



THEME 3

Engaging and Celebrating Commonalities and Differences



Top: A group of students socialize in South Hall.

Top: Tufts students travel to Nicaragua.

A cornerstone of Tufts' mission is to create a community of exceptional faculty, staff, and students from a range of backgrounds and perspectives, in which all individuals can achieve their full potential, and the community achieves far more than would be possible in a more homogeneous setting. Over the next 10 years, Tufts will demonstrate unprecedented institutional commitment to diversity, inclusion, and cultural competency, and renew its commitment to global activities and engagements. This process began with the 2012 convening of the President's Council on Diversity and will continue as the council's recommendations are debated and implemented. The future viability of higher education will hinge on reckoning openly with the challenges and opportunities of accessibility, diversity, and inclusion.

We consider cultural competency, fluent interactions with different people and perspectives, to be an essential component of higher education in the 21st century. In terms of basic preparation, personal experience with navigating issues of diversity, and exposure to different cultures and contexts, are increasingly important for all students, faculty, and staff as our daily interactions become more diverse and the world becomes more interconnected. Additionally, our commitment to inclusion and global perspectives promotes deeper thinking, and enhances social development and self-awareness. An excellent example of the benefits of focusing on diversity and inclusion is found in the course, Islam on the Ocean Rim. Cotaught between Tufts and the Lahore University of Management Science, the course used a digital classroom that allowed students to collaborate across continents through a live video link, providing them

with a rare opportunity to cross cultures while learning about key political and cultural issues. The resulting discoveries about commonalities and differences provided layers of intellectual and personal growth beyond what would have resulted from the typical classroom experience. Plans are under way to use the technological and pedagogical innovations developed through this course to make similar connections with other international partners.

In addition to the instrumental case for focusing on diversity and inclusion, Tufts also has a special obligation to these issues because of its emphasis on active citizenship. With the support and encouragement of the Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service, the Institute for Global Leadership, and other Tufts units, students find many ways to engage with local and global communities, often in an attempt to

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understand challenges and pursue solutions. The point is that rather than assume a passive, internal approach to what happens around us, we should actively participate in using knowledge to promote positive change. This message applies in nearby communities and around the world, but it should also apply on campus. Tufts students, faculty, and staff must ensure that our campus communities are models for the external communities we engage. Being a local active citizen means taking responsibility for understanding how opportunities are distributed across Tufts, and advocating for access and opportunities based on skill, merit, and other characteristics consistent with our core mission.

When universities commit to access, diversity, and inclusion, the implicit assumption is often that this commitment focuses on reducing barriers to achievement by U.S. students, faculty, and staff. By contrast, we explicitly include global communities and perspectives in this strategic theme. We do so in part because Tufts is a global university. The number of undergraduates who study abroad for at least a semester, the number of faculty who study other cultures

or conduct research in other countries, and the number of international students and alumni in our community all exceed what one finds at most U.S. universities. Adopting a broader perspective about access, diversity, and inclusion that includes global populations and global research, teaching, and outreach, complements the attention we focus on domestic populations, and builds strong bridges between two of Tufts' strongest focal areas—global and diversity.

T10 STRATEGIC GOALS – TUFTS IN 2023

Tufts has renewed and reinvigorated its commitment to engaging with community issues of diversity and inclusion, infusing the actions of the university with global perspectives and relevance. People of all backgrounds are supported financially, socially, and intellectually, to fully participate and thrive in the Tufts community. All have benefited from more breadth and depth of interactions and learning across the university, and a range of integrated, globally oriented programs and initiatives. These priorities have reinforced one another in generating a culture that celebrates and nurtures diversity as the lifeblood of productive global engagements.



Top: Tufts students and local children participate in Kids' Day activities.

Bottom: Teacher who received training from Tufts faculty works with her students.



Top: Students study near the Tufts European Center in Talloires, France.

Bottom: Students celebrate at Commencement.

T10 INITIATIVES

To best facilitate the achievement of our stated T10 strategic goals, the following initiatives have emerged through the strategic-planning process. These initiatives were designed to facilitate Tufts' response to the increasing need for financial aid, the desire to be a diverse and fully inclusive community, to strengthen our global position, and to provide stimulating opportunities for our philanthropic alumni.

In the months following the approval of the strategic plan, in consultation with and support of the Tufts community, these initiatives will be advanced through developing detailed implementation plans.

