



Report of the Mental Health Task Force

October 2019

Office of the President

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Executive Summary

One of the privileges of working in higher education is watching students grow and mature from their first arrival on campus to graduation. Their intellectual growth is only one part of our mission. We must consider how we support students' personal and social development as they establish their academic and professional identities. Developing students' academic skills is only one of our tasks; creating a welcoming community that supports students through the normative developmental task of young adulthood is an essential task as well. This includes building resilience, coping skills, and promoting safe and healthy relationships.

Across the country, colleges and universities are witnessing a sharp increase in the number of students seeking mental health resources. Leading professional organizations such as the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association have documented the increasing rates at which college students are making use of mental health services. We can identify a number of factors that may be shaping these trends. Earlier intervention and advances in treatment provide unprecedented opportunities for students with mental health diagnoses to excel in high school and attend college. At the same time, the late teens and early 20s remain the critical age of onset for many mental health disorders. In addition, as stigma decreases, more students fortunately feel able to seek the help they need and approach the utilization of mental health care as normative and a sign of good health and self-care behavior.

In line with national trends, at Tufts University we have seen a notable increase in the number of students with significant, ongoing mental health needs. At the undergraduate level, we have seen significant increases in hospitalizations related to mental health. And during the past two years, the Counseling and Mental Health Service (CMHS) serving undergraduate and graduate/professional students on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses has seen a significant increase in severe distress.

CMHS has also seen high utilization and an increase in the overall demand for services. Between fall 2015 and fall 2018, the number of new student intake sessions increased by 60%. More than one-quarter of the students on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses use CMHS services each year, and another eight to 10% utilize local community-based mental health providers.

Many students report that their academics at times are impaired by mental health issues. Of some 850 students in the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering who are registered for academic accommodations, more than 300 seek accommodations for reasons related to mental health. Anxiety and depression are the top concerns at Tufts and elsewhere in higher education.

All colleges and universities are grappling with these challenges. When considering strategies to strengthen student mental health across Tufts, we must keep in mind our own institutional landscape. For our relatively small size we are an unusually complex university, supporting a wide variety of student populations and offering a diverse array of academic programs. Our students study on four Massachusetts campuses; many undertake study and research abroad; and many of them also train at remote clinical sites.

Traditionally, the individual schools have been responsible for providing student services on our different campuses. The availability of clinical services to support mental health is thus shaped by individual school and campus histories. But it became clear two years ago that evolving trends in student mental health needs and treatments, changing student and family

expectations, and a complex regulatory landscape necessitated a comprehensive, in-depth assessment at a university-wide level.

The university-wide Task Force on Student Mental Health was launched in December 2016 with a charge to examine the state of student mental health on campus; assess mental health services and related resources; review policies and practices; and develop actionable recommendations with respect to education, outreach, and mental health promotion; services and resources; and policies and practices. The members of the Task Force included faculty, staff, and students from across the university. We are grateful for their engaged participation in a process that aimed to integrate community input, data-gathering, and informed analysis. Thanks to members of the Task Force, academic and administrative leaders across the university, implementation is already in progress for many of the recommendations introduced in this report.

On the Medford/Somerville campus, we have long offered expert on-site clinical services to support student mental health. We are fortunate that our students benefit from the dedication of outstanding clinical professionals who have a commitment to both the campus community and the highest standards of care. Today, the key challenge is how to respond to an escalating demand for services and the increasing level of acuity. As a result, the Task Force took a deep dive into staffing levels and care models, case management and referral processes, and communications.

We need to reimagine and invest meaningfully in comprehensive mental health outreach and wellness education across the Tufts student experience. We must remove barriers to accessing treatment, deepen relationships and referral networks with local community providers, and enhance communications to students and families. We have already significantly reduced co-pays for students on the university offered health insurance plan who see off-campus mental health clinicians, are piloting new evening hours on-site at CMHS, and are promoting new telehealth options. At the same time we need to make sure that the sense of community which can enhance engagement, growth and normative development is being supported across our varied educational settings. Not all struggles or challenges require clinical attention, and it is unlikely that simply growing our complement of providers can respond to all our students' needs.

Historically, the university had not provided on-site counseling services on the health sciences campuses. Starting in the fall of 2016, Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine on the Grafton campus began partnering with an external provider to establish on-site counseling services. The student community responded positively to the introduction of those resources, and utilization is currently at about 21% of the student population.

We identified this as a promising potential model to meet some student needs on the Boston health sciences campus as well. There, students have already benefited from robust health promotion efforts, and the dental and medical schools have incorporated stress reduction, mindfulness, and well-being into the curriculum. Now, as a result of the Task Force review, the schools on that campus have launched an on-site counseling service similar to the model offered in Grafton.

Graduate students on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses have access to clinical services through CMHS. But the Task Force has identified opportunities to strengthen non-clinical resources for graduate students in areas such as student affairs and academic support.

At the undergraduate level, the Task Force paid significant attention to strengthening academic policies and practices to allow for earlier identification and intervention to support students. Much progress has already been made implementing these recommendations thanks to support from the relevant faculty committees and administrative colleagues. Medical leave processes have been streamlined to empower students to take the time necessary to tend to medical needs in a more fluid and supportive way. A more structured personal leave process will provide more opportunities to connect students with resources and advising.

Across the university, we recognize the need to enhance training opportunities for faculty and staff, and to develop cohesive communications and outreach strategies. Knowing that alumni, parents, and friends share our commitment to Tufts' students, there may be opportunities for philanthropic support to advance initiatives in mental and behavioral health across the university.

While the Task Force recognizes that issues of alcohol and substance abuse are often closely related to student mental health concerns, in the interest of a more focused approach, the Task Force did not address these issues specifically. The Task Force is pleased to see initiatives led by our health and student affairs teams across the university to address these challenges. In the fall of 2019, thanks to generous donor funding, we have welcomed The Haven at College to provide support to students in substance abuse recovery. The Haven at College has an outpatient center at 200 Boston Avenue and provides substance abuse assessments and treatment, along with a residential house on campus. We are proud to become the first campus in New England to provide access to The Haven's services, allowing students to continue their studies while being supported in their recovery.

Looking ahead, we will establish a standing university-wide Steering Committee on Student Mental Health to oversee implementation of these recommendations and maintain our focus on this complex issue.

We are excited by the opportunity to make Tufts a leader in supporting student mental health and well-being. The success of our efforts to date was recognized in November 2018, when the university was awarded a scholarship from the HBC Foundation to enter into a four-year partnership as a JED Campus. JED Campus is a nationwide initiative of the Jed Foundation designed to help schools through a collaborative process of comprehensive systems, program and policy development to build on existing student mental health, substance abuse and suicide prevention efforts. This program will allow for deeper engagement on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses to implement strategic changes and promote student mental health and well-being.

The report that follows explores these and many other issues in much greater detail, outlining the working process employed by the Task Force, its specific findings and recommendations and implementation already underway. The appendices include a summary of recommendations as well as additional background information on the Task Force and the institutional context. We hope that this report will encourage students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, and friends to continue to work with us as we address this challenge of great importance to our entire university community.

Task Force Organization, Working Group Process, and Data

Task Force Organization

In the fall of 2016, President Anthony P. Monaco launched the Mental Health Task Force. The Task Force reviewed expert opinion in the context of national and Tufts-specific trends in student mental health and its promotion and care, analyzed quantitative and qualitative data with respect to our students' experiences, and engaged members of the Tufts community and appropriate outside experts to fulfill its charge. (See Appendix A: Purpose and Charge for the objectives of the Task Force.)

