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{POSTSCRIPT}

VOL. I • THE INDEPENDENT POLITICAL JOURNAL AT TUFTS UNIVERSITY • NO. I

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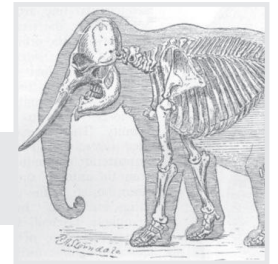
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Substance over brand

The cover of our inaugural issue, which you now read, is watermarked with an admissions question that is emblematic of a systemic problem at our university. “What does #YOLO mean to you?” was one of six optional essay prompts given to the Class of 2018 hopefuls, some of whom are now making decisions as to whether or not they will join us in Medford-Somerville. While it might not seem like much, its insidiousness lies in its #banality.

Improvements in branding, including a fresh admissions website, have been cited by Dean of Undergraduate Admissions Lee Coffin as spurring the steady increase in Tufts’ applicant pool over the past few years. If I were being mean I would say that Coffin told the *Tufts Daily*, “it would not surprise me next year to see California become the number one state in the applicant pool” because he knows its residents are attracted to superficial improvements. I’ll be friendly and say that 18-year olds, even the ones who apply to Tufts, are impressionable.

I was. Tufts’ admissions website was filled with idiosyncratic students blogging about the joys of being a Jumbo, and I liked it. More high schoolers undoubtedly choose Tufts because of ploys like this than most current students would care to admit. Getting Tufts to look as non-threateningly quirky as possible has played an *integral* role in its increase in profile and consequently the value of our degrees. Some modicum of thanks is owed to those in admissions for this.

That said, these gimmicks are not value-neutral. They can have real negative consequences if they lead students to choose at the wrong margin, or attract those that would regardless. This margin is how cool a college seems. The #margin. No one wants to go to school with kids who decided at the #margin, but a lot of us were those kids.

Even if Tufts was the Experimental College and nothing else, if the level of quirk in our marketing actually reflected something real, this type of branding would still be ill-advised. Tufts should

focus on attracting students with strong desires to succeed and transcend rather than to simply exist as Young and Cool and In College.

The question adorning our cover did not elicit such a strong negative response simply because it overstepped some sort of unspoken academic decorum, but rather because it was such an obvious ploy for fleeting (#trending), unsubstantial relevance. High schoolers should want to go to Tufts because it is a community of rigorous, motivated and open-minded thinkers, not because their tour guide wore Warby Parker glasses and the blogger in admissions totally gets Garden State. Kids think these are proxies for a good education when they are not, and Tufts preys on that.

Furthermore, to put it simply, there is an uncomfortable degree of disconnect between marketing and substance at play here beyond student characteristics. When “Dan from Admissions” does an extremely popular Reddit AMA in the fall and Computer Science class enrollment is being severely limited in the spring, something is wrong.

Being a hip student at a hip college is not the same as getting an education that pushes you to do things you thought you couldn’t and confront views you thought you wouldn’t. Prospective students should be sold on an education that does the latter. Only then will freshmen arrive on The Hill ready and willing to fulfill that expectation. That’s what #YOLO should mean to every one of them.

True to the primary goals of POSTSCRIPT; to promote substantive and independent-minded political debate, The Higher Education Issue hopes to engender thoughtful reflection on our experiences at Tufts, and the culture surrounding higher education at large. We would all be wise to do so.



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THE INDEPENDENT POLITICAL JOURNAL
AT TUFTS UNIVERSITY

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'Pax' 'et' 'Lux'

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From the Elephant's Mouth

▼ *Kid you hung out with during orientation to run for Massachusetts House:* Taylor Barnard, a senior currently serving as the president of the College Democrats of America, has announced his campaign for the Massachusetts House of Representatives from the 34th Middlesex District. A 20-something PoliSci major from Utah, Barnard says he's "down to chill" with residents of Medford-Somerville; balancing citizen concerns with learning valuable life skills like ironing shirts and making his own meals.

▼ *Tuition to rise by 4 percent. Seniors, rich kids feign outrage:* The Board of Trustees announced preliminary figures showing that the annual cost of studying and living at Tufts University will rise by nearly 4 percent to \$61,000 next semester. Seniors and progeny of oligarchs alike were 'really riled up' about the 'total... bull' of raising tuition while continuing to advocate for new majors and departments, 'free' services, and further unionization of faculty.

▼ *Class of 2018 thinks it's better than you:* The Office of Undergraduate Admissions announced a record-low acceptance rate together with a record-high applicant pool for the Class of 2018, attributed in part to an increase in applicants from California. The Elephant recommends local businesses stock up on kombucha, Birkenstocks and specialty glassware to accommodate the inevitable increase in demand.

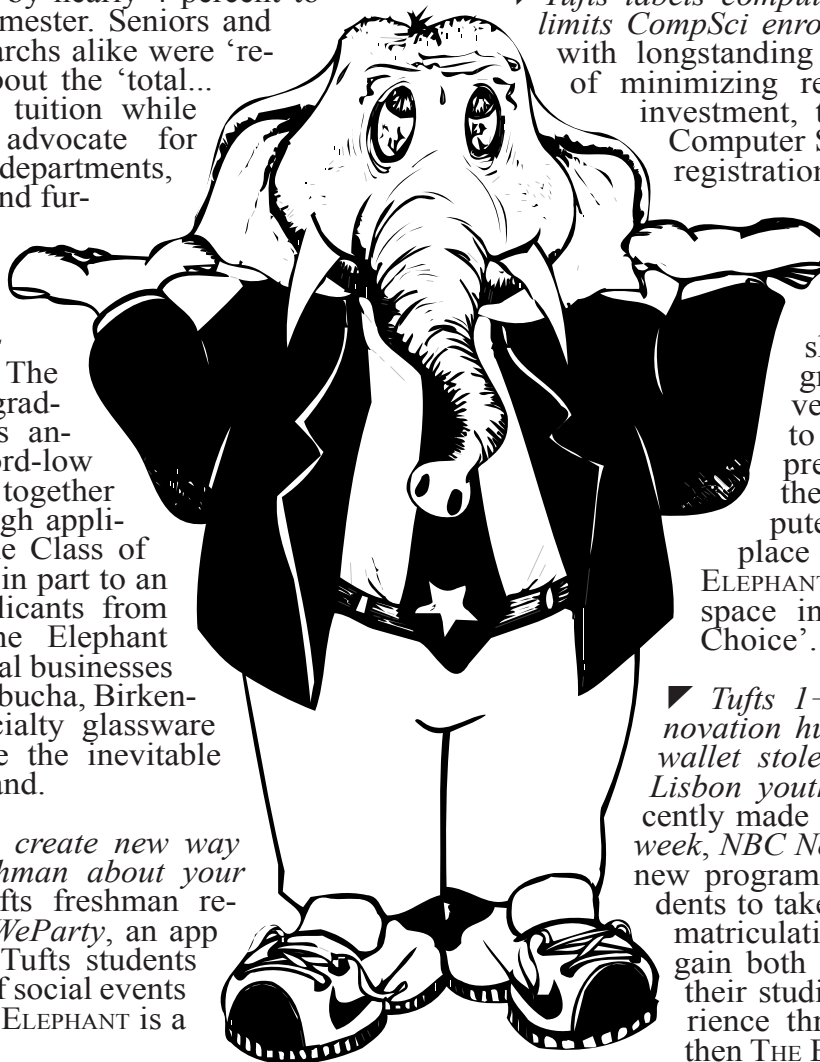
▼ *Tufts students create new way to not tell freshman about your party:* Four Tufts freshman recently debuted *WeParty*, an app designed to let Tufts students view locations of social events on campus. THE ELEPHANT is a

