



SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Director, Women's Center
Women's Center

August 2017

Dear Parents and Families,

I imagine many of you are spending quality time together, making checklists of supplies to pack, and feeling mixed emotions about the start of the school year right about now. When I left Boston to attend college in New Orleans way back when, I was excited to leave home, but I was also worried about making friends, managing coursework, and navigating the culture shock of moving to a new city. The move was tough on my parents too, as I was the first one in my family to head out of state for college. I'm sure some of you are feeling similarly as you prepare to send your student to a campus with over 5,000 undergraduate students from all over the world. Here in Medford, my colleagues and I have been anticipating the arrival of students and families all summer, and we're eager to welcome you and help folks settle in.

In May 2017, I came back to Tufts to start my new position as the Director of the [Women's Center](#). Tufts' Fletcher School took a chance on me in 2011 and gave me my first job in Student Affairs out of grad school. Since then, I've worked at several universities across the country, but there is no place like home, and I am happy to be here. What brought me back to Medford? I'm here because of the mission and vision for Student Affairs at Tufts. If we take it from the top, I can tell you that Dean Mary Pat McMahon is easily the most energetic and genuine Student Affairs professional I've worked with thus far. She's open to new ideas and values collaboration, which sets the tone for the rest of her division. New ideas and collaboration are flowing within the [Group of Six](#), of which the Women's Center is a part. I'm humbled and inspired to work with a dynamic group of center directors who are passionate about students' identity development and creating a more just world.

I first really started to think about freedom and justice as a college student in New Orleans when Hurricane Katrina struck during my junior year. The university I attended got me involved in service learning projects in devastated areas and engaged students in complex conversations about the intersections of race, class, and the environment. It was a transformative experience for me, and it continues to shape my approach to Student Affairs. It feels like we are living in a moment of renewed interest in the

issues impacting women as the Women's March on Washington this year was likely the largest single-day demonstration in recorded U.S. history. Although the march is over, the issues it brought up remain. In my role, I intend to support students' civic participation in the world around them, fostering an environment where our community can convene to discuss the issues impacting society, and encouraging students to take action.

All of our lives are informed by our experiences and understandings of gender. The mission of the Tufts University Women's Center is to advance the personal growth and intellectual development of all students, particularly on issues related to women and gender, identity, and social justice.

We are committed to intersectional feminism, fostering student leadership, and helping students identify and understand societal structures that relate to issues of power, privilege, and freedom. I hope you encourage your Tufts student to push themselves outside their comfort zones by participating in activities that they have never done before. I also hope you encourage them to seek out peers who come from different backgrounds than they do so they can learn from others' perspectives. We have so many brilliant minds on this campus, and so often our instinct is to retreat to spaces and faces we are familiar with. There is so much to talk about and so much work to do, and I'm excited to bring people together.

If you have any questions about the Women's Center, programming, events, or just want to say hello, please feel free to email us at womenscenter@tufts.edu.

Warmly,

K. Martinez

<They/Them/Theirs>

Director, Women's Center at Tufts University