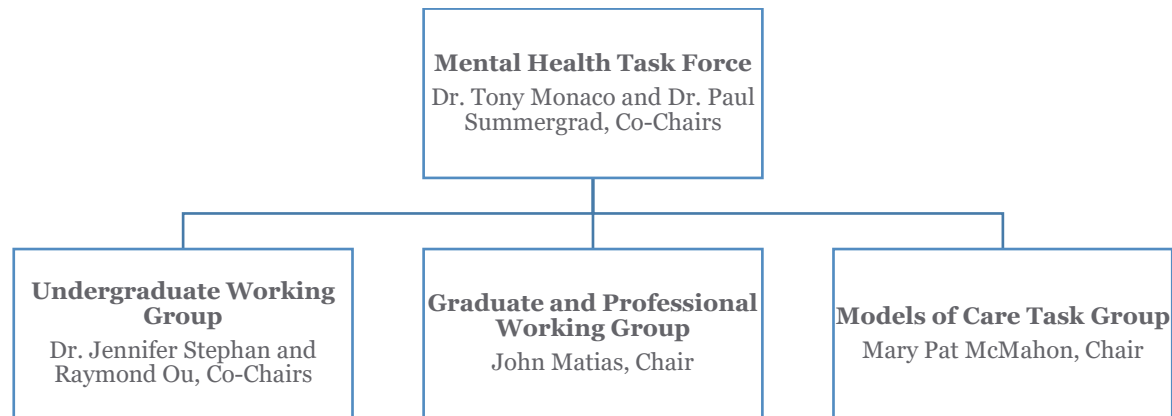
This report reflects the collaborative efforts of the Mental Health Task Force, the Task Force's working groups, and many members of the Tufts community, including students. Partners across the university have already begun efforts to implement many of the recommendations included in this report. Early implementation efforts are also briefly described in the sections below where applicable. (See Appendix B: Mental Health Task Force Timeline for a detailed outline of the Task Force's efforts.)

The Task Force was co-chaired by President Monaco and Dr. Paul Summergrad, who serves as the Dr. Frances S. Arkin Professor and Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at Tufts University School of Medicine, the Psychiatrist-in-Chief at Tufts Medical Center, and is a past President of the American Psychiatric Association.

The full Task Force was complemented by an Undergraduate Working Group (UWG) focused on undergraduate students, a Graduate and Professional Working Group (GPWG) focused on graduate and professional students across the university, and a Models of Care (MoC) task group focused on clinical services available on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses. The working groups allowed a broader range of stakeholders to participate in the work of Task Force. (See Appendix C: Mental Health Task Force and Working Group Members and Collaborators for a full list of students, faculty, and staff involved in the Task Force's efforts.)

The UWG was co-chaired by Dr. Jennifer Stephan, dean of academic advising and undergraduate studies at the School of Engineering, and Raymond Ou, former senior associate dean of student affairs for the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering. The GPWG was chaired by John Matias, associate dean of admissions and enrollment at the School of Medicine. The MoC task group was chaired by Mary Pat McMahon, former dean of student affairs for the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering.

Figure 1. Organization and Leadership of the Mental Health Task Force



Our Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses are home to undergraduate and graduate programs in the School of Arts and Sciences (including the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University), the School of Engineering and its graduate program, and graduate programs at The Fletcher School. Our graduate and professional programs in the health sciences take place in the School of Dental Medicine (TUSDM), School of Medicine (TUSM), Sackler School of Graduate Biomedical Sciences, and Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy on the Boston health sciences campus and at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine in Grafton.

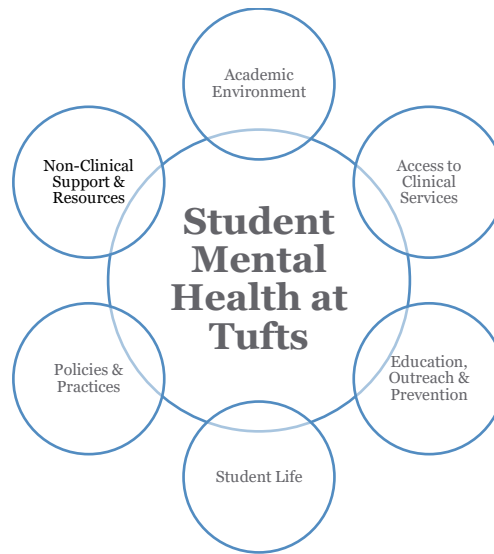
Working Group Process

Undergraduate Working Group

The UWG was established in spring 2017; working group members included students, faculty, and staff at the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering (AS&E). (See Appendix C for a complete list of all three working group members.) In the spring of 2017, the UWG focused its efforts on student engagement and outreach. The primary goals of student outreach were to introduce the Mental Health Task Force to the student population, explain the purpose and charge of the Task Force, and obtain qualitative data on the student mental health issues, needs, and priorities at Tufts. (See Appendix D: Undergraduate Working Group Outreach for a list of listening sessions and outreach activities.)

A thematic summary was compiled of recurring themes and concerns generated from student engagement. The themes reflect the concerns, needs, and recommendations that students expressed with regard to their personal mental health as well as that of the broader campus. The themes went beyond clinical services to include topics such as relationships with faculty, residential life experience, family pressures, and campus community. University policies and practices such as leave of absence policies, return from hospitalization policies, financial aid, and accommodations generated passionate feedback from students during these sessions. Major themes included: access to clinical services, academic environment, student life, non-clinical support and resources, policies and practices, and education, outreach, and prevention (Figure 2). These themes are described in greater detail in the findings and recommendations of this report.

Figure 2. Major Themes from Student Engagement



Given the strong student interest in policies and practices evident in the listening sessions, during the summer and fall of 2017, the group conducted an in-depth review of AS&E administrative and academic policies and practices that intersect with student mental health. In addition to reviewing policies at Tufts and peer institutions, the group also consulted with relevant departments and administrative leaders to better understand intersecting considerations such as financial aid, academic accommodations, and unique issues for international students.

In the fall of 2017, the UWG developed 16 draft policy recommendations. The co-chairs of the UWG presented the findings and objectives of its policy recommendations to the full Task Force in October 2017. In December 2017, the Task Force accepted the UWG's recommendations and agreed to engage relevant university stakeholders working toward advancing the recommendations. The UWG co-chairs engaged AS&E faculty and staff on draft policy recommendations through presentations and discussions at a series of meetings with faculty and academic leaders in spring 2018. (See Appendix D for a full list of UWG's outreach to faculty and staff.)

Efforts to advance and refine draft recommendations, exploration with stakeholders of solutions to challenges identified, and early implementation of recommendations are ongoing as detailed the sections on findings and recommendations.

Graduate and Professional Working Group

The GPWG was established in the spring of 2017; the working group comprised members from seven schools and across three campuses. (See Appendix C.) Initially, the GPWG conducted an inventory on the resources and services available to graduate and professional students at all eight schools spread across four campuses. Recognizing the lack of uniform data collection across all the schools on student mental health and well-being, the GPWG explored survey options to collect benchmarking data.

During the 2017–18 academic year, the GPWG focused on three activities: data collection, community engagement, and policy review. In November 2017, the Healthy Minds Survey was

administered to students on the health sciences campuses to collect baseline data equivalent to what was already available from surveys on the Medford/Somerville campus. Working group members and staff supporting the GPWG hosted 15 listening sessions for students in Boston, Grafton, and Medford/Somerville. The themes and recurring concerns from the listening sessions served as qualitative data to inform and support the recommendations of the GPWG. Although some of the challenges differed for the graduate and professional student population, with the exception of Policies and Practices, all of the major themes from listening sessions with undergraduate students (see Figure 2) generated significant feedback from graduate and professional students as well. These themes are described in greater detail in the findings and recommendations of this report.

In the spring and summer of 2018, the GPWG divided into two smaller groups to dive deeper into the resources and needs for campus specific communities, one group focused on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses and the other focused on the health sciences campuses. The GPWG engaged the student affairs leaders on the health sciences campuses in a series of meetings focused on student needs, on-campus resources, barriers to accessing clinical resources, and options for establishing some clinical services on the Boston health sciences campus. In early autumn 2018, the GPWG received and reviewed results from the Healthy Minds Survey and drafted and refined its recommendations.

