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SAVE THE DATE!
Parents and Family Weekend
October 19–21, 2012
parentsprogram.tufts.edu
Dear Parents,

It’s been an exciting year at Tufts! The university was delighted to welcome John Barker, dean of Undergraduate and Graduate Students, and is looking forward to its next provost and senior vice president, David R. Harris. Tufts also proudly saw the opening of the Center for the Study of Race and Democracy, a university-wide center that will stimulate research and debate on race and democracy.

Being a Tufts student means taking classes and having research opportunities with top professors. But learning doesn’t stop inside the classroom. Students heard notable speakers who came to the Hill, including developmental economist Muhammad Yunus, winner of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize, and “NBC Nightly News” anchor and managing editor Brian Williams.

Students also could have gone to many of the author talks given through the Center for the Humanities at Tufts (CHAT), including Martin Amis, Tom Perrotta, Albert Berger, Gary Shteyngart, and Zadie Smith. Or, they might have engaged with the Institute for Global Leadership Norris and Margery Bendetson Education for Public Inquiry and International Citizenship (EPIIC) Symposium, where more than 50 military experts examined conflict in the 21st century.

Your generosity to the Parents Fund ensures that the university will continue to offer extraordinary educational opportunities. Thank you to those who have already made a philanthropic gift. If you haven’t done so yet, you can do so online at http://giving.tufts.edu/, email parentsprogram@tufts.edu, or call us at 617-627-3798.

Best wishes for a peaceful and relaxing summer,

The Parents Program Staff

Sports Round-Up

The Tufts men’s lacrosse and women’s softball teams are contending for NCAA national championships as the 2011–12 year in Jumbo sports is coming to a close. The softball team won the NCAA Regionals behind the stellar pitching of first-year Allyson Fournier, who was named the Most Outstanding Player of the tournament. The Jumbos are 40–5 overall and won their seventh conference title this spring. The men’s lacrosse team (16–2), which won its third straight NESCAC title, is trying to reach the NCAA final for the third straight season. The Jumbos women’s tennis team earned its 12th consecutive NCAA Championship berth and won a second-round match. The men’s and women’s track & field teams were both the runner-up at their conference championship meets and have several athletes qualified to compete at the NCAA Championship later this month.

On May 2, the Tufts football team hosted a “draft day” for Riley Roman, an eight-year-old from South Hadley, Massachusetts, who was recently diagnosed with a primitive neuroectodermal brain tumor. New England Patriots linebacker Rob Ninkovich was at Riley’s draft day. Involvement with the Tufts football team will provide the opportunity for Riley to get back out onto the field with his new teammates, a dream come true as he continues his fight against cancer.

—Paul Sweeney, Director, Sports Communication
A New Vision for the Hill

John Barker Joins Tufts as the Dean of Undergraduate and Graduate Students

John Barker, the new dean of Undergraduate and Graduate Students, looks at the whiteboard hanging on the wall of his office, filled with priorities, ideas, and accomplishments, and smiles. “Let me explain what we’re doing,” he says. At the top of his substantial list is to create a seamless transition of academic and co-curricular opportunities for all undergraduate students, as well as advocate and support students who have been historically underrepresented in higher education, he says.

Key to Barker’s vision is the recognition that each student has his or her own journey. “There is no one right or wrong way to get the most out of a Tufts education,” he says. “It’s important that each student receive personal attention.”

Barker, who most recently was the associate provost of undergraduate education at the University of Miami in Florida, is responsible for enhancing the undergraduate and graduate student experience in the School of Arts and Sciences, and strengthening the integration of university-wide undergraduate and graduate academic and co-curricular initiatives. He oversees Student Services, Student Affairs, Academic Advising and Undergraduate Studies, Programs Abroad, and Intercultural and Social Identities Programs.

Academic learning is only one of the components of a successful college education, Barker says. Students must also have self-confidence and achievement motivation. Toward that goal, 10 Academic and Community Engagement Fellows (ACE) will be hired in partnership with the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service—juniors and seniors who have gone through extensive training—who will provide academic support to new Jumbos beginning this fall. ACEs will serve as academic role models, assist first-year students in learning about campus resources, and create a welcoming community through programs that promote academic success.

Dean of Arts and Sciences Joanne Berger-Sweeney says Barker is “just the right person to help integrate curricular and co-curricular experiences for our undergraduate and graduate students at Tufts. He’s smart, energetic, and bold; he is brimming with new ideas. Without a doubt our students will see some of his new ideas for enhancing the student experience coming to fruition next year and beyond.”

Among Barker’s earliest achievements are designing and launching the Bridge to Liberal Arts Success at Tufts (BLAST), a program to transition primarily first-generation students from urban and charter schools to Arts and Sciences undergraduate studies; implementing the Behavioral Intervention Team and Bystander Intervention Program, a risk-prevention team comprising of senior administrators, who assess students exhibiting potentially risky behavior; and connecting the Study Abroad Program with the International Center to look at the international community as a whole.

School of Engineering Dean Linda Abriola says that Barker brings an extraordinary passion to his new position. “He has a wealth of exciting ideas about how we can improve the undergraduate student experience through strengthening of existing programs and development of new co-curricular initiatives. His vision for community building resonates strongly with our deepest values,” she states.

