

TUFTS DAILY September 3, 2002

## Dillon vacates building she helped design

*Dean leaves a legacy of advanced student services*

by JONATHAN LEE  
Daily Editorial Board

Kristine Dillon, the Dean of Academic Services and Student Affairs, left Tufts this August, four years after she was hired to untangle the University's web of student services.

Dillon became the president of the Consortium On Financing Higher Education (COFHE) Sept. 1. Her appointment was announced in June.

Dillon came to campus in 1998 as the executive director of the student services project and was largely responsible for the layout and planning of Dowling Hall. At that time, student services consisted of nine separate, non-collaborative departments scattered across campus.

Less than two years later, Dowling Hall opened, housing services ranging from academic advising and registration assistance to tutoring and programs abroad.

"It's the place where students go to get their questions answered," Dillon said. "When they say 'Mom, I talked to Tufts,' they're talking about Dowling."

Dillon headed a nine-member committee made up of departmental employees and consultants that met for two-and-a-half days a week from Oct. 1998 to May 1999. When the committee finished compiling its report, she accepted a permanent position as Dean of Academic Services and Student Affairs - the "Dean of Dowling," as she was known to students and faculty.

Dillon developed the concept of students as "customers" in their use of Tufts student services and separated data-oriented and people-oriented employee positions. She also came up with the registrar counter in Dowling's entrance hall and the use of moveable partitions to make the building's space more flexible.

15 years of experience as Associate Vice President for Student Affairs at the University of Southern California (USC) helped shape Dillon's philosophy, which is centered on understanding rather than mechanization. "We approached the project without trying to automate the process," Dillon said. "My job is to make sure that a person comes away understanding the experience."

The student services building and the people behind its development have received extensive praise from those who witnessed the transformation. Tufts was named an IBM Best Practices Partner in Student Services in 2000 and hosted the annual Innovations in Student Services conference the following year. A recent e-mail survey of students and

parents received a substantial 20 percent response rate, and ratings of Tufts' student services were overwhelmingly positive.

Despite the success of her project, Dillon says that her job will never be done. "I always felt that I had new things to do," she said.

Most of her work as a dean consisted of meeting with other deans and departmental chairs to facilitate the inner workings of Dowling, conducting focus groups on issues such as plans for the new dormitory, and co-chairing the Task Force on the Undergraduate Experience.

Dillon became the second president of COFHE, a Cambridge-based consortium of 31 colleges and universities founded in 1974 to provide advice on issues ranging from financial aid and administration to admissions and student retention (Tufts is not a member). As president of the Consortium, Dillon will help determine the direction of student services at the institutions it advises.

Director of Administration Paul Stanton will serve as the interim Dean of Academic Services and Student Affairs until a permanent replacement is found, according to Susan Ernst, the Dean of Arts and Sciences. A national search by a committee including Ernst, other deans, professors and student representatives is set to begin this fall.

Bruce Krasnof, a senior programmer for Tufts Computing and Communications Services, served on Dillon's student services redesign committee. He recalled the drive Dillon brought to campus in 1998. "Everyone knew it was time for Tufts to take a step forward but Kristine really took the direction," Krasnof said. "She had the confidence and the clout to make that happen."

Associate Director of Financial Aid Patricia Sheehan agreed. "Dowling Hall is a testament to the way she worked," she said. "She was a very student-centered administrator and encouraged the people who worked with her to think in a very student-centered way. She will be sorely missed."

Prior to her work at Tufts, Dillon orchestrated the creation of residential colleges at USC and assisted in the development of web-based student resources at the school.

Dillon has contributed to four books and has published articles on the college student experience and student services. She hopes her new position will allow for more writing time and speaking engagements.

---

*All material is (c)2001 The Tufts Daily and may not be reproduced or redistributed without permission.*

*Send questions and comments to the [Online Editor](#).*