Models of Care Task Group

During the summer of 2017, the Task Force established the Models of Care (MoC) task group. The purpose of the MoC task group was to investigate alternative models of care to meet the increasing volume and complexity of mental health care needs of students on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses by paying particular attention to clinical services and researching best practices /national exemplars.

Members of the MoC task group included faculty and staff engaged in roles that support student mental health or with clinical expertise. The MoC task group held four formal retreats and several focused small group meetings during the 2017–2018 academic year. During the retreats, the MoC task group explored topics ranging from national trends in college student mental health, best practices at peer institutions, utilization trends at Counseling and Mental Health Services (CMHS) and other campus resources, the scope of care at CMHS, off-campus referral practices, health insurance, communications and outreach strategies, and telehealth innovations.

In the spring of 2018, the MoC task group developed draft recommendations, began engaging leadership in the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering on the feasibility expanding certain resources to support their recommendations, and began vetting vendors to enhance referral capabilities. At the same time, CMHS promoted telehealth options available through BetterHelp and iHope. Efforts to refine draft recommendations, explore solutions to challenges identified with stakeholders, and early implementation of recommendations continued through the summer and fall of 2018.

Data Sources and Evidence

To support the Task Force and its working groups' findings, deliberations, and recommendations, members relied on the following quantitative data sources on Tufts students:

- Healthy Minds Survey
- American College Health Association—National College Health Assessment

- Insurance utilization data from UnitedHealth
- Utilization data from on-campus services and resources including: CMHS, Health Services, Student Accessibility Services, Deans of Students, Tufts University Police Department, Ears for Peers, AllOne Health, Student Advisory and Health Administration, and Student Wellness Advising

On the Medford/Somerville campus, Health and Wellness Services and CMHS have collected data on student health and well-being for more than a decade through the Healthy Minds Survey and the American College Health Association—National College Health Assessment. One unique challenge identified early in the Task Force’s work by the GPWG was the lack of uniform university-wide data collection on student health and well-being for graduate and professional student populations. Under the auspices of the Task Force, the Healthy Minds Survey was administered on the Boston and Grafton campuses in the fall of 2017. The Healthy Minds Survey was also administered as regularly scheduled on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses in spring 2018; this was the first time the Healthy Minds Survey has been administered since the SMFA became part of the School of Arts and Sciences.

Other data sources informing the work of the Task Force included:

- Thematic summaries of listening sessions with students
- Written comments submitted via e-mail and online by members of the Tufts community
- Consultations with peer institutions and professional associations such as EAB, New England College Health Association, and the Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors
- In-depth literature review of college mental health trends and service delivery modalities and evidence-based intervention strategies

The major findings and recommendations presented here outline a multifaceted strategy to supporting student mental health. The findings and recommendations are organized thematically in line with the Task Force charge. (For a summary of Task Force recommendations, see Appendix E.)

Findings and Recommendations: Education, Outreach, and Mental Health Promotion

Student Life Experience

Establishing a cohesive and welcoming community at Tufts is a priority, as periods of transition during a student's academic career are sometimes challenging and may take a toll on student mental health and emotional well-being. There are two key time periods that undergraduate students described as being particularly challenging: the first-year experience and returning to campus following time away for study abroad or a leave of absence. For graduate and professional students, periods of transition of note include returning to an academic setting after taking time off between undergraduate and graduate/professional studies and, for professional students, shifting from the pre-clinical to the clinical phase of their training.

The transition to college life is challenging for many first-year and transfer students. Students arrive on campus with a wide range of academic and social skills, experiences, and expectations. For many first-year students, the transition to campus life comes with independence and new responsibilities like managing personal finances, health, and well-being and prioritizing academic and social obligations. Some students have not yet developed help-seeking behaviors and time-management and stress management skills to cope with the stressors of a rigorous academic environment and campus life. Undergraduate students who did not participate in Pre-Orientation programs expressed difficulty transitioning to campus life and described feeling left behind and disconnected from peers who established friend groups during Pre-Orientation.

Many graduate and professional students relocate to study at Tufts, leaving behind established support networks.

Among undergraduate and graduate/professional students alike, some students with pre-existing mental health conditions stop taking their medication when they arrive on campus. Discontinuing medication without supervision can make adjusting to campus life more difficult and may have unintended consequences on a student's health and well-being, academics, and ability to make social connections, including clinical relapse.

During the listening sessions, undergraduate students identified intersecting themes between student life, campus climate, and student mental health and well-being. Many of the themes raised here are being addressed through implementation of the recommendations of the Student Life Review Committee and the ongoing work of the Dean of Student Affairs Office and the chief diversity officers.

While acknowledging that events sponsored by the Office of Campus Life are substance-free, students shared frustration that so many other social events on campus often seem to revolve around and promote the use of alcohol. Some students raised concern that their peers may use alcohol and marijuana to cope with stress and numb mental health concerns. Micro-aggressions experienced in the classroom and on campus are emotionally taxing on students of diverse backgrounds. Students involved in social justice advocacy experience "burn-out." The polarized political climate is anxiety producing for some students and creates tension when students are still developing the skills to engage across differences. Breaks throughout the academic calendar year are especially isolating for international students when there are fewer peers on campus. In research-based settings, some female graduate students voiced concerns of feelings isolation and frustration with a lack of professionalism in male-dominated labs. Doctoral students

expressed fear of retaliation from faculty supervisors if they raised concerns about climate or harassment.

RECOMMENDATION: The Task Force supports the recommendations of the Student Life Review Committee and continued implementation of changes to undergraduate orientation and residential life aimed at enhancing community and the first-year experience.

Implementation Progress: During the time the Task Force has been at work, the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering have made significant progress implementing the recommendations of the Student Life Review Committee—deepening orientation programming for incoming undergraduates, developing a more intentional and cohesive residential experience, developing new social spaces, and further strengthening programs to support meaningful inclusion for all students, including those from historically underrepresented, first-generation and low-income cohorts.

RECOMMENDATION: Explore the possibility of developing a 100-level course for first-year undergraduate students around mental health and well-being. Many other colleges and universities are piloting different models of for-credit first year courses to cultivate healthy relationships, self-care, and resiliency, and foster emotional intelligence. Happiness 101¹ and THRIVE: Foundations of Well-being² have proven to be immensely popular and impactful among students at Yale and the University of Southern California, respectively. Pennsylvania State University, the University of Virginia, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison have come together for the Student Flourishing Initiative, collaborating as part of an initial pilot program for first-year students.

Approximately 40% of Tufts undergraduates choose to study abroad for a semester or year, in destinations around the globe. Additionally, many graduate and professional students engage in study and/or research at international sites during their time at Tufts. Many students find study abroad to be a transformative experience; however, study abroad experiences may compound underlying emotional or mental health challenges for some students, and sometimes students are exposed to new trauma while abroad. It can be difficult to find a mental health provider while studying abroad. Cultural norms and attitudes toward mental health, and navigating health care in a foreign country, may prevent students from accessing the care they need. Some students find it difficult to adjust back to campus life after being away following a study abroad experience. Tufts Global Education (formerly Tufts Program Abroad Office) includes mental health, self-care, and wellness as a central component to their pre-departure, in-country orientation, in-country support services, and return programming.

RECOMMENDATION: The Task Force encourages continued attention to mental health issues faced by students undertaking study and research abroad.

Academic Environment

Throughout the Task Force's efforts, students, faculty, and staff all expressed concern about a campus culture where stress is normalized. Students described a campus culture that glorifies

¹ Moore, Angela. "[Happiness 101: Psychology course strikes chord with Yale students.](#)" *Health News*. March 18, 2018. REUTERS. Web. September 20, 2018

² Lindberg, Eric. "[New Course on thriving at USC and beyond earns rave reviews.](#)" USC News. February 14, 2019. Web. July 23, 2019.

long hours and all-nighters. Students who participated in mindfulness programming through the Chaplaincy or Health Services and time management programming through the Academic Resource Center (ARC) described positive outcomes with respect to stress management.

