

May 2019

## Dear Parents and Families,

We hope this finds you preparing for a restful and relaxing summer. Here at Tufts, students are currently finishing final papers and preparing for the last round of Exams and Review Boards, and our graduating seniors are setting their sights on [Senior Week](#). In just about 10 days' time, both of us are looking forward to welcoming the parents and families of graduating students to campus for [Baccalaureate](#) and [Commencement](#). We can't wait to celebrate the accomplishments of the Class of 2019 with you. As the academic year comes to a close, we're writing to provide all parents and families with a brief look back at some of the highlights from 2018-19, and to outline next steps for the Division of Student Affairs at Tufts.

The 2018-19 academic year was filled with exciting developments in Student Life. Our [FIRST Resource Center](#) opened its doors in October 2018 and has quickly become a central hub for first-generation, low-income, and/or underrepresented students. Supports and resources for student mental health have continued to grow on the Medford and Fenway campuses and now include partnerships with [telehealth resources](#) and a very successful [same-day model of care](#) for the end of the semester. As a result of student advocacy, both [Rainbow House and Start House](#) also had expanded footprints in junior and senior housing in 2018-19, which provided additional space for interested students to explore issues of gender and sexuality and the Asian-American experience. It would be almost impossible to outline all of the latest initiatives and programs taking place across the Division of Student Affairs, but we hope the overview below gives you some idea of the new resources and supports your student may have taken advantage of this year.

## Renovations and Enhancements in Residential Life

The Office of Residential Life and Learning continued to innovate this year, providing new programs and resources in our residence halls, streamlining critical processes, and taking advantage of new spaces on campus. As many of you know, we are reaching the conclusion of a year-and-a-half long renovation project for [Miller and Houston Halls](#), which has created additional community spaces for first-year students, upgraded the

accessibility of both buildings, and addressed a number of deferred maintenance items. Both of Miller Hall's wings have now been completely renovated, and a new exterior to the building showcases common space across multiple floors. We are currently completing a similar construction project in the east wing of Houston Hall, and renovations to the entire building will be finished in August, just in time for the beginning of the 2019-20 academic year. We are also thrilled to be offering additional on-campus housing to juniors and seniors in the fall with the completion of the final phase of the [Community Housing \(CoHo\)](#) project, and we are excited about the installation of [Sustainability House](#), a carbon-neutral space made possible through the generosity of an anonymous donor.

Residential Education continues to be enhanced at Tufts as well, with an array of new programs and collaborations. This year, new students competed in residential-hall teams as part of a Welcome Week event called BOlympics, and students on both the Medford and Fenway campuses had the chance to participate in BOgate, a community event co-sponsored by Tufts Dining, Campus Life, Athletics, Residential Life, and student leaders that brought the community together for food, games, and JumBO pride ahead of one of our football games. Professor Grace Talusan also spoke with Metcalf residents this spring about her new memoir [The Body Papers](#) and ran a writing workshop in that residence hall for our first-year students. Last but certainly not least, we rolled out a much-improved [lottery and housing selection process](#) this year, which reduced the duration of the lottery itself and greatly simplified the group-formation and room-selection processes. We received many positive reviews on this new system from students, and we're looking forward to fine-tuning it in 2019-20.

## **New Programs and Events in Campus Life and the Career Center**

Each department within the Division of Student Affairs offers new programs every academic year to help ensure we're meeting students' current needs and providing the best possible Tufts experience. This year, the Office for Campus Life welcomed 31 new student organizations, who joined [our list of now 330+ total organizations](#). Our "student orgs" registered over 500 events collectively in 2018-19, and nearly 30,000 tickets were processed for a wide range of programs and events. The [Tufts University Social Collective \(TUSC\)](#) hosted over 210 events this past fall and spring, with an average of 285 students in attendance. These events included our Late Night FUN programs every Friday night in the Campus Center, Film Screenings each Friday and Saturday night in the Tisch Library, and larger

events like the Fall Fest Concert, which sold an additional 1,000 tickets and moved to a new venue in the Gantcher Center. In addition, TUSC continued to collaborate with the Tisch Library to host events like a Silent Disco, Escape Rooms, and Study Breaks, and they partnered with offices like [CARE](#) to enhance study safety and security, bystander intervention, and consent education at events.