staunch supporter of Jumbo entrepreneurship, but considering the traits of early adopters of the app we're surprised that it lacks a feature that uses smartphone cameras to rate attractiveness of women. Sorry bro, bad ratio.

▼ *Student body eagerly awaits announcement of acts for Spring Fling 2015:* The New Pornographers, Flosstradamus and headliner Childish Gambino were recently announced by Tufts Concert Board as the acts for Spring Fling 2014. Senior Michael "Lil Chutzpah" Greenblatt was cited as the only student at Tufts who identifies closely with early 2000s Canadian Indie Rock, Top 40 EDM, and party rap. He is psyched.

▼ *Tufts labels computers a passing fad, limits CompSci enrollment:* In keeping with longstanding University policy of minimizing return on students' investment, the Department of Computer Science has limited registration in its introductory courses due to lack of resources. Despite being one of the most marketable skill sets for today's graduates, the University doesn't seem to think it's worth preparing students for the increasingly computer-oriented workplace of tomorrow. THE ELEPHANT hears there's still space in 'Math of Social Choice'.

▼ *Tufts 1+4 to serve as innovation hub for getting your wallet stolen by bunkmate in Lisbon youth hostel:* Tufts recently made headlines in *Newsweek*, *NBC News*, and *NPR* for a new program that will pay students to take a gap year before matriculating. If Jumbos can gain both greater context for their studies and work experience through the program then THE ELEPHANT stands be-



Comedy is allied to Justice.

—Aristophanes

hind it. If it means taking away funding better used elsewhere to finance traipsing teens who could have done this on their own then *I+4* should be trashed. Increased Tufts brand awareness does not a good idea make.

▼ *ExCollege celebrates 50 years with indie gala:* The ExCollege held a gala at the Museum of Science last Saturday to commemorate 50 years of serving Tufts students. Attendees discussed such topics as cisgendered privilege and sabermetrics over the throbbing din of Kraftwerk's first three records. In addition to mingling with alumni, Tufts seniors mingled with each other in the Human Bodies exhibit. A new course offered this semester, 'Plato vis-à-vis Play-Doh', took the coveted award for best use of mixed media in an ExCollege classroom.

▼ *You get a U-Pass, you get a U-Pass, everybody gets a U-Pass!* : An unpopular (read: incredibly popular) proposal to give Tufts students unlimited, free access to public transportation has been proposed by the Tufts Transit Coalition (TTC). Little mention was made of how much Tufts students would have to use the T to justify the real cost to the university and thus future students of such a pass. Odds are it's more than the few times per week a small pool of students use it to get to an internship. TTC member Alex Wallach was quoted in the *Tufts Daily* as saying "The U-Pass would not be a financial burden on students." Rather, the money to fund the program is expected to be picked from the trees on

which it grows. Hey free stuff though!

▼ *Tufts Podcast Network exists, provides content to dozens:* Tufts' newest source of student-produced audio content has it all: news, sports, spoken words, discussions of human rights and self-described 'hilarious back-and-forth.' In other words: everything you could record with your MacBook microphone during a long lunch at Dewick. Kudos to everyone at the network for building a new platform of campus media to express

themselves. THE ELEPHANT was running out of things to listen to instead of WMFO.

▼ *Slaughter to kill it at commencement:* Former director of policy planning for the US Department of State and the current president and CEO of the New American Foundation Anne-Marie Slaughter will deliver the commencement address to Tufts' Class of 2014. Famous for her monumental piece in *The Atlantic*, "Why Women Still Can't Have It All,"

Slaughter's speech to Jumbos is rumored to be entitled "JK, They Totally Can, Have You Seen My Résumé? Suck It."

▼ *Wilson to act as halfway house:* The Office of Residential Life and Learning has designated Wilson House as transfer student-only housing for the upcoming academic year, citing the intrinsic benefits of grouping students together based on arbitrary, non-substantive characteristics. No word yet on how late their curfew is or what color patches will be sewn onto their clothing.

▼ THE ELEPHANT never forgets.

Top ten other unlimited, free things that all Tufts students should pay for:

- 1) Rom-Coms - Somerville Theatre**
- 2) Marlboro Reds - Tufts Convenience**
- 3) WiFi Access - Diesel**
- 4) Fun Tops - Buffalo Exchange**
- 5) Candlepin Bowling - Flatbread**
- 6) Cornbread - Redbones**
- 7) Reverb Pedals - Rockin' Bob's**
- 8) Artisinal Ravioli - Dave's Fresh Pasta**
- 9) Gainful Employment - The Economy**
- 10) Plastic Bags - Hodgdon**

Changing Tufts' Political Dialogue

What to expect when you're accepting

❖ CAMPUS

by Joe Donenfeld

As a senior, I have taken great pleasure in looking back at my experiences at Tufts with a fresh perspective. I think about how those experiences might have been made better. Who are people I should have met, the clubs I should have joined, the classes I should have taken? One of the revelations I've had concerns the existence of this very publication.

Students at Tufts have an attitude problem when it comes to conservative thought on this campus. I had hoped that coming to college from a liberal community, my perspectives would be challenged by ideas from the conservative plurality in this country. However, it seems that most of the political dialogue that occurs between students on this campus is between liberal and very liberal students. Where is the conservative perspective? Is it because Tufts attracts mostly liberals? Probably. However, late in my freshman year I met a group of students who proposed a different reason for Tufts' lack of conservative thought.