Sources of stress described by graduate and professional students include academic performance, competition, transitioning to a new city, personal finances, career prospects, work-life balance, time management, and family responsibilities. Although time management and stress management were among the top concerns cited by Fletcher students, the Graduate and Professional Working Group found that Fletcher students do not have access to time management programming offered through the ARC.

Programs at Tufts are academically demanding; academic stress often precipitates student mental health concerns. Academic performance and student mental health are intertwined. Seventy percent of students on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses and 65% of students on the health sciences campuses indicated that emotional or mental difficulties have hurt their academic performance.³

Until recently, there has been much less literature about graduate and professional student mental health than about undergraduate issues. High stakes associated with the schedule of board and qualifying exams can make it difficult for students to take time off necessary to tend to personal and health needs. Nationwide, professional degree programs are increasingly incorporating mental health and well-being programming into the curriculum and viewing it as essential to students' professional development. Recognizing the intersection between student mental health and the academic environment, in recent years TUSM, TUSDM, and Cummings School have made curricular changes to reduce stress while maintaining the integrity of the academic rigor of their programs.

The experience of PhD students is unique since they wear different hats over the course of their academic program—student, teaching assistant, research assistant, etc. Especially in STEM fields, the PhD experience is highly competitive. The academic environment is demanding and perpetuates bad habits, glorifying long hours and normalizing stress. Doctoral students described mixed experiences with primary investigators. The relationship with a principal investigator (PI) or advisor affects not only the quality of training, but also students' career outlook and emotional well-being. Positive mentor relationships are critical to student success.⁴

The Task Force found that there is no formal training university-wide required for faculty and staff on supporting student mental health. Across the university, faculty and staff expressed an interest in deepening their understanding of student mental health and knowledge of how to appropriately support students and make referrals.

RECOMMENDATION: Taking a community health approach, the Task Force encourages the schools and academic departments to consider ways to reduce stress, support student development, and promote healthier behaviors. Strategies may include:

- Avoiding scheduling of course work during designated “open blocks.”
- Enhancing communication and coordination of high-stake deadlines of assignments and exams within departments to reduce stress when feasible.

³ Healthy Minds Survey, 2017 - 2018.

⁴ Tsia, J. & Muidi, F. “Towards sustaining a culture of mental health and wellness for trainees in the biosciences,” *Nature Biotechnology*. Vol. 34, November 3, 2016.

- Participating in social-emotional learning training and curriculum development offered through Tisch College and CELT.

RECOMMENDATION: To cultivate a supportive and informed university community, the Task Force recommends that schools enhance training opportunities for faculty and staff to deepen their knowledge about student mental health. Strategies may include:

- Adopting evidence-based online training tools.
- Expanding gatekeeper training opportunities.
- Enhancing professional development training for PIs on managing research settings and mentorship.
- Improving online resources for faculty and staff to ensure easy access, consistency, and accurate information on campus resources, policies, and practices to support students with mental health concerns.

Implementation Progress: Health and Wellness Service is working with university leaders to identify and implement a pilot of an online training tool for faculty and staff to deepen their knowledge of student mental health and campus resources.

RECOMMENDATION: Recognizing stress management and time management as among the top concerns by Fletcher students, the Task Force recommends the exploration of the feasibility of extending services at the ARC to include Fletcher students.

Mental Health Awareness and Stigma Reduction

University-Wide

Healthy Minds data suggests that stigma surrounding mental health treatment is lower at Tufts than the national average.⁵ However, concerns about stigma and confidentiality were prevalent topics of discussion during listening sessions and identified as a barrier to help seeking. Students of color and international students raised heightened concerns about stigma within their communities. Student groups such as Ears for Peers and Active Minds on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses, and Cummings Thrive on the Grafton campus play a vital role in stigma reduction and mental health awareness. Recent research suggests that student-run mental health promotion and education efforts have a positive impact on the mental health climate on college campuses.⁶

RECOMMENDATION: The Task Force recommends that the university strengthen partnerships with student leaders on mental health awareness campaigns, outreach, and wellness activities. Provide and promote gatekeeper training opportunities to student leaders across the university.

Graduate and professional students expressed significant concerns about stigma and confidentiality throughout the listening sessions and in response to open-ended questions included in the Healthy Minds survey. The most common concerns raised included:

- Difficulty requesting time off from supervisors to attend appointments during the day

⁵ Healthy Minds Survey, 2017–2018.

⁶ Strengthening College Students' Mental Health Knowledge, Awareness, and Helping Behaviors: The Impact of Active Minds, a Peer Mental Health Organization, *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry* 2018; 57(7):500–507. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2018.03.019>

- Apprehensions that revealing mental health or emotional well-being challenges to advisors or supervisors might have a negative impact on professional or academic opportunities
- Concerns about how mental health treatment might impact an individual's eligibility for a federal security clearance or professional licensure

RECOMMENDATION: The Task Force recommends the schools develop consistent stigma reduction programming with an emphasis on graduate and professional students to reduce barriers to help-seeking and promote mental health as a life skill necessary to succeed in their prospective fields. Topics for special attention include confidentiality, providing reliable and current information regarding mental health concerns related to professional licensing and the security clearance process.

Boston Health Sciences Campus

Student Wellness Advising and Health Promotions is the primary source of mental health promotion efforts on the Boston health sciences campus. Student Wellness Advising and Health Promotions is staffed by one full-time wellness advisor responsible for all of the health promotion, wellness programming, advising, and referral support for students across the Boston health sciences campus.

RECOMMENDATION: To bolster and better support the health promotions programming and wellness advising offered through Student Wellness Advising and Health Promotions, the Graduate and Professional Working Group recommends increasing administrative support through a designated administrator or coordinator.

Grafton Campus

Seminars with a focus on mental health promotion are offered throughout the academic year by All One Health, the on-site mental health provider for veterinary students. In addition, as of spring 2018, a part-time donor-funded wellness advisor is providing wellness and health promotion programming tailored for the needs of veterinary students on the Grafton campus.

RECOMMENDATION: Following the pilot year of programming offered by the wellness advisor at Cummings School, the Task Force recommends that the school evaluate the effectiveness of the programming in the context of a long-term health promotion strategy for veterinary students.

Implementation Progress: The Cummings leadership is developing a strategy to fund the wellness advisor role moving forward.

Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA Campuses

Health and wellness promotion efforts on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses are shared across several campus partners. The Models of Care task group found that there is not currently a dedicated position focused solely on mental health outreach and education. CMHS's current structure has a model of shared responsibility for on-campus mental health outreach and training. Most clinicians participate in a robust liaison program with key departments, both academic and cocurricular. A smaller team of clinicians share responsibility for routinely conducting campus gatekeeper trainings with student leaders, faculty, coaches,

teaching assistants and research assistants, department chairs, and other faculty and staff. Because of the high demand for clinical services, clinical staff must prioritize treatment over programming.

RECOMMENDATION: Hire a dedicated mental health outreach and education specialist for the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses. This position would help streamline and facilitate mental health outreach and training while also realigning competing demands on clinical staff at CMHS.

Communications and Outreach

The Task Force found that outreach and communications efforts across the university are localized and mostly take place at the school level. Eighty-nine percent of students on the Grafton campus, 77% of students on the Boston health sciences campus and 85% of students on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses indicated that they knew where to seek professional health for mental or emotional health concerns.⁷

In listening sessions, AS&E undergraduate and graduate students reported some degree of confusion around CMHS's short-term treatment model, as well as concerns about finding ongoing and/or longer-term clinician support off campus. Listening sessions illustrated uncertainty among graduate students on the Medford/Somerville campus related to which resources on campus are specific to particular student populations, whether school-specific or campus-wide. During listening sessions, students conveyed frustration with difficulty navigating related Tufts websites and pages to find the information they were looking for related to mental health services and support.