The Career Center offered students excellent programming this year, including piloting Industry Nights designed to help students connect with industry professionals, learn about organizations and emerging trends, and explore career paths. These new events had an average attendance of over 125 students and included areas like Consulting, Technology, Health and Life Sciences, Art and Design, Education and Advocacy, and Sports and Entertainment. In 2019-2020, the Career Center plans to host additional Industry Nights in areas such as Consulting; Law and Government; Social Impact; Communications, Media, and Marketing; Sustainability and the Environment; Consumer Products; and Start-Ups. Students also had the chance to participate in three Career Treks in 2018-19, which connected current students with alums and other industry professionals on day trips to New York City.

## **Update on SMFA at Tufts**

[SMFA at Tufts](#) continues to grow in exciting new ways down at the Fenway as staff expand and enhance resources, supports, and services for our BFA and Combined Degree students. Many SMFA students are currently enjoying the results of our ongoing efforts to refine the process for scheduling Review Boards. Enhanced communications and an [refreshed website](#) are making this complex procedure a little simpler for students. We were also honored to host an SMFA Health, Safety, and Sustainability Day on April 18 in memory of the [late Julie Graham](#), a longtime faculty member and revered painter and photographer. Eight workshops on issues of sustainability, health, and safety addressed relevant histories and dialogues in science, art, and manufacturing; innovative approaches to art materials and methods; and access to tips and ideas on sustainable and safe practices in art studios. A new and improved [SMFA Café](#) is also scheduled to start construction right after Commencement 2019, with an anticipated opening in time for the coming fall. We expect the new SMFA Café to continue as a vital hub for students, faculty, and staff alike.

## Looking Ahead

The 2018-19 academic year may just be coming to a close, but plans are already well underway for 2019-20. We are excited to welcome the Class of 2023 to campus this August with new Orientation programs and events. We also have several enhancements in store for incoming students. For the very first time, our newest Jumbos will receive a customized New Student Checklist that will guide them through the specific requirements for their program and standing. Our Orientation team has also outlined [the goals for Orientation](#) explicitly on our website to help incoming students better understand what their first week at Tufts will be like. We'll be finalizing the schedule of events for Orientation 2019 in the coming months and can't wait to welcome new students, parents, and families to campus this fall.

Finally, many of you may know that Mary Pat McMahon, who has served as the Dean of Student Affairs for the Schools of Arts & Sciences and Engineering for the past 5 years, [will be leaving Tufts next month](#) to assume the role of Vice Provost and Vice President of Campus Life at Duke University. We are deeply grateful to Dean McMahon for her tireless and transformative work at Tufts, as are so many students, faculty, and staff members across campus. We are also already collaborating with leaders and department heads within and beyond the Division of Student Affairs to ensure that the efforts Dean McMahon spearheaded and managed continue both in the interim while we search for her successor and in the long term. This summer, we will begin a national search for AS&E's next Dean of Student Affairs, with plans to partner with students, faculty, and staff across the Medford and Fenway campuses. For 2019-20, we expect an Interim Dean will be chosen to support our leadership team within the Division of Student Affairs, and we anticipate a new Dean of Student Affairs will join us by Fall 2020. We will be sure to keep parents and families updated during our search, and we look forward to introducing you to the new Dean of Student Affairs as soon as they arrive on campus.

Wishing you and yours the very best for your summer,

**James M. Glaser**  
**Dean, School of Arts and Sciences**  
**Professor of Political Science**

**Jianmin Qu**  
**Dean, School of Engineering**  
**Karol Family Professor**