This collection of students represented a variety of conservative viewpoints ranging from practically liberal to moderately conservative. They were extremely well read and had an intense interest in politics. When I asked why they weren't participating in politics within the greater Tufts community, they laughed at me. To them the idea of engaging with their peers was preposterous. They explained how they felt completely ostracized from the community due to their political beliefs. These students felt that they could not have the same conversations that I enjoyed over lunch in Carmichael without

being judged or attacked for their views.

I thought this was preposterous. Our country is recovering from a serious recession, and conservatives on this campus are not being heard? Yet, as a senior, I feel I would be doing my friends from freshman year a disservice to not bring these issues with our campus to light as I have found their claims about political intolerance on

campus absolutely correct.

I believe that, at Tufts, a student with conservative viewpoints cannot actively participate in conversations the same way a liberal student can—

and I no longer believe that I am crazy in thinking so.

I came to Tufts a liberal because I had been surrounded by them my whole life. But once I came here I was fortunate to have politically conservative friends who challenged my ideas, pushed me to question my political beliefs, and thus made me mature intellectually. Having my deeply held political beliefs challenged by well structured, conservative arguments taught me to articulate my thoughts more clearly and find confidence in what I believed in. I value these experiences as some of the most important moments of my time at Tufts.

However, I doubt many students at Tufts have had the same opportunity as I have because those conservative students rarely felt safe enough to speak about their conservative ideologies in public forums. This is due to a politically intolerant climate that proliferates our campus. Many of those students considered transferring and some did. This hostile environment deprives students of exposure to well-rounded political discourse, and renders them less capable to understand different political views. This

poses a serious problem for our campus.

So, how can we change? How can we make sure conservative thought is brought to the forefront of arguments on this campus and not only criticized, but heard? Firstly, we can support a student like Austin Berg, who is trying to create forums for conservatives and liberals alike by establishing PostScript. Secondly, we as a student body can be more self-aware when we criticize political viewpoints on Facebook, in Dewick, or in class. Rather than casually dismissing an idea for being conservative or Republican, you can choose your words to attack the specific policy being debated rather than someone's political ideology. When students call conservatives stupid, prejudiced, narrow-minded, or insensitive we not only judge a political party and its leaders, but students at this school.

When I was a sophomore I had an extensive conversation with a senior about gun control. This issue was, and remains very important to me. I firmly believe that guns lead to gun violence—that more guns lead to more gun violence. Before my conversation with the senior, I thought these arguments to be irrefutable, and anyone who disagreed must be ignorant. Yet, I now have a much better understanding of the issue and its complexities, and realize that it's an oversimplification to call my friend a supporter of violence, as I probably would have done before hearing a reasoned conservative perspective. For him this was a matter of freedom, and our ability to remain autonomous and protect ourselves. Our conversation allowed me to understand the issue in a way I hadn't previously. Our conversation gave me conviction in my beliefs, and it also allowed me to respect my friend for his perspective.

It's unfortunate that my friend didn't feel comfortable having this conversation in a public forum like Dewick, but I understand why he didn't. We can make this campus a better place by including conservatives, if we do, I am certain we will be better for it.

I am choosing to write for PostScript because I believe that having a strong independent publication is a start to creating a healthy political climate on this campus, one that respects all perspectives, including the ones the majority doesn't agree with.

Students shouldn't be afraid to express their political beliefs at a school as progressive as Tufts. ❖

Joe Donenfeld is a senior majoring in Political Science

Commitment Issues on The Hill

Define “liberal arts”

❖ CAMPUS

by Anantya Sahney

At its core, the freshman experience is a struggle between expectation and reality. When I arrived at Tufts eight months ago I was under the impression that we were all here to undergo a deeply transformative, Socratic schooling, with an emphasis on knowledge as an end in itself. “Variety” and “discovery.” Of course, reality was to be vastly different.

It turns out that my notion of the liberal arts education applied to a very small group of students, myself included. More importantly, the mechanisms in place at Tufts—the core curriculum and distribution requirements—seemed to be operating at an entirely different level, one that was in fact contradictory to my romantic conception of the liberal arts. I found myself asking, what purpose do they serve?

Freshman year is the time during which the liberal arts students focus their academic pursuits and move closer towards deciding a major. Questions regarding our future are supposed to take on a rather different meaning in the minds of liberal arts students than that of their counterparts in other curriculums. We are told that one need not forge a direct link between the degree attained and the job or career eventually pursued. The English major does not necessarily become a writer or a professor; but perhaps ends up working on Wall Street.

It is this belief in “transferable intellectual and practical skills” that separates the collegiate experience at a school like Tufts from those around the rest of the world. Or so I thought.

The course of first term revealed the actual thought process behind deciding a major.

Initially, the decisions of my peers were very much in line with my pre-conceived notions of the liberal arts, as many seemed to be leaning towards the more unconventional departments such as Asian American Studies or Art History. However, as the term progressed, the change in thinking was all too evident:

History and Sociology majors switched to International Relations, those who once opted for Math now settled on Computer Science, and, most pertinently, the number of econ majors, double majors and minors increased (I too decided to take my first econ class this semester). It was clear that

people were thinking in more practical, and dare I say, pecuniary terms.

Why blame them? Anxiety concerning loans, obnoxiously high tuition fees, and an increasingly competitive job market are certain to shape one’s decision-making process.

The question that remains is whether the structures in place at Tufts are still suitable. Tufts’ embodiment of the liberal arts ethos is evident through a series of core and distribution requirements that are deemed critical to any student’s development. While the intent to promote an expansive education is indeed sound, the effectiveness of the initiative is questionable. The plethora of different options available to complete these requirements, such as transfer of credits and the ambiguous idea of culture credits, enables and indeed encourages students to seek the path of least resistance. More importantly, the need to fulfill distribution requirements has an adverse impact on the quality of edu-

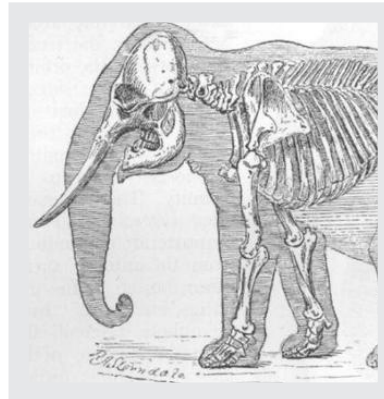
cation, as certain courses are taken merely to tick off the boxes—I have heard many of my classmates speaking of Wanderers in Space or Symmetry in this vein. Not only is the individual prevented from engaging with his or her genuine interests, but the classroom experience is also compromised.

