

Message from the Deans

WHY GRADUATE FINANCIAL AID IS CRITICAL

By Lynne Pepall and Robert J. Sternberg

THE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES HAS A LONG HISTORY OF VALUED graduate programs in diverse disciplines, originating with the first Ph.D. awarded in biology in 1895. Because the reputation of an academic institution depends in large part on the quality of its graduate programs—especially doctoral programs—the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences is an indispensable part of the total portrait of education at Tufts.

Building our graduate programs enhances our strength as a “research university with very high research activity (RU/VH)”—the designation given to Tufts University by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. But to build strong graduate programs, Tufts needs to offer competitive levels of financial aid.

Now more than ever, helping both undergraduate and graduate students receive a Tufts education without also acquiring onerous debt is critical for attracting the best and the brightest to our classrooms and laboratories. Graduate student stipends and research fellowships contribute more than just dollars. They help build an intellectual community among graduate students and faculty as well as recognize the distinctive achievements of our students.

This year the School of Arts and Sciences allocated new resources to graduate stipends, teaching assistantships and health insurance fees for doctoral students. The school also created two new dissertation fellowships for doctoral students in the humanities. In the natural and social sciences, graduate fellowships typically support students working with faculty in research teams or in laboratories. Graduate students in these fields enjoy many opportunities for collaborating with faculty and fellow students, greatly enriching their education. It is just as important to foster the same intellectual environment in the humanities, where opportunities for outside funding are often scarce. The creation of the two humanities fellowships ensures that doctoral students can pursue their scholarship as part of an integrated intellectual community. The increasingly interdisciplinary nature of research makes clear that such scholarly integration and collaboration will only become more important over time.

The Graduate School also awards competitive research grants through the Graduate Student Research Awards Committee (GSRAC), a panel comprising graduate students and faculty from across the disciplines. Through the GSRAC, graduate students not only learn how to write a grant proposal, but also what goes into reviewing a proposal. The GSRAC also encourages many of our graduate students to seek external funding for their research.

We all know that tomorrow’s breakthroughs build on the scholarly work of today. Devoting funds to graduate fellowships is an excellent investment in our students, in our school, in our university, and, more broadly, in the production of new scholarly knowledge.

NEW FACES

The Dean’s Office is pleased to welcome two new staff members, **Jacqueline Dejean** and **Shannon Krick**.

Dejean assumed the new position of research administrator for A&S in November 2007. Prior to joining Tufts, she was assistant director in the Office of Sponsored Programs at the Education Development Center Inc. Her objective here is to develop a research administration infrastructure that meets the needs of faculty across departments and disciplines. So far, Jacqueline has been instrumental in assisting with the preparation of 17 submissions, including a recent collaborative submission to the NSF by the departments of Mathematics, Education and Physics & Astronomy. She consults with department chairs and administrators, an effort that resulted in the development of a new Grant Submission Checklist (<http://as.tufts.edu/research/checklist>) to help investigators navigate Tufts’ pre-award process. She can be reached at 617.627.4745 or at jacque.dejean@tufts.edu to share your ideas.

Krick comes to us from the University of California Merced, where she assisted the president and COO of a university foundation. She has quickly transitioned into the role of administrative assistant to Dean Robert Sternberg. She can be reached at 617.627.3864 or at shannon.krick@tufts.edu.

A&S OVERSEERS

The changing financial aid landscape in higher education was the topic of the day when the Arts and Sciences Board of Overseers held a joint meeting with the school's Campaign Volunteer Leadership Team on April 3.

Lee Coffin, dean of undergraduate admissions, described how the financial aid process at some of our peer schools has changed over the last several months and how those changes might affect the pool of students admitted to Tufts.

Patricia Reilly, director of financial aid, educated the group about financial aid awards at Tufts and how the shifting landscape might affect the decision-making process of prospective students and their families.

Jim Glaser, dean of undergraduate education, described the programming in place to meet the needs of a socioeconomically diverse undergraduate population, and Brigette Bryant, senior director of development for A&S, provided an update on *Beyond Boundaries: The Capital Campaign for Tufts*, highlighting the status of financial aid support to Tufts. For more on the campaign, go to <http://giving.tufts.edu/campaign>.

FEEDBACK

The A&S News Beat is published by the Office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences. We welcome comments and story ideas.

Contact Editor Jillian Dubman at jillian.dubman@tufts.edu or 617.627.3533.

Getting Ready for Commencement 2008

There is an unmistakable excitement on campus during the month of May. Commencement is the time when we wish our graduates well on their journey beyond Tufts. Faculty and staff make this event a success, so here are a few important tips and reminders as we prepare for the big day on Sunday, May 18.

Departmental Ceremonies: These events are meaningful when departments take ownership of them so they reflect the personality and culture of the department, while conforming to certain standards set by the Commencement Office. We also suggest that all speeches be short and crisp (3 to 5 minutes) to keep the events moving along.

Planning and Logistics: Department chairs are encouraged to meet with their department administrators to create a script for their ceremony. Venue walk-throughs take place in May. And because preparation is key, we strongly suggest that all key players attend the walk-throughs.

Attendance and Participation: Our seniors and graduate students value the relationships they have forged with their faculty, so show them how much you value those relationships by attending Commencement. Your participation is just as important in Phase I (aligning behind Ballou Hall and participating in the procession) as it is in Phase II (there are many ceremonial roles to fill).

Free Food: There is such a thing as a free lunch! Tickets are available through your department administrator.

Everyone puts a lot of work into this event, so thank you in advance for making it memorable for our graduates. For more information about Commencement, visit <http://commencement.tufts.edu/ase>.

Faculty Achievements

CHARLES SYKES, the Usen Family Career Development Assistant Professor of Chemistry, has been named a 2008 Beckman Young Investigator, a program of the Arnold and Mabel Beckman Foundation that supports promising young faculty members in the chemical and life sciences. The award includes \$300,000 in research funding.

DAVID WALT, the Robinson Professor of Chemistry, was elected to the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) for his development of sensors that can simultaneously image and perform biochemical analyses. He is also an adjunct professor in the biomedical engineering department in the School of Engineering. Election to the NAE is among the highest professional distinctions accorded to an engineer.

The Northeastern Association of Graduate Schools announced that its three faculty awards for 2007–08 have all been given to Tufts professors! **LAURENCE SENELICK**, the Fletcher Professor of Oratory and professor of drama, won the Graduate Faculty Doctoral Teaching Award; **NALINI AMBADY**, professor of psychology, received the Geoffrey Marshall Mentoring Award; and **CRISTELLE BASKINS**, associate professor of art history, was awarded the Graduate Faculty Teaching Award. These are highly esteemed honors and include competition from more than 120 prominent graduate schools in the U.S. and Canada.

<http://as.tufts.edu/about/newsletter>