

Charge to the Task Force on the Undergraduate Experience

(Please see Task Force web site: <http://ugtaskforce.tufts.edu>)

The educational environment at Tufts University has changed substantially in the past three decades. Once an excellent regional university, we have now become a university of international prominence. By any measure, our students are stronger academically than ever before. Our students are also far more diverse, as are our faculty. Over the last decade, the number of international, Asian, and Hispanic students has doubled while the number of African American students has increased by one-third. The richness and cultural diversity of the student body creates both challenges and opportunities.

The environment outside of our university has also changed. Technology is evolving at breath-taking speed and has dramatically altered the way students communicate and learn. Advances in the life sciences are opening up whole new fields of discovery while also raising profound ethical and moral dilemmas. The increasing globalization of the world's economies emphasizes the importance of understanding other languages and cultures.

Given these and other changes, it is time for a comprehensive evaluation of undergraduate education and life at Tufts University. What is the overall educational experience that we wish a Tufts undergraduate to obtain? Do our curriculum and teaching methods effectively prepare students for the world they will encounter upon graduation? Are we meeting the intellectual expectations of our students? Can we anticipate how technology might further enhance the overall educational experience, in terms of curriculum, pedagogy, and student support? How does the co-curricular and residential experience of our students complement their classroom education?

Now is an ideal time to explore how the Tufts undergraduate experience might be enhanced for the 21st century. We are celebrating the 150th anniversary of the founding of the college. We are preparing for our reaccreditation review by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. In the not too distant future we will also begin a major new fundraising effort. The work of the Task Force will help to shape the priorities for undergraduate education and life in this new capital campaign.

The Task Force on the Undergraduate Experience therefore is charged with the following:

- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of our curriculum and pedagogy in the context of our educational mission and guiding principles. Describe how our curriculum and teaching methods might be strengthened to better prepare students for the world they will encounter upon graduation. Communicate these ideas to the established faculty committees charged with responsibility for the undergraduate curriculum.
- Assess the contribution of residential and co-curricular life to the overall Tufts undergraduate experience. How might a more intentional residential experience

strengthen undergraduate education? What role should faculty play in residential life?

- Evaluate how each year of the undergraduate experience contributes to a distinctive, coherent, and thoughtfully designed transformation of intellect and character, and to a significant on-going relationship between students and Tufts University.
- Identify the resources that are necessary to effect the changes recommended in the Task Force's report.

The Task Force should build on the work of the Higher Education Initiative. Through outreach, the Task Force should engage the community in evaluating and assessing different potential futures for undergraduate education. The work of the Task Force will not be complete until the Task Force has built a broad-based coalition in support of its recommendations. Members should work hard to achieve a consensus for change. Specific recommendations that involve changes to curriculum must respect the faculty governance process, and should be referred to the appropriate standing committee of the faculty for action.

The Task Force will report directly to the President. Its membership will draw from distinguished faculty of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering as well as leaders within the student life arena, and current Tufts students. A report and recommendations are expected within 18 months from appointment.