The system in play lies somewhere between the core curriculum on one end and an open curriculum on the other. It is as though Tufts chose a convenient but confusing middle-ground that partially allows students to forge their own education hile retaining a perfunctory care for the classic liberal arts ethos. Analogous issues are evident within the school of engineering as well. A sophomore mechanical engineer tells me that the hu-

manities, arts and sciences requirement, known as HAS, is often met with a similar, pragmatic follow-through. The reality is that certain aspects of the Tufts curriculum are sometimes constraining, rather than enriching.

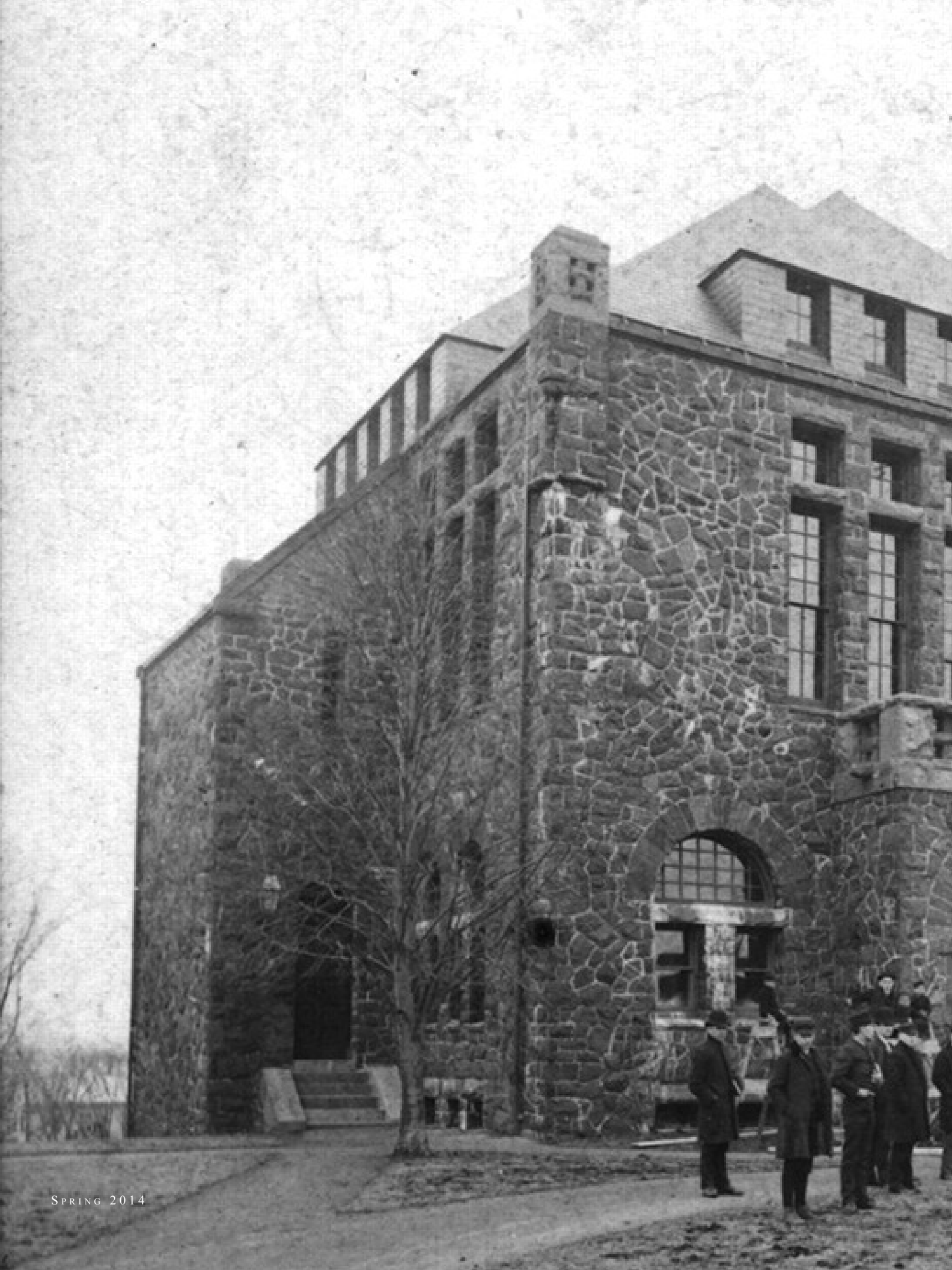
All these areas of conflict arise because of the fact that the mandatory liberal arts program at Tufts often only works at a superficial level. The desire to create civic-minded, worldly, and intellectually diverse students cannot be faulted, yet the means of doing so certainly can. The set of requirements and the intricate pathways to achieving them are reflective of a system that is emblematic rather than meaningful; for instance, my own completion of the language requirement and my actual fluency in Spanish are unrelated. More often than not, the core and distribution requirements act as inhibitors to students maximizing their four years at Tufts and creating a truly personalized curriculum.

Freshmen year exposed me to the multitude of socio-economic, academic and personal factors that shape individual aims for college, aims that are often at odds with the liberal arts ethos. The idea that an education must have variety and that knowledge and skills are transferable is simply incompatible with today’s harsh realities, and the curriculum doesn’t have enough depth to change the minds of students. If Jumbos are to leave the Hill with a real liberal arts education, Tufts should go big or give up. ❖