“I love how active, smart, and passionate Tufts students are. The most important part of my job is to make sure they can write, think, and look at themselves as global citizens. Then I will have succeeded in my goals.”

—John Barker
Dean of Undergraduate and Graduate Students
Jack McDermott, A14, is speaking into his iPhone, and although this is usually the most banal of activities, it has become remarkable in that the app he is using—Speech4Good—has delayed his speech by 100 milliseconds, processed it, graphed it, then returned it through headphones, a technique called delayed auditory feedback (DAF), to help treat stuttering, as well as other voice disorders, and Parkinson’s speech-related issues. McDermott is CEO of Balbus Speech, a company he launched in May 2011 after looking for ways to make his own treatment for stuttering more accessible and engaging. (“Balbus” comes from the Latin word for stutter.) His best friend, Michael Cotter, a Harvard student, joined him as director of marketing and public relations when the app was being developed. They hired a programmer to write the software, and used savings and money from their families to get the business going. Now the app is being downloaded across the country and elsewhere, including in Turkey, Australia, and Great Britain.

McDermott didn’t seek to change the methods used for speech therapy, but he thought making it easily portable would be transformational. “When I went to speech therapy, I would be connected to a big, expensive machine using a technique called delayed auditory feedback. The app takes users’ input speech and processes it to output audio separating how each word sounds,” he explains.

In addition to DAF, the app features a dashboard designed to navigate within Speech4Good, a library that saves recorded practice sessions, social sharing that allows an easy way to send emails of recorded practice files to speech therapists, or anyone else, and organized files within a custom library to play back recorded audio and hear improvements.

“In the past, I would go to therapy then leave, using a tape player at home. Now I can record up to 10 minutes of my homework, save the file, take notes, replay it, and send it to my therapist,” McDermott says.

His work earned him Tufts’ Paul and Elizabeth Montle Prize for Entrepreneurial Achievement. “Paul Montle, A69, created the scholarship to reward students who demonstrate entrepreneurial skills and also have a moral obligation to eventually give back to Tufts more than they received. Jack is the ideal recipient. He has shown true entrepreneurial spirit in creating something that will help many,” says Laura Doane, program director for Advising and Scholarships.

McDermott receives marketing and technical assistance from entrepreneur Tim Noetzel, A08, whom he met through Compass Partners, a national program that provides resources, training, and support to students with innovative ideas.

“We do very little traditional marketing. We’ve found that through word of mouth, Facebook, Twitter, and blogs we’re able to grow,” McDermott states. On the website a viewer is likely to see a chat box emerge with McDermott’s face and accompanying welcome note to feel free to ask questions. “It’s easy to do. I have Skype up while I’m on the computer doing homework and I can see if anyone is on the site,” he says.

“I have goals to make other things more accessible. I’m very interested in the education market,” he says. “But I’m always thinking of my next big idea.”
Engineering Students Shake Up Engineering Stereotypes at Area High Schools

Shahbazi Public Service Fund Supports Engineering Students

Three students from the School of Engineering are engaging their peers and reaching out to area high schools to shake up stereotypes of engineering. Supported by the Shahbazi Public Service Fund, Richa Batra, Jeffrey Arena, and Esha John, all E12, are energizing young students and changing views about the field.

“There are a lot of misconceptions about engineering,” says John, an electrical engineering major who serves as outreach coordinator for the Engineering Student Council. “It’s not all about math and science—you need to be able to write well and work in teams.”

Their efforts kicked off this fall after Batra started reaching out to other engineers to garner interest in the program.

“About two years ago, I was involved with a group that did similar work in area high schools,” explains Batra, a mechanical engineering major and the outreach coordinator for the Society of Women Engineers. “I wanted to revive those efforts and I knew that other engineering student groups were looking for similar projects, so it was a great opportunity to partner and work together.”

Arena, a mechanical engineering major and president of Tau Beta Pi, the engineering honor society, adds that the program has been a great opportunity for Tufts students.

“At Tufts, it’s not hard to find community service opportunities, but it can be challenging to find opportunities which are academically relevant to your course work,” Arena says. “This project allows engineers from all disciplines to take what they’ve learned and to help young people discover this field.”

John adds that the group is focused on sparking interest among women and minorities, groups nationally underrepresented in engineering.

“Part of what’s really unique about this group is that a majority of the Tufts students involved are women,” says John, a native of India. “By going to a high school and talking to students about engineering, we’re able to start changing stereotypes and shifting perception about who can be an engineer.”

At Tufts, the School of Engineering has long been a leader in this regard. Headed by Dean Linda Abriola, one of the few female engineering deans in the country, about 31% of the school’s undergraduates are women. Additionally, 26% of graduate students are female and 22% of tenured and tenure-track faculty are women—numbers are much higher than at most other institutions.

“At our fall workshop, we had about 70 Reading High School students who were all taking some type of math or science course,” Arena, a Reading native, explains. “We talked to them about college life as engineering students and discussed the possibilities for engineering careers after college.”

