Taskforce Chair Kristine Dillon, Professor Gilbert Metcalf, Jason Shinh, and Charline Han at last week’s forum.

by JONATHAN GRAHAM
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The Task Force on the Undergraduate Experience has been a subject of student debate over the last few months, but an open forum held last Tuesday went poorly attended by the student body.

The forum was held to give students a chance to voice their opinions on the goals of the group as well as to give suggestions on changes that could be made at Tufts.

Task Force Chair Kristine Dillon said that she was “anxious to hear what students had to say” and hoped that the Task Force will have substantial decisions made in another year.

The Task Force was created by President Bacow earlier this semester to examine different aspects of undergraduate life at the University and look for ways to improve the curriculum, residential facilities and extracurricular activities at Tufts.

Members of the Student Advisory Board, a group created to add more student opinion to what some considered a faculty-heavy committee, comprised most of the student presence at the forum. Just a few students with no relation to the Task Force were present.

Those that were there were very vocal in their opinions on the Task Force’s role in undergraduate life. Students gave their views on the World Civilizations course requirement, the state of residential life at the school, and the amount of diversity on campus.

Some at the meeting pointed out that many of the changes students were looking for were already there, but just required students to look for them. “It can’t all come from the administration, some of these are student changes,” one student said.

Recently elected Tufts Community Union (TCU) President Melissa Carson said that although the Task Force’s mandate “covers a lot,” it needs to look at many more aspects of student life if it wants to complete its job.

“They need to be careful not to miss anything if they put this much time in it,” Carson said. “Some discussion is being lost with the focus on fundraising.” She said that the Task Force is too focused on the next capital campaign then on the current needs of students.

Much of the hour-long open forum — which was stretched to an hour and a half because of ongoing discussion — focused on improving the larger Tufts community as the most important step, but that the Task Force’s mandate didn’t cover it. One freshman in attendance said “the overall Tufts community” is missing and that there is “separation at Tufts, both racially and socially.”

Although many voiced problems and concerns with the school, solutions were not forthcoming. The mandate of the Task Force runs out in one year, at which point it will issue a report on changes the University should implement to improve student life.