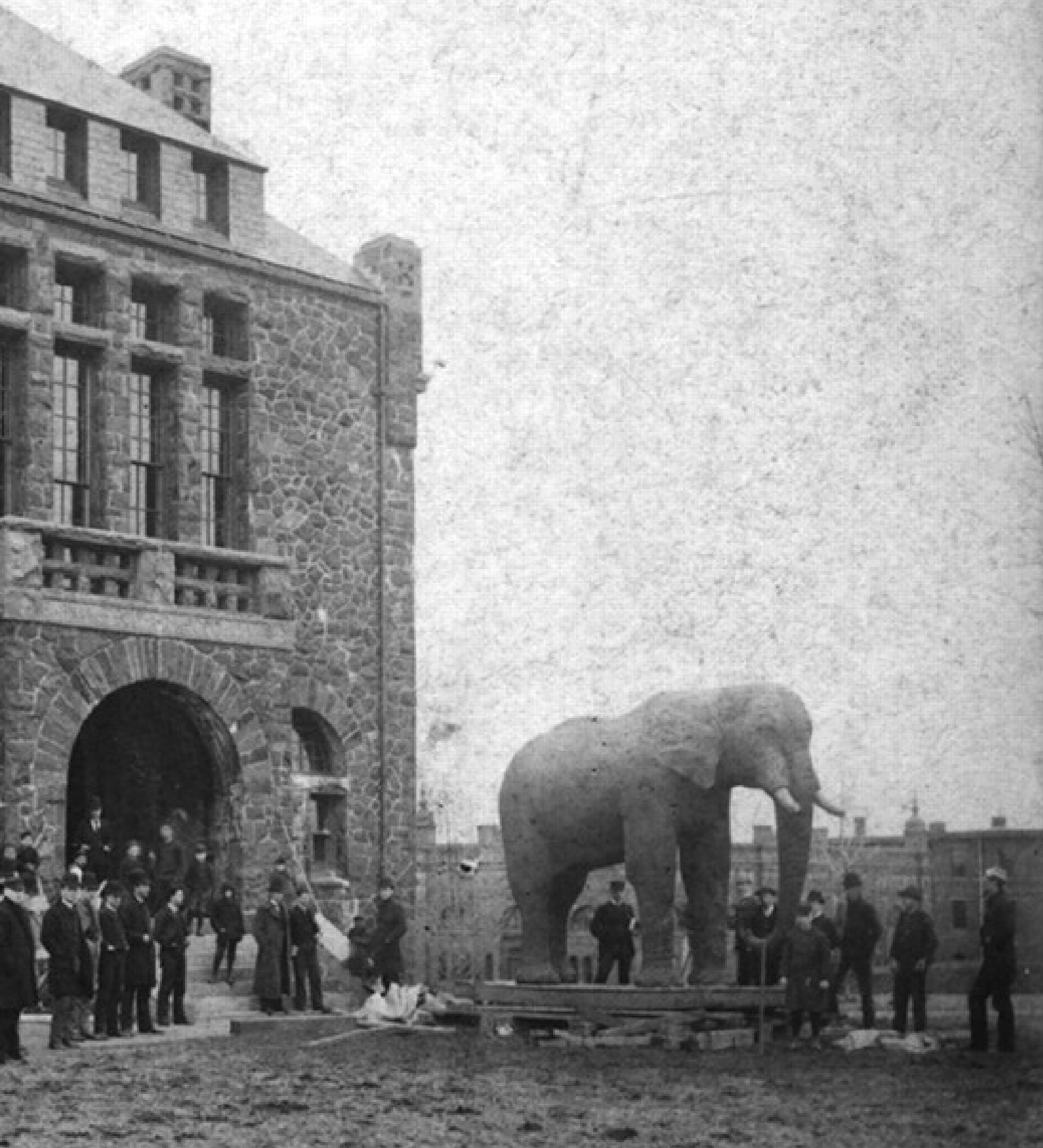


Tufts chose a convenient but confusing middle-ground that partially allows students to forge their own education while retaining a perfunctory care for the classic liberal arts ethos.

Anantya Sahney is a freshman majoring in History



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The Appeal of 'Apartheid'

Effects of SJP's audacity

❖ CAMPUS

by Chris Rickard

For supporters of Israel, the idea of an event comparing the Jewish state to apartheid South Africa must be appalling. Yet, despite the fact that our campus is nearly one-third Jewish and has many students who profess very pro-Israel positions, that is precisely the comparison that was made a few weeks ago, and indeed, for the past three years at Tufts. Flying in the face of majority opinion, a handful of students used on-campus demonstrations and inflammatory tactics to spark interest and, more importantly, to infuse new perspectives into an ongoing debate.

With campus discussion tending to side with Israel, Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) took an impassioned stand for an alternative view. People may not want to hear it, but every day, the Palestinian people face violence and injustice, much of which is largely unacknowledged in mainstream media. It is an uncomfortable topic, and starting such a painful conversation is an enormous task. This is the motivation behind "Israel Apartheid Week" (IAW): make an uncomfortable debate unavoidable.

However, many Tufts students argue that by demonizing Israel and antagonizing a significant portion of the student body, SJP was halting dialogue before it could even begin. Many found their demonstrations distressing and abrasive. Some argued that calling Israel an apartheid state is not only false

but slanderous. I can understand these complaints. The comparison of Israel to the apartheid state of South Africa is a serious indictment, and those who fundamentally disagree with the comparison will likely dismiss SJP as inflammatory and sensationalist without listening to their arguments. This begs

More important than a marked increase in opinion writing, IAW sparked campus discussion on an interpersonal level. It may not have been members of SJP and Friends of Israel sitting down for coffee, but other people in our community discussed the complexities of the issue.

the question, why start campus debate in a way that virtually guarantees that a large portion of the student body won't participate?

There was a point when I too would have preferred a more moderate approach, one that encouraged all parties to come to the table in search of common ground.

Therefore I was not among those slipping IAW flyers under dorm room doors or standing outside the campus center participating in demonstrations. That said, I've come to realize the importance of SJP's activism and the encouraging results they have produced.

Throughout the week friends approached me to talk about IAW. Many of the people I spoke with began by criticizing SJP's tactics, which they thought were polarizing and deterred the student body from engaging. But nevertheless, IAW had forced them to think about the issue. Although they couldn't bring themselves to engage with SJP di-

rectly, many were looking for someone with which to discuss their thoughts, and over the course of the week I was engaged in at least a dozen conversations on the subject. Although these discussions didn't necessarily arrive at full agreement, by considering new perspectives and finding middle ground we did have productive dialogues.

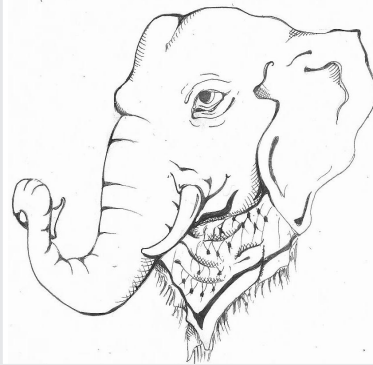
None of these conversations would have happened without the provocations of SJP. They played a crucial role in redefining the boundaries of what could be debated. "Israel Apartheid Week" brought out the emotion, angst, and curiosity that are necessary to provoke a real campus dialogue on this contentious issue.

It was made clear in the days following IAW that the discussion it generated had endured. Students on both sides wrote op-eds. Each day there was a new angle added to the conversation, building upon or disagreeing with the previous day's argument. It was tangible, coherent dialogue. More important than a marked increase in opinion writing, IAW sparked campus discussion on an interpersonal level. It may not have been members of SJP and Friends of Israel sitting down for coffee, but other people in our community discussed the complexities of the issue. For those who

knew little, it was a call to learn the basics. For those who were already deeply invested, it provided an occasion for further debate.