RECOMMENDATION: Expand communications efforts to ensure that new and returning Tufts students have consistent and accurate information and awareness of resources available through the university. Strategies may include:

- Collaboration among schools on each campus to develop cohesive and consistent communication strategies to improve knowledge of the scope of resources available and improve access to online information and tools.
- Include parents and families of undergraduate students in the distribution of information about mental health, and provide consistent outreach.
- Improve health and wellness related websites to more clearly outline support structures in and beyond CMHS; improve search function and present more comprehensive information online about services and resources available to support students.

Implementation Progress: Since the summer of 2018, schools have been collaborating to improve communications strategies. Examples include:

- DOSA has proactively included content around mental health resources and related topics in its monthly Parent Newsletter.
- DOSA and CMHS added Facebook Live sessions for incoming students and families, in addition to longstanding programming on student mental health during orientation and Parents and Family Weekend.

⁷ Healthy Minds Survey, 2017–2018

Findings and Recommendations: Services and Resources

University-Wide

At Tufts, resources and services to support student mental health, well-being, and personal development are primarily offered at the school level. (See Appendix F: Overview of Current Services and Resources for a description of the wide-range of services and resources available across the university that intersect with and support student mental health and well-being.) Although there are some services available at the university-wide or campus-wide level, currently there is not a university-wide approach to supporting student mental health and related resources.

RECOMMENDATION: Recognizing student mental health and well-being as a university-wide priority, the Task Force recommends further exploration of the potential to develop an Integrated Wellness Outreach Center to promote holistic student health, mindfulness, nutrition, and well-being across the university. Such an initiative could support a fundamental transformation of mental health and wellness promotion at Tufts.

Within the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering, and at Cummings School, donors have shared an interest in supporting innovative programs to advance student mental health and wellness. The Task Force is encouraged by these developments and hopes that additional private funding can be secured to support this work going forward.

RECOMMENDATION: Engage University Advancement to explore opportunities for philanthropic support to advance initiatives in mental and behavioral health and wellness.

Across the university, our students have demanding and challenging schedules. Lack of time is the top reason students don't access mental health care. Research has shown promising outcomes for online therapeutic services for individuals presenting with a wide variety of mental health issues, including anxiety, stress, and depression, which are the most common presenting issues in college mental health.⁸ Since the fall of 2017, students on the health insurance plans offered by the university have been able to access BetterHelp, an online counseling platform, without charge.

RECOMMENDATION: Recognizing the demanding schedules of students across the university and challenges finding local community providers, the Task Force supports the further adoption of evidence-based telehealth resources where feasible. Telehealth resources have the potential to expand access to care for students in remote clinical locations, studying abroad, on break, or unable to find a community provider that meets their scheduling needs. As with any new treatment modality, implementation should be accompanied by ongoing monitoring for efficacy.

Implementation Progress: In addition to BetterHelp, which is available for free to students on the Tufts' Student Health Insurance plan, beginning in the fall of 2018 CMHS began promoting telehealth resources available through iHope. The iHope counseling service is accepted by most major insurance plans, including Tufts' Student Health Insurance plan. iHope bills students for a copay

⁸ See telehealth.org/blog/telemedicine-peter-yellowlees-md; Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, Vol. 12, 2016. See also www.apa.org/monitor/2017/11/trends-technology.aspx

according to their insurance plan. CMHS has developed a webpage with FAQs and other helpful information on telehealth.

Boston Health Sciences Campus

There is no on-site health service on the Boston health sciences campus. Students enrolled in Schools on the Boston health sciences campus must seek mental health care and primary health care through local community providers. Although the Boston health sciences campus is located adjacent to Tufts Medical Center – the principal teaching hospital for Tufts University School of Medicine – and many Tufts graduate and professional students access care there. They can still experience barriers accessing mental health care in the local community. In particular, due to LCME accreditation requirements, medical students may not receive treatment from medical providers affiliated with TUSM who may be involved with their academic evaluations.

More than half of the students studying on the Boston health sciences campus come from outside of Massachusetts, and many are international students.⁹ Many graduate and professional students do not have a local primary care physician. Some students with out-of-state health insurance policies have difficulty finding local providers who will accept their insurance. Other students with MassHealth experience long wait times for Boston area providers. 41% of Boston health sciences students are enrolled in the health plan offered by the university. Of the students enrolled in the university health plan, 7% utilized their insurance to access mental health providers.¹⁰

The top barriers to help-seeking identified by health sciences students include lack of time, financial concerns, difficulty finding an available appointment, and uncertainty where to go.¹¹ The lack of on-site counseling services on the Boston health sciences campus has made us an outlier compared to peer institutions with similar health sciences campuses.

RECOMMENDATION: Encourage students to identify a primary care physician in the local community to improve access to health care when needs arise.

Implementation Progress: During the summer of 2018, the Boston health sciences schools collaborated to send messages to incoming students that clearly outlined the need for them to find local community health care providers on arrival in Boston.

RECOMMENDATION: Enhance communications around health insurance options to help students make informed decision when selecting a health plan to meet their needs.

RECOMMENDATION: Evolving trends in graduate and professional student expectations, the prevalence of mental health needs among students, and increasing attention to the mental health needs of medical,¹² dental, and STEM graduate students¹³ not just during their

⁹ Tufts University Fact Book 2017-2018, Geographic Distribution of Students by State/Territory Fall 2017, pg. 91

¹⁰ Student Advisory & Health Administration Office, Data for AY 2017 - 2018

¹¹ Healthy Minds Survey, Fall 2017 Health Sciences

¹² Karp and Levine. “[Mental Health Services for Medical Students—Time to Act.](#)” *New England Journal of Medicine* 379:13. 28 September 2018.

¹³ Evans, Bira et. al. “[Evidence for a mental health crisis in graduate education.](#)” *Nature Biotechnology*. 36:3. March 2018.

academic pursuits but also as part of their professional success suggests a greater need for an on-site counseling service to support graduate and professional student mental health and well-being. The Task Force recommends that leaders on the Boston health sciences campus explore modalities to establish an on-site counseling service on the campus. In the longer term, the Task Force recommends establishing a designated space for health and wellness for on-site resources and programming that is easily accessible for students on the Boston health sciences campus. Campus leadership should continue to assess, the quality, efficacy and availability of resources including psychiatrists and nurse practitioners.

Implementation Progress: During the summer of 2018, academic and administrative leaders on the Boston health sciences campus began discussions about the need for an on-site counseling resource for graduate and professional students on that campus. After exploring several possible models for an on-site counseling resource, leaders on the Boston health sciences campus have partnered with AllOne Health to offer on-site counseling resources. On April 1, 2019, an on-site counseling resource, TalkOne2One, was launched on the Boston health sciences campus.

Across the university, the Tufts University Police Department (TUPD) is a vital community partner in responding to students in distress during emergency situations, however, the Task Force found that the Boston health sciences is the only campus without access to a designated 24/7 hotline for students in distress to reach and receive guidance from a licensed clinician.

RECOMMENDATION: The Task Force recommends that a 24/7 telephonic service be made available for students in distress to access a licensed clinician for the Boston health sciences campus.

Implementation Progress: Beginning April 1, 2019, a 24/7 telephonic counseling service became available for students on the Boston health sciences campus through the TalkOne2One program.

Grafton Campus

Over the past three years, the leaders at Cummings School have made significant efforts to enhance services and resources to support students on the Grafton campus by housing a range of clinical and non-clinical resources to support student development and well-being in the Cummings Support Center. The creation of the Cummings Behavioral Health Service, beginning in fall 2015, was received well by students; approximately 21% of students on the Grafton campus utilize the on-site counseling service.

