I am grateful to you for agreeing to join the Student Life Review Committee. Your participation is an important service to current and future undergraduate students at Tufts.

At Tufts, we believe that a robust co-curricular experience is an essential part of a liberal arts education, and that it can offer unique opportunities for the transformational student experiences we seek to foster. The work of the Student Life Review Committee should take into account the context offered by our rigorous academic environment and Tufts’ distinctive nature as a relatively small, student-centered research university. The T10 strategic plan adopted by the Board of Trustees in November 2013 outlines broad goals for the student experience to which we are committed and which your recommendations should seek to advance.1

In recent years, we have undertaken a number of important, focused initiatives to support our students. We have carried out university-wide initiatives to advance diversity and inclusion, and to prevent sexual misconduct and substance abuse, and we have recently launched a similar effort to promote student mental health. Within the Schools of Arts and Sciences and Engineering, we have seen new structures and programs in the Division of Students Affairs and have enhanced engagement with Greek life and other student organizations, including more intentional leadership development as well as education and training for members. The Residential Strategy Working Group led by the Provost has contributed to significant developments in our long-term residential strategy, while a restructuring of our Office of Residential Life and Learning is currently underway this semester. I encourage the Committee to learn from the research and analysis already undertaken in these initiatives, and to develop recommendations that build on and support the good work that is currently underway.

I ask that you begin your work with a careful assessment to determine how our current co-curricular experience contributes to our undergraduates’ well-being, personal growth, and depth of connection to a vibrant Tufts community as students on campus and as alumni, and where that contribution can be strengthened. Your assessment should inform the development of specific, actionable recommendations for how we can better support holistic, inclusive engagement in undergraduate student life at Tufts.

---

1 In the words of the strategic plan, “Transformational experiences can be defined as experiences that fundamentally challenge a person’s assumptions and preconceptions, as well as their beliefs and values, affecting how they understand themselves, others, and the world. These experiences are likely to occur when people venture beyond their comfort zones—physically, intellectually, socially, culturally, geographically, or otherwise. The novel thinking that often accompanies unfamiliarity can lead individuals to appreciate unexamined parts of their environments, discover new parts of themselves or others, and achieve in ways previously thought impossible.” The plan calls on Tufts to “cultivate a challenging, supportive environment that enables and integrates transformational experiences, one that would be difficult to replicate through online or other nonresidential learning environments.” For more on the plan and transformational experiences as a strategic theme, see [http://provost.tufts.edu/strategic-planning](http://provost.tufts.edu/strategic-planning).
Your assessment and recommendations should address the structures, programs, and policies in place in our Greek system, student organizations and clubs, athletics, and the undergraduate social and residential experience. I ask that you consider how these important components of the student experience support our undergraduates’ personal development; enrich a sense of community; align with Tufts’ values as a university; advance our institutional commitments to accessibility, diversity and inclusion; and contribute to the health and safety of our students while mitigating risk.

As you assess how to best engage and support the well-being and growth of this generation of students, you will want to consider the changing needs, expectations, and demographics of our undergraduate student population, as well as broader national trends. I also ask that you be mindful of the important role of our students’ interactions with their neighbors and our host communities of Medford and Somerville.

I hope that you will engage in a consultative process with opportunities for input from members of the Tufts community on and off campus, including alumni and current and past parents, as well as our students, faculty, and staff. I encourage you to draw also on quantitative and qualitative survey data, the lessons to be learned from peer institutions, and an understanding of current best practices in holistic student development.

Your recommendations should identify specific structural, programming and/or policy changes that will, in the opinion of the Committee, enhance the culture of undergraduate student life at Tufts, as well the resources and strategies that would be needed to implement those recommended changes effectively. I would like to receive your recommendations by the end of the current spring semester.

Thank you again. I very much appreciate your service.

Anthony P. Monaco
January 23, 2017