Ultimately, many still disagree with SJP's beliefs; some may reject them out of hand. But despite

isolating some who may never agree with them, IAW has been revelatory for many others. SJP brings a volatile issue into high contrast, leading to self-reflection and critical examination of the beliefs and assertions on both sides. Their actions may not be popular with the majority, but their audacity is pushing campus towards better dialogue. ❖



Chris Rickard is a junior majoring in International Relations

Tuition, Transparency and Tufts

Costs and benefits of four years as a Jumbo

❖ CAMPUS

by Carolina Reyes

On March 11, 2014 *The Tufts Daily* reported the University's announcement to raise tuition and fees by nearly four percent to \$61,000 next semester, making Tufts the second most expensive college in a state that is home to over 100 institutions of higher learning.

Statements from the University claimed that the increase in tuition was due mainly to the need to "stay competitive" in the faculty employment market, in addition to unavoidable administrative costs and compliance mandates, according to Executive Vice President of the Board of Trustees Patricia Campbell. However, this tuition increase, various recent policies, and statements made by Tufts have caused students to increasingly question the integrity of these decisions and the true value of a Tufts education.

In November of 2013, the University revealed the 2013-2023 Strategic Plan, a document meant to guide and outline the next ten years of policy making at Tufts. It seemed to reaffirm Tufts' commitment to financial diversity by making statements such as "People of all backgrounds are supported financially, socially, and intellectually, to fully participate and thrive in the Tufts community" found on page 30. The Strategic Plan continues to say that, "Tufts, like almost every other elite college and university in the country, has published costs of attendance for its undergraduate and graduate programs that exceed the annual income of most U.S. households". A figure that is approximately \$52,000 according to the Federal Government. But let's examine the trend.

According to an article published by The Primary Source in 2008, the cost of attending Tufts for the 2005-2006 academic year was just under \$40,000. The same year, The Daily pub-

lished an article claiming that over the previous five years Tufts had raised annual undergraduate charges by over five percent each year. In 2008 alone Tufts increased the cost of attending by 5.33 percent, raising tuition by \$2,498 to \$49,358. Over the past ten years Tufts' consistent tuition hikes have amounted to a total increase of \$20,000.

That said, evidence reinforces Tufts' assertion that the University's tuition and fee increases are in line with the broader national trend over the past decade. Indeed, according to a 2013 report published by the College Board, 70% of full-time students in the private, nonprofit four-year sector attended institutions that increased their tuition and fees between 3% and 6% for the 2013-14 academic year. However, the statement in the Strategic Plan remains void of analysis regarding the effects of increasing tuition and fees upon the student

body and does not address the issue of steady tuition increase, which has occurred over the past 14 years at Tufts.

Tufts has not provided sufficient evidence directly to students, in its Annual Report, or

Tufts has not provided sufficient evidence directly to students, in its Annual Report, or in financial statements available online to illustrate how it has attempted to lower expenses...

in financial statements available online to illustrate how it has attempted to lower expenses in areas that comprise the remainder of the University's expenses beyond compensation. And further, it has not explained how it intends to maintain a commitment to socioeconomic diversity on campus beyond increasing financial aid (as it should if it increases tuition) and establishing a "council on diversity", despite recent student students demands for transparency on these matters.

Furthermore, on March 23rd Tufts announced its decision to limit enrollment of Computer Science courses to declared majors and enforce new waitlist procedures for minors and non-department students. Various Daily editorials written by Computer Science under-

graduate and graduate students have expressed that funding and resources for the department are grossly insufficient and outdated for current and future students.

This seems to contradict the notion of Tufts as "an excellent value proposition" (as it defines itself in the introduction of the Strategic Plan). According to a January 2014 *Forbes* article that uses data from the non-profit, National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), the article ranks an undergraduate degree in computer science as the second most valuable and claims that the average starting salary for students who majored in Computer Science is about \$59,100, significantly higher than the average starting salary for humanities or social science graduates, which is estimated at \$38,000.

This is the consequence of repeatedly increasing tuition. As cost continues to rise students are increasingly becoming concerned about the return on their degree. Although Tufts' mission to promote Active Citizenship amongst its students is certainly admirable, its recent efforts to reemphasize that aspect of a Tufts education is misplaced and fails to acknowledge the realities that accompanying the rising cost of a Tufts education. An education that should be adapting to students' increased interest in "practical" degrees such as engineering, computer science, and business that will return well on their investment. Increased applications to the School of Engineering, high enrollments in Computer Science courses, widespread discussions of a finance minor, demands for a Co-op program, and better career services are all indicators of this.

Tufts should work harder to improve funding in these areas as students demand. Although new initiatives such as 1+4 certainly have their value, shifting funding towards internship stipends and career services would be far more cost-effective and also more reflective of what students want.

I couldn't tell you how much I believe a Tufts education is worth. There is a wealth of evidence that shows how intellectually and fiscally rewarding a higher education can be, and I certainly believe my education has an unquantifiable value in and of itself. However, as the landscape of the higher education field shifts, Tufts should make efforts to allocate its resources to those departments and areas that will best prepare undergraduates for a post-"Great Recession" world where unemployment rates for recent graduations are higher than ever and starting salaries are far less than a year's worth of tuition. ❖

Carolina Reyes is a senior majoring in International Relations

IS THERE A HIGHER EDUCATION BUBBLE?

...and are you?

Since the early 1990's, spending on administration per student increased by 66%, while instructional spending per student rose by 39%. (Forbes)

In 2012, a whopping 41% of all colleges experienced declining enrollment. (Forbes)

\$36 billion in loan debt is held by people over 60-years old. (Forbes)

Since 1981, college fees have risen, fees have risen as the consumer price index has risen two-and-a-half times.

Between August 2009 and August 2012, the price index for college tuition grew 8%.

Nearly twice as much as the gross costs of room and board care.

Sources: "Voice of the Graduate" by McKinsey & Co. (<http://mckinseysociety.com/downloads/reports/Education/UXC001%20Voice%20of%20the%20Graduate%20v6.pdf>); "Just How Fast Has College Tuition Grown?" by Danielle Kurtzleben in US News (<http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2013/10/23/charts-just-how-fast-has-college-tuition-grown>); "The Great College Hoax" by Kathy Kristof in Forbes (<http://www.forbes.com/forbes/2009/0202/060.html>); "Average student loan debt: \$29,400" in CNNMoney (<http://money.cnn.com/2013/12/04/pf/college/student-loan-debt/>); "After Housing and Stock Market is Higher Education The Next..." by Avi Dan in Forbes (<http://www.forbes.com/sites/avidan/2013/01/01/after-housing-and-the-stock-market-is-higher-education-the-next-bubble-to-burst/>)

One in four college students have considerably less than the average of high school seniors.