RECOMMENDATION: The Task Force is encouraged by the positive responses among Cummings students to the on-site clinical services offered on the Grafton campus. The Task Force encourages the school leadership to continue to evaluate the utilization and success of those on-site services.

Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA Campuses

Students on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses have access to expert onsite clinical services to support mental health. The clinical team includes psychologists, social workers, licensed mental health clinicians, and a psychiatry department staffed by one senior

psychiatrist and two clinical nurse specialists. Healthy Minds Survey data indicate high levels of student satisfaction with the quality of care at CMHS: 89–90% of Healthy Minds respondents who had utilized CMHS reported that they were satisfied with the quality of the therapists they saw.¹⁴

Consistent with college counseling services on most campuses across the country, CMHS utilizes a “brief model” of assessment and counseling, which typically focuses on helping students to effect a desired change or goal. Services offered at CMHS are free to students; providing services at no charge is critical for reducing barriers to accessing care for college students. With the exception of peak periods during the academic year, most students are able to schedule appointments at CMHS within a week. Urgent appointments are available at CMHS daily. Over the past several years, the demand for urgent and triage appointments has increased.

Under Tufts’ brief care model, CMHS does not have a predetermined maximum number of sessions per student. The mean number of one-on-one sessions at CMHS per student in AY 2017–2018 was three, and in AY 2018–2019 the mean was four. The decision about whether or not the needs of a student fall within the scope of clinical care of CMHS is usually made after an initial meeting with a counselor. Students who utilize CMHS clinicians’ services and need or desire more frequent or longer-term treatment are generally referred to a local provider for ongoing care.

Currently, 28% of Medford-based undergraduate and graduate students utilize on-campus counseling services each year; in AY 2018–2019, 78% of CMHS clients were undergraduates and 22% were graduate students. The Healthy Minds survey indicates that another eight to 10% utilize local community-based mental health providers each year. First-year students have the highest utilization rates among undergraduate students.

The demographics of students utilizing CMHS are reflective of the diverse student populations on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses. (See Appendix G: Demographics of CMHS Clientele.) While on many college campuses it has proven challenging to connect students from underrepresented communities with mental health services, students from historically underrepresented groups access CMHS services at rates equal to or exceeding utilization in the student population as a whole. CMHS recognizes that mental health practices have a history of prejudice and discrimination based on sex, gender identity and expression, ethnicity, race, sexual/affectional orientation, age, physical and mental abilities, size, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic class. Since such discrimination has historically affected the way mental health issues were defined and the way people received care, CMHS acknowledges a responsibility to work toward the recognition and elimination of prejudicial attitudes and practices.

In line with national trends,¹⁵ CMHS has seen an increase in the number of undergraduate and graduate students with significant, ongoing clinical needs. Between fall 2015 and fall 2017, the Medford/Somerville Counseling and Mental Health Service (CMHS) saw a 60% increase in new

¹⁴ Healthy Minds Survey, 2015–2016 and Healthy Minds Survey, 2017–2018

¹⁵ According to the Annual Report, Center for Collegiate Mental Health, 2015, “on average [between 2009–10 and 2014–15 academic years], [the] institutional enrollment [of 93 surveyed colleges and universities] grew by 5.6%.” Concurrently, “the number of students seeking [counseling] services increased by 29.6%, and the number of attended appointments increased by 38.4%.” See also Reilly, Katie. “Record Numbers of College Students Are Seeking Treatment for Depression and Anxiety—But Schools Can’t Keep Up.” *TIME* Magazine. March 19, 2018. *TIME* Web. September 20, 2018. See also Annual Report, Center for Collegiate Mental Health, 2016.

student intake sessions in the fall semester and 40% increase in utilization overall. Anxiety and depression are the most frequent issues at intake. CMHS saw a sharp increase in students presenting with suicidal ideation from fall 2015 to fall 2018. Seventy-five percent of students utilizing CMHS report prior mental health treatment.

All Tufts students are required to have health insurance coverage that meets the minimum coverage requirements set by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The university offers a comprehensive plan for undergraduate and graduate students and, if needed, their spouses and children through UnitedHealthcare StudentResources, one of the largest student health insurance providers in the country. Twenty-five to 30% of undergraduates and the majority of graduate students purchase health insurance through the university offered plan, which is coordinated by Health and Wellness Services. The university has endeavored to ensure that the plan offered to our students is as comprehensive as possible. To reduce the financial burden on students who may seek mental services off-campus, the in-network co-pay for appointments was reduced to \$5 starting in AY 2018–19.

While there are many local providers in the Medford/Somerville area, many factors can inhibit or prevent a student from continuing treatment with a provider in the local community. These factors include whether or not the provider takes the student's insurance, the proximity of a provider's office to campus and/or the student's residence, the availability of appointment hours that match the student's course schedule, the preference of the student for a provider with a particular identity or identities, and the areas of specialization in the provider's practice. Many clinicians do not accept insurance, which can pose a financial barrier to accessing care.

RECOMMENDATION: Enhance referral processes at CMHS to better support students seeking ongoing mental health treatment from local community based providers.

Implementation Progress: Implementation efforts to strengthen referral processes and connection with local community providers are underway. Examples of those efforts include:

- A comprehensive review of CMHS' referral database of local providers was completed during the summer of 2018. As a result of the review and outreach, six additional local community providers were added to Tufts insurance for the 2018–19 academic year.
- Over the summer of 2018, CMHS explored a partnership with Thriving Campus, a tool that directs students and staff to local clinicians. During the spring of 2019, CMHS piloted Thriving Campus with for clinical staff; the tool is currently undergoing required accessibility improvements before it is available to students.
- To improve community provider awareness of the unique challenges and needs of Tufts students, between May and August 2018, CMHS hosted three open house sessions with local community providers.

RECOMMENDATION: To meet a greater portion of our students' needs on campus the Task Force recommends increasing capacity at CMHS through establishing and meeting preferred on-campus clinician-to-student ratio by hiring additional clinicians, enhancing group therapy offerings, and extending clinical hours to include evening hours.

Implementation Progress: CMHS, Health Services, and DOSA continue to explore ways to increase our capacity to serve students at CMHS; the following implementation strategies are in process:

- During the fall of 2018, CMHS piloted offering extended hours. Extended hours were continued into the spring semester. CMHS will offer extended hours one evening per week during AY 19–20.
- During the spring of 2019, CMHS piloted offering same-day appointments during the busy end-of-year period with 45-minute same-day sessions. These same day-sessions are designed to be one-time, goal-oriented counseling sessions focused on a specific concern. The pilot of rapid access appointments was very successful and received positive feedback from students. CMHS plans to offer primarily rapid access appointments in AY 19–20 during high-need periods at the beginning and end of each semester and a mix of appointment types including same-day appointments throughout the year.
- CMHS continues to offer a limited number of urgent/same-day appointments throughout the academic year.
- A dedicated graduate student group therapy offer was established in spring 2018 and continued in AY 18–19. The group meets in the evenings, when a greater number of graduate students are available. The graduate student group therapy offering has been well attended and has been well received by graduate students.
- In response to concerns by graduate students—with teaching relationships with undergraduate students—of being seen in the waiting room at CMHS, CMHS staff are now also available for appointments at Health Services.

CMHS is a division of Health and Wellness Service, which also includes the Health Service. The Health Service and CMHS are committed to strong collaboration in support of student health and well-being.

Clinicians at CMHS bring to their work a broad range of educational and professional backgrounds, theoretical orientations, and clinical interests. In addition to counseling, services include diagnostic assessments and initial assessments for interventions with medications as well as ongoing management and monitoring of psychiatric medication.

