



SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Director, Africana Center
Africana Center

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Dear Parents and Families,

I hope this finds you enjoying the final weeks of summer and looking forward to the beginning of the 2019-20 academic year. Here in Medford and the Fenway, staff and faculty are currently busy preparing for the arrival of our newest students, who will be on campus in just a few weeks' times for [Pre-Orientation](#) and [Orientation](#). We're also looking forward to welcoming our returning students back to campus with new programs, resources, and opportunities for engagement. As Director of the [Africana Center](#), my role at Tufts is to help ensure that our students of African descent have access to academic and social resources, and to contribute to broader diversity and inclusion efforts across campus, including those managed and facilitated by the University's other [identity-based Centers](#). I'm writing today to provide you with a brief overview of some of the support students can find at the Africana Center and to share a preview of the programming we are in the midst of planning for our [50th Anniversary Celebration](#).

The Africana Center's [history of service](#) began in the fall of 1969 when the Afro American Cultural Center first opened its doors in Carpenter Hall and became part of Tufts' co-educational residence facilities. Throughout the years, the Africana Center (renamed in 2001) has sponsored public lectures, art shows, panel discussions, film series, career consultation, and advising workshops and academic support programs. We also have a long history of being a resource to assist with the University's overall diversity and inclusion efforts. We focus on supporting students of African descent, improving communication and managing student engagement challenges, encouraging the academic, cultural, and social development of Tufts students, and promoting the development of an intellectually affirming and culturally diverse college experience.

At the Africana Center, our approach is to be student-facing; we provide a deep and broad range of support directly to students in the Tufts' Africana community. We are also student-focused, serving as a strong voice for students — collaborating with Tufts administration, admissions, faculty, and staff to create a more inclusive and equitable experience for all. We recognize that it takes everyone in the community, working together, to decrease the risk of discord and create a safe haven for students where they can access resources and find support for their everyday lives. The 1969 inception of the Africana Center was a catalyst for even more progressive change on campus, amplifying the voices of student-activists who called for improved University-wide support — both for themselves and for their peers. Generations of demonstrations on campus have led to the hiring of more faculty and staff of color, the creation of the [Africana Studies program](#) and the [SQUAD Pre-Orientation program](#), increased funding for student support, and much more. Importantly, the Center continues to focus on improving ongoing challenges around student communication and engagement, which stem from years of past wrongs — whether perceived or real — and we work closely with the University's administrative and academic offices on issues of interest to students, advocating tirelessly on their behalf.

This fall, from October 18 through 20, Tufts alums will gather on campus with current students and faculty to celebrate the [Africana Center's 50th Anniversary](#). From the Tufts Black Alumni Association Homecoming Tailgate and the Tuftonian Wakanda Gala to the Food for the Soul Jazz Brunch, the 50th anniversary weekend will celebrate spirit, culture, and food. The celebration emphasizes the valuable connections alumni returning to campus make with current students. Hearing stories from the students who were here before them helps today's students validate their experiences and understand the valuable contributions they are making to the greater Tufts community. We can't wait to see many Tufts alums back on campus in October.

If the Africana Center can ever serve as a resource for your student, please encourage them to [be in contact with us](#). We are also always happy to hear from parents or families who have questions or concerns.

Wishing you and your family the best as we approach Fall 2019,

Katrina Moore
Director, Africana Center