EDUCATION BUBBLE?

you part of it?

College tuition and
fees have increased
more than sixfold while the
job index has only increased
half times (Forbes)

From August 2003
to August 2013, the
index for college
tuition rose 80 percent.
It rose twice as fast
as the job index
grew in
the same period
of time at
the top 100
colleges in
the U.S. (US News)

College grads takes home
25 percent less
than the top quartile
of high school
grads (Forbes)

42% of recent graduates are in
jobs that require less than a
four-year college edu-
cation,

41% of graduates from the na-
tion's top colleges could not
find jobs in their chosen field;

and half of all graduates said
they would choose a dif-
ferent major or school.

(McKinsey)

Average student loan debt
for the class of 2012:

\$29,400 (CNNMoney)

Higher Education: The Long, Painful Road Ahead

We know where the money's going

❖ NATIONAL

by Mikko Silliman

Tufts recently announced that tuition will be creeping up to \$61,000 per year, and as fellow senior Carolina Reyes has been wise to point out in this publication and in her *Tufts Daily* column, that's a lot of money. But Tufts students are not alone in experiencing gargantuan tuition surges. It's as if universities around the country are locked in an arms race, each gunning to outdo the other on their tuition bills. I'd like to offer here some explanation as to the deeper problem of why college has come to cost as much as it does, and, moreover, suggest where we should shift our concern regarding our nation's higher education system.

Reyes is right to ask where the money is going, but just below the initial Daily article regarding the tuition surge, right on the front page, is part of the answer. "Senate, volleyball teams working to add beach volleyball court." A lot of money in this tuition (and spending) arms race goes to providing students with new facilities, budgets to student activities, bringing ever more speakers to campus, etc. Don't get me wrong, these are all good things, and they do definitely add to our university experience. That said, if we care about seeing our tuition decrease, we cannot demand superfluous spending on such extravagances as beach volleyball courts - or even a *gratis* T pass.

Mikko Silliman is a senior majoring in Philosophy and Economics

Now we might wonder, why isn't the university more hesitant to spoil us? Why are they willing to increase tuition in order to pay for these trifling 'necessities?' In short, the answer is that they are in another arms race; a race for the best and brightest students.

But wait. How can it be possible that increasing tuition will draw the brightest students? Won't it just attract the students who come from wealthy families willing to pay an arm and a leg for four years of resort treatment at an elite institution?

Well, not entirely. Yes, as the buzz about the new SAT has brought to light, high SAT scores are closely tied to socioeconomic family background. But, according to the Tufts University Admissions web-

site, Tufts grants need-based aid to 40% of students on our campus. The truth is that part of the reason we see large tuition increases is that money from students of more affluent backgrounds goes to students from less affluent backgrounds. If we care about socioeconomic diversity, this is good. But this also presents a huge difficulty for all the students at Tufts who come from middle-class families who can just about afford to pay tuition, through mortgages, loans, and whatever else it takes.

Back to the question Reyes astutely asks: "Where is the money going?" To answer this question we have to step back and look at what's been happening across the country since the late 1980's.

Under the assumption that increased participation in higher education will increase macroeconomic growth and, by providing opportunities for people who have never had them before, increase socioeconomic equality, the government has encouraged rapid expansion in higher education access. According to the US Census Bureau, while high school graduation rates have remained more or less constant at 70 percent since the 1950's, since the 1980's the percentage of high school graduates who go on to graduate from college experienced a rapid spike in growth, increasing by nearly 170 percent in a mere 30 years. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, college enrollment increased by 34 percent in the last decade alone. The White House's current stated goal is to continue this increase in college enrollment rates to the highest in the world by 2020 - this will require nearly a doubling of current enrollment.

If the skills students learn in university increase productivity (across the board - not just at elite institutions), having the most university graduates per capita in the world will be good for the United States. Unfortunately, the evidence does not indicate that more university graduates increases productivity and economic growth. This should not be surprising when we note that the Department of Labor Statistics reports that only 20 percent of all jobs require the skills gained in university - nearly 15 percent less than the number of youth graduating with university degrees.

Fortunately, however, the rate of returns to university education is high. While these numbers are all quite speculative, Tufts is cited by Boston.com (January 2013) and GoLocalWorcester (July 2013) to have a return to investment of roughly \$1 million. Economists tend to agree that the average rate of return on college is around 10 percent - for top universities, the number is higher. In arenas like the stock market, a long term rate of return of even five percent is considered an extraordinary success. College, certainly at an elite institution like Tufts, is still a good investment.

Here's what that means. While it is incredibly difficult for middle-class families, particularly those who do not qualify for



financial aid, to pay for college, those of us graduating with degrees this spring or in the coming years are very fortunate when looking at long term returns, especially when compared to those without degrees.

Without a university degree it has become harder and harder to land a middle class job. Although, as the Labor Department statistics indicate, only a small portion of jobs fully employ the skills we acquire in college, more and more employers have come to require university degrees. Thirty years ago, real estate agents rarely had university degrees. Today, a bachelor's degree has become prerequisite for the same job. And for good reason. Having a degree tends to show that you have learned to meet deadlines, see a task to its finish, mingle with the upper crust of society, etc. These are incredibly useful characteristics for prospective employers to be aware of. But, they are a far cry from what our liberal arts institutions espouse. We like to think that we are learning to broaden our interests, sharpen nuanced opinions and become "global citizens."

Unfortunately, as long as these values of a liberal arts education are tied to a prohibitively expensive price tag, a pre-college educational trajectory that excludes large non-random swaths of our country's citizens, as well as opportunities for middle-class employment, increasing university enrollment has disastrous consequences. This is especially true if we care about socioeconomic mobility. In economics speak, when a university education serves in large part as a positioning mechanism rather than as a tool to enhance human capital, as college enrollment increases, people at the margin displace those lower down on the socioeconomic ladder; people without degrees, from jobs. The labor market becomes more polarized.

Unsurprisingly, this is exactly what has happened since the 1980's. Socioeconomic mobility has plummeted and the road to the middle class has quickly eroded. The American dream has become ever more illusory. As more and more people go to college, there are fewer and fewer jobs available for those without degrees.

In a sense, it's not that college degrees have become too expensive, they still provide a healthy rate of returns, it's the opposite: they have become too valuable.

So, what I'm saying, in response to Reyes' outrage, is this: given the demand for university degrees, all things equal, lowering the price tag for elite institutions would subsidize the wealthiest half of Americans at the expense of those below them on the socioeconomic ladder.