“Some students had no idea what engineering was and they asked us really good questions,” Batra adds. “Going in, we were a little nervous the students would just be quiet and not have any questions, but it was really exciting how much energy and enthusiasm they had for the topic.”

—Sarah Shugars, Communications Specialist for Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship
The Neurobiology of Music

Incoming Professor Aniruddh Patel Shares His Passion for Music Cognition

“It’s not the size of the brain but rather brain connections that allows music to be felt,” states incoming associate professor Aniruddh (Ani) Patel. “Keeping a beat is a rich, complex phenomenon. We humans move in sync with a musical beat, a trait shared not with our closest chimpanzee relatives but with parrots and cockatoos, who share our talent for vocal learning. This suggests insights into the evolution of music.”

---Aniruddh Patel
Associate Professor
Department of Psychology

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—Aniruddh Patel
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Productions, will also be joining the Tufts faculty as part-time Professor of the Practice in the Department of Drama & Dance.

“For the last 15 years I worked with graduate students at the Neurosciences Institute and I will continue to work with graduate students here. But I’m really looking forward to teaching undergraduates. The study of music cognition is really taking off and I’m excited to bring in smart students to the field,” Patel says.

While he’ll be teaching in the Department of Psychology, Patel intends to take advantage of Tufts’ interdisciplinary approach to teaching, research, and learning. “Music touches on so many facets of our mental lives. I look forward to working with colleagues who study language in the Department of Psychology, like Phil Holcomb and Gina Kuperberg, but also with faculty like David Locke (associate professor of music), Joe Auner (professor and chair of the Department of Music), Ray Jackendoff (Seth Merrin Professor of Philosophy), and Maryanne Wolf (Child Development), as well as faculty at the School of Medicine. Access to researchers across the university will greatly enrich my ability to do interdisciplinary work,” he states.

James Glaser, dean of Academic Affairs for Arts and Sciences, is enthusiastic about one of Tufts’ latest hires. “Bringing Dr. Patel to our psychology department is a real coup. He’s an internationally recognized researcher whose work is innovative, provocative, really stunning. He’s also a fabulous communicator, and our students are going to be clamoring for seats in his classes. Parents may want to check out some of his public lectures on YouTube,” he says.
Ethan and Hilary Stone

Parents Leadership Council Members: Legacy of Leading by Example

Ethan, A80, A14P, A14P, and Hilary Stone, J79, A14P, A14P, were at first surprised when their twins Erin and Jeremy decided to follow in their footsteps and attend Tufts. The Stones, who live in Santa Barbara, hoped that their kids would seriously consider schools in California, but Erin and Jeremy wanted to experience living somewhere entirely different, so they looked at mostly East Coast schools when going through the college search process. “We looked at 23 schools throughout the country,” Hilary explains, “and though our children knew we loved Tufts, we didn’t try to steer them toward it. But seeing all these other schools made us appreciate the university even more.”

Ethan and Hilary, Parents Leadership Council members, choose to generously support the Parents Fund for Arts, Sciences & Engineering because they believe Tufts is a great institution that has impacted their lives in many ways. “We felt Tufts had given a lot to us academically and socially. It was for both of us a place that led us to grad schools and jobs, a place that we think positively about,” Ethan says.

The Stones, who met playing Frisbee in the quad in front of Lewis, have donated to the university since they graduated. “We always wanted to give back to Tufts. As we went through the process of looking at schools with our kids, we came to learn that alumni giving is actually an important criterion on which schools are judged. So, giving back is more important than we realized. Gifts of any size go a long way in enhancing the reputation of the school,” Hilary notes.

Ethan’s father, James B. Stone, A52, a Marine who came to the university on the GI bill from neighboring Somerville, used to say that you carry a degree forever. “He taught me the importance of helping improve the school and giving opportunities to others,” he says.

Tufts was Hilary’s first choice when she was applying from Cleveland, Ohio. “Being a student at Tufts allowed me opportunities, like working closely with a psychology professor in his lab, that are possible only because of Tufts’ strong undergraduate focus,” she says.

The visit to Tufts was at the tail end of the kids’ college search process. “We thought they’d be sick of looking at schools by the time we got here,” Ethan says. “But Jeremy took one look and said it felt like college. For Erin, the Tufts tour was the first time a college guide talked about specific programs, like the Institute for Global Leadership (IGL), that combined her passions for writing and photography. They both applied for Early Decision.

Erin, a varsity soccer player, is also involved with the IGL’s Synaptic Scholar Program, a leadership program that provides students a forum to take risks and pursue passions in a supportive environment. Her dream, Hilary says, has always been to work at National Geographic, where she has an internship in D.C. this summer.

“One of the great things about Tufts is that it’s big enough to appeal to students on many levels, but it’s not too big. Students are allowed to grow in a safe, supportive environment. It’s a place where you become an adult,” Ethan says.

To join parents like the Stones who are passionate about enhancing the student experience at Tufts by making a gift to the Parents Fund for Arts, Sciences and Engineering, please visit https://tuftsgiving.org/; contact the Parents Program at parentsprogram@tufts.edu; or call us 617-627-3798.

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