Referrals to the CMHS psychiatry service may be made through the CMHS counseling service or from an off-campus therapist. CMHS and Health and Wellness Service has seen a 33% increase in new medication patients over academic years from 2015–2016 to 2017–2018. Additionally, many students receive medication management from home or off-campus providers. Data from the most recent Healthy Minds survey indicate that 21% of students on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses have used a psychiatric medication in the past year. While CMHS psychiatric staff are able to meet the current volume of requests for on-campus medication management, leadership recognizes the importance of ongoing assessment of staffing levels to support continued psychiatric consultation with CMHS leadership as well as direct patient care.

CMHS is committed to ongoing assessment of treatment effectiveness and to continuing professional development for its team, given both changing student needs and evolving best practices in care as informed by relevant research. Advances in psychiatric medication and treatment over the last generation have opened new personal and academic opportunities for many students with mental and behavioral health challenges. CMHS staffing, treatment, and policy decisions will continue to be informed by new research and best practices as the standard of care evolves.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue to evaluate operations and staffing practices at Health and Wellness Services and CMHS to reach the optimal use of clinical resources focusing on clinician backgrounds, training, and approaches to meet student mental health needs most efficiently and effectively.

CMHS faces intense competition for clinical staff in the local market, both from other colleges and universities and from a wide range of other professional opportunities including private practice. Recruiting and retaining an outstanding staff must and will remain a priority for CMHS in the face of these competitive pressures.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop and implement a retention strategy to ensure Tufts continues to retain a team of highly skilled on-campus clinicians.

Over the past three academic years, Student Affairs and CMHS have jointly supported an average of 34 mental health-related hospitalizations for AS&E undergraduate and graduate students, a 70% increase from the average of the prior three years. The majority of hospitalizations are initiated by students or their families and/or outpatient clinicians. Three-quarters of students who are hospitalized resume their studies within two weeks' time with support from CMHS and/or a local provider, Student Affairs staff and their advising dean. Others, after hospitalization, choose to engage in additional outpatient or inpatient treatment during a medical leave of absence and coordinate with Student Affairs staff when they are ready to return to their studies.

Each semester, another 20-40 students elect to attend to their health needs through a medical leave in consultation with their treatment providers and Student Affairs staff. Each student's circumstances are unique and call for careful coordination of on- and off-campus resources, often in coordination with their parents and families, Advising Dean, and faculty members. Whether seeking to return to classes and campus life from a short-term hospitalization or developing a support plan to take or return from a medical leave of absence, Tufts students consistently need responsive, well-informed administrative support as they navigate these steps.

RECOMMENDATION: The Task Force recommends that the Dean of Student Affairs Office continue to evaluate staffing structures and internal processes to best to meet the needs of students with complex circumstances.

Across the university, the Deans or Offices of Student Affairs work directly with students in navigating personal and academic challenges during their times at Tufts. Those units also provide important programming to enhance the student experience, create community, and support personal growth and well-being. The Graduate and Professional Working Group found that there is a lack of student affairs infrastructure to support students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and graduate programs in the School of Engineering. Almost all support for GSAS and Engineering graduate students is provided at the program or department level. The lack of clearly defined student affairs support makes it difficult for students to navigate challenges they may face during their time as a graduate student; graduate students often seek help at CMHS or Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) for needs better suited for student affairs professionals.

RECOMMENDATION: The Task Force recommends collaboration between GSAS, the graduate programs in Engineering, and the Dean of Student Affairs Office to explore models and structures to better support the graduate student experience on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses.

Findings and Recommendations: Policies and Practices

Leave of Absence Policies

Leave of absence policies provide students with the procedures to take time off from their studies for personal or health reasons. Students with mental health needs may depart the university by taking a Medical Leave of Absence (MLOA) or Personal Leave of Absence (PLOA). Additionally, some students who take a Required Academic Withdrawal may be experiencing the effects of mental health challenges. The Task Force found that each policy has different considerations and circumstances for a student departing from and returning to Tufts. (Appendix H: Comparison of Leave Policies outlines the differences between the leave policies for undergraduate students.)

MLOA and PLOA policies and processes are set and administered by the individual schools. The following discussion surrounding leave of absence policies focuses on the MLOA and PLOA policies in place for undergraduate students in the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering.

Medical Leave of Absence

The purpose of a medical leave of absence is to allow students to take a break from campus life and their studies to more intensely address a medical or mental health condition that impacts their ability to function successfully or safely as a member of the Tufts community. All of Tufts' schools have their own MLOA policies and processes for departing and returning.

Concerns around the process of taking and returning from a medical leave of absence were one of the most frequent topics to emerge during the listening sessions with undergraduate students. Students expressed deep concerns over student rights during the return process and the transition back to campus after approval to return. Additionally, students expressed a desire for more options to permit students with mental health conditions to continue their studies while balancing treatment needs.

The Medical Leave of Absence process assumes students seeking leave are doing so voluntarily. However, in rare cases, DOSA, in consultation with health and/or counseling professionals, may determine that an involuntary medical leave is necessary for health or safety reasons. Decisions to place a student on an involuntary medical leave are based on individualized assessments of the student's ability to access and engage in their educational activities and potential health and safety risks the student may pose to themselves or other members of the Tufts community. Students placed on involuntary medical leave may appeal the dean of student affairs' decision through a grievance process.

There is no set limit on how long a student may be on medical leave. Most students who take a MLOA subsequently return to Tufts and resume their studies. Some of the benefits of taking a MLOA include:

- Personalized advising and consultation prior to taking a leave to make informed decisions about all options available to the student and a personalized plan to support the student upon return from MLOA.
- A student's medical leave status does not appear on their transcript.
- Students who leave the university during the first six weeks of classes are eligible for a refund of a percentage of tuition in accordance with the schedule set by the bursar.

- For students with tuition reimbursement insurance, a medical leave generally qualifies a student for benefits under tuition insurance plans they may carry.
- Students who have purchased the health insurance plan offered through the university are eligible to continue on the plan while on medical leave for up to one calendar year from the start of their leave.

Following a review of the MLOA exit process during the summer and fall of 2017, the Undergraduate Working Group identified the following themes and challenges:

- There are many misconceptions and myths within the community surrounding medical leaves of absence.
- The exit process is intended to be a consultative process with opportunities for students to engage and receive guidance from student affairs professionals, their advising dean, and others prior to taking MLOA.
- Although intentionally established as a consultative process, the exit process lacks structure or clarity and includes redundancies that can be frustrating or disempowering for some students.
- Need for greater coordination and collaboration between DOSA and the International Center to support international students who take a leave of absence.
- Eligibility for a tuition refund is limited to a window of several weeks at the beginning of each semester; after the refund period has passed, the financial burden of losing tuition dollars paid and financial aid used is a barrier for some who may benefit from taking a MLOA.
- Students on MLOA feel disconnected from the Tufts community because they are not permitted on campus and do not have access to Tufts e-mail while on leave.

Following a review of the MLOA return process during the summer and fall of 2017, the Undergraduate Working Group identified the following themes and challenges:

- There are many misconceptions and myths in the community about the ability of students to return from medical leave, contributing to a reluctance to make use of the policy. It is actually extremely rare that a student's request to return from MLOA is denied, and an appeals process has long been in place in the event that a student objects to a decision made by the dean of student affairs.
- Although intentionally established as a consultative process, the return process lacks clarity and includes redundancies that can be frustrating or disempowering for some students.
- The current return from MLOA process is cumbersome for both students and administrators.
- Students reported that returning from MLOA commonly led to stress with respect to housing and course registration.

RECOMMENDATION: Streamline steps necessary to exit and return from MLOA.

Strategies may include:

- Evaluate the exit and return procedures for taking medical leave to ensure students receive adequate guidance and support.
- Assess the role of external clinician evaluations of a student's readiness to return from MLOA.
- Codify internal processes for notifying the International Center when international students take a leave of absence.

- Engage stakeholders including DOSA, advising deans, the International Center, and Financial Aid to evaluate current practices for determining the effective date of medical leave applications.