In response to her underlying question then, regarding where Tufts tuition money is going - it's going towards keeping up with the Jones' on university rankings lists. Put bluntly, it's not just academics that determines the rate of return on a college education, but perceived prestige and image. If we care about a Tufts degree being a good investment for us, we need Tufts to spend money with an eye towards a higher spot in the rankings game. This is a perverse cycle. It is also a reality.

This leaves us in an incredibly difficult policy dilemma. Where do we go from here? Reyes' suggestion of greater transparency carries part of the solution, but, it cannot be enacted in isolation. If we look to the Nordic model for universities, we see that college tuition is, if not entirely free, then very close to free. Given the strong public K-12 education system in these countries, free college means there are few socioeconomic barriers for education. However, university spots are rationed, capped at about 20 percent of the population. This means that competition for spots is fierce, but, they are awarded on merit, not family wealth or the education level of one's parents.

But competition isn't so fierce as we might expect: other educational and career trajectories are respected and legitimized. Smart kids from good families go to vocational schools, technical apprenticeships, and polytechnic schools. This means that the middle class is adding value in the production line through acquisition of tangible skills. As opposed

to the United States where much of our productivity is tied to innovation at the top, a strong middle class provides economic growth across the spectrum.

Sounds pretty good. Obviously, this will not happen any time soon. Imagine the public outcry at any political figure who announces that they will cap university enrollment to 20 percent of the population, or even 25 percent. Political suicide. If we have the money, we don't want anyone to tell us that we can't attend university - even if it hurts those who have fewer resources than we do. The system of values governing American society makes even the suggestion of

In a sense, it's not that college degrees have become too expensive, they still provide a healthy rate of returns, it's the opposite: they have become too valuable.

a policy similar to that of the Nordic countries impossible. This is not to say that those values are not worth preserving, they simply limit powerful

policy tools in this instance.

Instead we will see the following: as more and more people enter university, the value of college degrees per se - probably not those of elite institutions - will deflate. This means that mediocre students who attend lower ranked universities will go into insurmountable debt to pay for their degree. The job options will be few, as schools will not provide the opportunities so glowingly advertised in college brochures. After considerable lag, people will begin to reconsider going to college. This will cut demand on college degrees. Prices will finally drop.

Slowly, other career and educational trajectories will begin to become legitimized, and with reduced barriers to entry for college, socioeconomic mobility will increase. But given extreme political reluctance to face these issues head-on, it seems we have little choice but to throw up our hands and watch as nature takes its course.

We can hope, perhaps perversely, that the recent recession will speed up the process, finally making us question our fetishization of the educational status quo. Until then, don't be surprised to see Tufts tuition on the rise. ❖

tweets from tufts professors



{PS} PostScript
@TuftsPostScript

These are real, excluding ours. Some are odd. Some are offensive. s/o to Profs. Sommers, Berry, Sharpe, Nelson, Shapiro, Ouer, and #RustyTunnard, who mysteriously lists 'Barge Owner' in his bio.

Reply Delete Favorite More

3:08 PM - 10 Feb 2014



Sam Sommers
@samsommers

Following

I mean, the Tsarnaevs couldn't be whiter if they tried to be-- they're literally Caucasian.

Reply Retweet Favorite More

FAVORITES

2



9:54 AM - 30 Apr 2013



Jeffrey M. Berry
@JeffreyMBerry

Following

Nugent flap follows depressing template: outrage vitriol; rabid press coverage; weak apology; more vitriol; both sides fundraise #TedNugent

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RETWEETS

2



5:10 PM - 24 Feb 2014



hystericalblackness
@hystericalblkns

Following

John Bolton is evil.

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FAVORITE

1



11:45 AM - 6 Mar 2014



Sam Sommers
@samsommers

Following

You'd think I would've learned by now that I don't really *know* public figures. Yet still surprised. And, of course, very sad. #pistorius

Reply Retweet Favorite More

12:11 PM - 14 Feb 2013



hystericalblackness
@hystericalblkns

Following

I abhor butter.

Reply Retweet Favorite More

10:41 AM - 31 Mar 2014

{PS} PostScript
@TuftsPostScript

@samsommers merriamwebster.com/dictionary/tact

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{PS} PostScript
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@JeffreyMBerry tbn the best hashtag here but 'Nugent flap' made us gag

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{PS} PostScript
@TuftsPostScript

@hystericalblkns a bit harsh for the former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and political figure most resembling a #Muppet

Reply Delete Favorite More

{PS} PostScript
@TuftsPostScript

@samsommers 😞

Reply Delete Favorite More

{PS} PostScript
@TuftsPostScript

@hystericalblkns you should call it evil

Reply Delete Favorite More



Miriam Nelson
@DrMiriamNelson

Following

Paula Deen having Type 2 diabetes shows that no one is immune to chronic disease associated with poor diet and lack of physical activity.

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5:16 PM - 21 Jan 2012



Ben Shapiro
@bennytheshap

Following

In this trying time of political upheaval, the thing I want to know is When will Linux have a non-shitty audio system?

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4:44 PM - 1 Oct 2013



Freedom Oeur
@FreedomOeur

Following

If the Carfax mascot is the Car Fox, why don't they just call themselves Carfox?

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7:23 PM - 2 Jan 2014



Rusty Tunnard
@rustytun

Following

The week Pete Seeger dies, Bob Dylan does a Chrysler ad. The times they are indeed a'changing.

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RETWEET

1



9:07 PM - 2 Feb 2014



Rusty Tunnard
@rustytun

Following

He may be older and vegan, but Bill Clinton can deliver a speech like no one else can

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10:52 PM - 5 Sep 2012



Rusty Tunnard
@rustytun

Following

Reprehensible that Congress uses student loans as fuel for political fire when this affects so many future voters. Stupid and short-sighted

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5:40 PM - 1 Jul 2013

{PS} PostScript
@TuftsPostScript

@DrMiriamNelson not even her?

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{PS} PostScript
@TuftsPostScript

@bennytheshap #globalcitizen

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{PS} PostScript
@TuftsPostScript

@FreedomOeur you should write for us

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{PS} PostScript
@TuftsPostScript

@rustytun if we were matching tweets with names this would be a #nobrainer #RustyTunnard

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{PS} PostScript
@TuftsPostScript

@rustytun congrats on the award for weirdest qualification of a speech by a former president

Reply Delete Favorite More

{PS} PostScript
@TuftsPostScript

@rustytun as stupid and short-sighted as inflating the higher education bubble with free loans?

Reply Delete Favorite More

{POSTSCRIPT}

Tufts University
POSTSCRIPT
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Medford, MA 02155