, attended the Institute for Global Leadership’s (IGL) Education for Public Inquiry and International Citizenship (EPIIC) symposium as a high school senior, which, he says, “sealed the deal” about choosing Tufts. Now involved with several IGL programs, Perlstein credits his involvement with IGL’s Synaptic Scholars Program for allowing him to integrate learning inside and outside the classroom.

Founded by IGL director Sherman Teichman, A09P, Synaptic Scholars is a leadership program that provides a forum for students to take risks and pursue passions in a supportive, collaborative environment.

“I wanted to create an experimental framework where students would approach issues in an interdisciplinary way, one that encourages active engagement with the world,” Teichman says.

Students are paired with mentors from an array of backgrounds who serve as advisors and contacts for students throughout their academic careers, Teichman explains.

For Perlstein, involvement in Synaptic embodies a commitment that IGL makes to promote intellectual life on campus. “I served as one of the founding executive coordinators of the Tufts Idea Exchange (TEX)—a TED-style forum for Tufts students, faculty, alumni, and staff to showcase innovative thinking from across the university community,” he says. He was also an executive board member and president of OneWorld, which partners with Synaptic Scholars to produce TEX, and also runs the annual OneWorld Global Crafts Bazaar and Development Fair, which has become a staple of university programming through a combination of globally conscious educational programs and the sale of fair trade crafts from around the world.

“Ben is a distinctive student who is passionate, introspective, and innovative. It’s fulfilling to see this generation of students committed to peace and reconciliation in the Middle East,” Teichman states.
“I had traveled abroad with the IGL a number of times throughout my Tufts career, and I know that the experience that I gained from working in the field independently played a key role in giving me the confidence to undertake this project.”

—Elizabeth Herman, A10

Are past events shaped by current political agendas?

Yes, says Elizabeth Herman, A10, who examined the issue as an undergraduate and as the recipient of a Fulbright Scholarship, one of the most prestigious award programs in the world. Her senior thesis focused on how the tragic events of 9/11 are portrayed in history books. As a Fulbright Scholar, Herman expanded on her work, going to Bangladesh to focus on how the country’s Liberation War was written about in the national social science textbooks.

Herman, who was interviewed on National Public Radio and cited in the New York Times, spent a year in Bangladesh, visited more than 30 schools, collected approximately 150 textbooks and curriculum documents from 1971 to the present, and conducted more than 100 interviews.

Herman says the idea to study history’s portrayal in textbooks came to her when she returned to her Newton, Massachusetts, high school to coach a debate team and began thumbing through a social science textbook, finding some of what was written troubling.

“And there, in one of the last chapters, were segments on 9/11 and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. As I skimmed through the presentation of these events, I found some of what was written a little troubling, and decided to look into the matter further. When I started brainstorming ideas for a summer scholars’ research topic later on in the year, I remembered that visit and became interested in seeing how these events were presented in other countries’ textbooks as well,” she says.

As an undergraduate, Herman says Associate Professor of Political Science Kelly Greenhill was key in helping her shape her work.

“Kelly encouraged me to turn the project into a thesis, and even though she was to be on leave to work on three of her own research projects, she graciously agreed to be my thesis chair during her so-called break! She was off campus for a good portion of the year, but made time week after week for hour-long phone chats,” Herman adds.

“Elizabeth is a remarkable young woman—intelligent, multitalented, hardworking and disarmingly charming,” states Greenhill.

Education lecturer Steven Cohen and Associate Political Science Professor David Art were additional readers for her 477-page thesis.

“Steve helped me consider the questions from an educator’s point of view—something that I do today as I continue the work. David Art was my second reader, and even though he was an advisor for a number of other thesis students, he agreed to be on my committee,” she says.

Sherman Teichman, director of the Institute for Global Leadership (IGL) and Associate Director of IGL Heather Barry were also invaluable mentors, Herman says, providing funding for the translations that she needed and connecting her to their network to locate translators.

The experience she had writing her thesis and her independent research work gave her analytical skills to tackle the research project. “I had traveled abroad with the IGL a number of times throughout my Tufts career, and I know that the experience that I gained from working in the field independently played a key role in giving me the confidence to undertake this project,” she says.
On the Right Track

**A Family’s Love for Sports and Tufts Spurs Support for New Athletic Building**

Ted Tye, A79, A06P, A13P, was a self-professed “Cousens gym rat” as an undergraduate at Tufts, whose love for sports and the university is clear. He and his wife, Kate, J79, A06P, A13P, have cheered their three children through years of sports, and Ted has coached soccer and basketball in Newton, Massachusetts, for more than 20 years, sending many young athletes on to play in college. He still runs their town’s travel basketball program. Their daughter Jessica graduated from Tufts in 2006, and their daughter Samantha played varsity basketball in her first two years at the university. When the Tyes learned that Tufts was planning a new athletic facility, the Steve Tisch Sports and Fitness Center—which received key support from Steve Tisch, A71, chairman of the New York Giants, and pledges from the members of the Athletics Board of Advisors—they decided to make a generous gift, naming a women’s varsity team room “The Tye Family Team Room Suite.” The couple is part of a large group of parents, alumni, and friends who are supporters of athletics at the university, including the Bacow Sailing Pavilion and the William A. Shoemaker Boathouse, named by David W. Shoemaker, A07P.

“I have closely followed the women’s basketball team and have seen first-hand the need for better facilities. I also attend many women’s field hockey and men’s lacrosse games. I have had the chance to visit all of the NESCAC schools and see their facilities. As a member of the Athletics Board of Advisors, I know the importance of improving our facilities both for our many varsity athletics as well as for our amazing recreational programs. I am really inspired by the commitment of all Jumbo athletes and coaches and want to see them have a quality facility at Tufts.”

—Ted Tye, A79, A06P, A13P

The 42,000 square-foot facility embraces “green” technology. Building systems include high-efficiency plumbing fixtures, heat recovery, demand ventilation, high-performance glazing, solar shading devices, automatic lighting controls, and natural day lighting. The fitness center will meet increased student demand, and student athletes and coaches will have access to new locker rooms, a film classroom for off-the-field instruction, and an expanded sports medicine suite. Rooms will be equipped for aerobics, Pilates, dance, and physical education classes. Dedicated space will support the university’s Personalized Performance Fitness Program that many members of the Tufts community use to keep in shape.

“I have also been involved as a class leader, current board of Tufts Hillel, and as a board member of the Tufts Development Corporation among many other Tufts activities. However, I find the need to enhance the athletic complex as one of the university’s biggest needs, and we were delighted to be able to make a major gift commitment,” Ted says.
NME, the Tufts New Music Ensemble, performs in Distler Performance Hall during Parents and Family Weekend on October 29, 2011. More scenes from the weekend are on the front cover.