1. Enhance undergraduate and graduate financial aid. Tufts has made tremendous strides in the past few decades in the research it conducts, the educational opportunities it provides, and the positive impact it has on individuals and society. Tufts, like almost every other elite college and university in the country, has published costs of attendance for its undergraduate and graduate programs that exceed the annual income of most U.S. households. The reality is that unless Tufts can offer aggressive financial aid, some number of exceptional applicants will not have the opportunity to experience all we have to offer. Tufts has a moral imperative to ensure that our educational experience is accessible to all those who present exceptional records. It is diversity, in all its forms, that drives institutional excellence.

We are addressing this national challenge by pursuing TEAM and other efforts to reduce costs and increase revenues, as well as by asking Tufts alumni and friends to contribute to a current financial aid initiative, and to the financial aid campaign that will certainly be part of the upcoming university fundraising effort. The priority given to financial aid stems from our institutional roots, the success stories of many Tufts alumni who were first-generation college students, our emphasis on active citizenship, and the essential competitive requirement to encourage as many exceptional people as possible to join our community. For these reasons and many others, Tufts is committed to providing opportunities for less affluent students to be educated here, and for all students to learn in an economically diverse community.

2. Implement emerging diversity and inclusion recommendations. In March 2012, President Anthony P. Monaco created the President's Council on Diversity. He observed that "while we can be proud of significant accomplishment in meeting our commitment to diversity and inclusion, we also know that there is more to be done." He charged the council with assessing the diversity and inclusion environment at Tufts, identifying diversity and inclusion goals, and offering recommendations for achieving our goals. The council will complete its work shortly, following an additional period of community engagement, but it is already clear that Tufts has some of the challenges every

other college and university face. The composition of the Tufts community across all schools does not always reflect the pool of exceptional individuals who would thrive here; the quality of the student experience is sometimes correlated with demographic characteristics, and achievement for some groups falls short of what one would expect based on their pre-Tufts accomplishments. While Tufts is similar to other schools in its range of challenges, the university differs from many in its commitment to making positive change, and in using evidence and data to do so. The council recognizes that long-standing patterns will not change without significant effort, and that all parties will not always welcome necessary actions. To ensure that the recommendations of the council are implemented and that diversity and inclusion goals and initiatives continue to be pursued aggressively, Tufts will appoint a university-wide chief diversity officer. The officer will not be the only person responsible for achieving our diversity and inclusion goals, but will be a partner with identified leaders in all Tufts units. Like most goals, those for diversity and inclusion will require significant effort, deep partnerships, and resiliency. Tufts also commits to sharing data relevant to our diversity and inclusion goals, regularly updating the community on initiatives, and continuing to work with the community to identify keys to success. Yet another example of Tufts' commitment to achieving diversity and inclusion goals is the TALEs initiative, which has been described under Theme 2, and has

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creating an inclusive learning environment as one of its critical foci. Through these and other actions, Tufts will create an environment in which all who join our community can succeed, develop a deep and enduring connection to Tufts, and benefit from engaging with people whose experiences and perspectives differ from their own. For many students at Tufts, the diversity of our community will be an essential ingredient of their individual transformational experiences described in Theme 2.

3. Strengthen and coordinate global programs. Tufts has long been a leader in global studies, but we must do more to coordinate our efforts, to challenge all students to think globally, and to better engage those who support global research, education, and outreach. Achieving these goals will require increased resources and greater coordination across the university, both of which will be achieved in the next 10 years. Key campus partners will include the Office of Programs Abroad, Institute for Global Leadership, International Relations Program, Global Health, Fletcher School, Tufts European Center, and the international student offices found in most Tufts schools.

This opportunity in our core global area is akin to what Tufts faced more than a decade ago with another signature area—active citizenship. Today, the Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service works with all schools to enhance the student civic experience, conducts original research on civic practices, and serves as a hub for active citizenship research, teaching, and outreach. Tisch College provides the physical, organizational, and financial resources necessary to develop, seed, and sustain the university's active citizenship strategy. The creation of a unit that may take a different form than Tisch College, but that has a comparable mission for global activities, will ensure that our growth in this vital area is with intentionality, coordination, and the requisite resources. As with active citizenship, we will not stifle the spontaneous and specialized global initiatives of individual units, but will work to make university-wide collaboration on global projects and scholarly partnerships and exchanges easier, and thus encourage more coherence in our overall global presence.

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