Implementation Progress: During the summer of 2018, in consultation with administrative stakeholders, DOSA significantly revised the MLOA policy and associated processes to simplify the exit and return processes. DOSA will continue to assess internal processes and practices regarding the MLOA to support students' needs.

RECOMMENDATION: Explore and promote possible benefits of broader use of tuition refund insurance. Relevant issues for review may include:

- Costs, benefits, and access for students with a range of financial needs or aid situations.
- Further educating students returning from MLOA about the potential value of purchasing tuition refund insurance.
- Changing the existing “opt-in” policy to include tuition refund insurance as an “opt-out” selection.

RECOMMENDATION: Reduce barriers and stressors associated with returning from MLOA. Strategies may include:

- Consider how students may remain connected with the community while on MLOA.
- Explore the feasibility of reserving campus housing for students who may be intending to return from medical leave in future semesters and ways to assist students returning from leave with housing options.
- Consider permitting students to register for courses prior to their intended return from medical leave.

Implementation Progress: In partnership with advising deans, Tufts Student Services, and Tufts Technology Services, DOSA has made the following efforts to reduce barriers and stressors associated with returning from MLOA:

- Students on MLOA no longer lose access to their Tufts e-mail account or SIS.
- Students on MLOA no longer are prohibited from campus and may attend campus-wide events.
- In collaboration with the advising deans and Tufts Student Services, DOSA is piloting course registration for students prior to their return from MLOA.

Personal Leave of Absence

Students may take personal leave for various reasons: some examples include travel, to participate in a non-academic program, attend to a family crisis, work, or to gain a sense of direction. PLOA policies for students enrolled in graduate and professional degree programs across the university are structured, consultative, and time bound. By comparison, the current PLOA policy and practices for undergraduates lack structure and consistency to provide opportunities for students to connect with campus resources prior to taking PLOA and upon returning to the campus community.

Some undergraduate students utilize PLOA to tend to medical needs and return to campus without receiving guidance and advising about support structures that may assist students to make the transition to Tufts.

The lack of a formal exit and return process for PLOA may contribute to some students taking multiple leaves of absence and depleting their financial aid resources while not making progress toward their degree. The disparities between the return and exit processes of the MLOA and PLOA policies contribute to confusion surrounding leave of absence policies.

RECOMMENDATION: Establish procedures for personal leaves to ensure students receive guidance and support for their individual circumstances prior to and upon return from PLOA. The objectives of the new processes should be to:

- Enhance student advising prior to taking personal leave.
- Connect students with resources and support, including alternatives to taking a leave of absence.
- Support students transitioning back to Tufts after a leave of absence.
- Limit the number of times a student may take a personal leave of absence.
- Ensure greater equity between leave of absence policies by continuing to examine differences between the two and closing identified gaps.

Implementation Progress: Advising deans and relevant campus partners have begun to explore opportunities to update the Personal Leave of Absence policy and associated procedures.

Accommodations and Reduced Course Load

The university is committed to providing accommodations and services to students with disabilities in order to ensure a comprehensively accessible Tufts experience. OEO works with student affairs leaders at the various health sciences schools to provide reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Student Accessibility Services Office (SAS) provides support to 850 registered undergraduate and graduate students on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses, including The Fletcher School, with documented disabilities, more than 300 of whom are registered for reasons related to mental health.

The School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering do not offer part-time programs for undergraduate students. Some students at Tufts, however, have disabilities or conditions that may affect their ability to maintain the expected 12 or more Semester Hour Units (SHUs) per semester. Students may petition SAS for a reduced course load (RCL) as an accommodation. They must do so prior to the start of each semester; the RCL accommodation cannot be implemented retroactively. RCL may be granted with reduced tuition depending upon the number of Semester Hour Units (SHUs) taken for the semester. Additionally, the academic standing degree progress criteria are amended for students receiving an RCL accommodation.

The RCL accommodation and other accommodations offered through SAS provide support and tools to help students with mental health challenges to succeed on campus. RCL is a relatively new policy; the 2016–2017 academic year was the first full year that the policy was in place. Twelve students took advantage of this accommodation in AY16–17. Ten students utilized the RCL accommodation in AY17–18. Fifteen students utilized the RCL accommodation in AY18–19. In the fall of 2019, 18 students are utilizing the RCL accommodation. Undergraduate participants in the listening sessions were not widely familiar with SAS’s RCL policy and the

broader range of accommodations and support offered through SAS for students with mental health challenges. For eligible students, the RCL accommodation may allow for greater academic success and scheduling flexibility for students to participate in treatment while continuing their studies.

SAS is frequently a resource for students returning from a medical leave of absence. SAS can support students in the academic, housing, and transportation environments depending on their individual needs.

RECOMMENDATION: Increase awareness of Student Accessibility Services and the benefits of the Reduced Course Load policy for undergraduate students and academic accommodations available for AS&E and Fletcher students.

Academic Policies and Practices

Academic policies are set and enforced by faculty committees at the school, and in some cases program level. Many of the professional and graduate programs may also adhere to academic or technical requirements set by accreditors and professional licensing bodies. The faculty and the academic environment play an essential role in the success and well-being of our students and have a major impact on Tufts' ability to support students who may be dealing with mental health challenges.

The Undergraduate Working Group identified several academic policies and practices that intersect with student mental health. While not all students with mental health challenges also face academic difficulty, academic policies and practices that encourage help-seeking and early identification of struggling students strengthen Tufts' ability to support students effectively. Thresholds for academic intervention (academic alert and probation) may be too low to trigger early intervention. A GPA below 2.0 is a commonly used threshold to trigger academic interventions at peer institutions; the threshold for academic alert for undergraduates at Tufts has been a GPA of 1.67 or lower. Academic standing policies and academic progress policies associated with financial aid are not synchronized, putting students at risk of running out of aid before completing their degree.

Deadlines for course withdrawal in some cases allow students to postpone seeking help until late in the semester. Once a student is matriculated, the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering do not accept transfer credits from community colleges. For students on medical leave, course work at a community college may provide continued academic engagement and fulfillment. It may be cost prohibitive or geographically impossible for students on medical leave to take course work at four-year institutions.

RECOMMENDATION: Evaluate current academic policies and administrative practices to ensure early identification and intervention to help encourage struggling students to engage with resources. Relevant academic policies and practices for consideration may include:

- Academic standing criteria and academic progress policies
- Midterm notification of student performances
- Deadlines for course withdraw and incomplete policy
- Awarding credit for course work completed at a community college for students on MLOA
- Transcript treatment of courses enrolled in prior to medical leave

Implementation Progress: The Academic Standing Committees at the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering revised the academic standing criteria to include a semester GPA threshold of 2.0 and benchmarks for satisfactory credit progress, effective AY 2018–19. The Education Policy Committee adjusted the course withdrawal deadline to week 10 of the semester, effective AY 2019–20. In collaboration with the advising deans, the incomplete process has been streamlined for faculty members. Members of the Undergraduate Working Group and the advising deans continue to work with the Education Policy Committee to explore additional policy considerations.

Suicide Prevention

Suicide is recognized as the second-leading cause of death for 15-to 34-year-olds¹⁶. Suicide prevention has been and remains a critical priority at Tufts University. Important suicide prevention initiatives at the university in recent years include gatekeeper training, orientation programming, consultations with staff, students, and faculty concerned about students, and CMHS liaison relationships.

In May 2018, the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts issued an important ruling on student suicides, *Nguyen v. MIT*. The Nguyen case involved the death of a graduate student at MIT, whose family sued the school, alleging that multiple faculty and staff members knew about their son's mental health problems and thus had a duty to prevent his suicide. The court ruled in favor of MIT and its non-clinician staff and faculty members, reasoning that Nguyen's suicide was not reasonably foreseeable because no one at the school knew that he had tried to commit suicide in the past or that he had any stated plans or intentions to harm himself in the future. Generalized concerns about student well-being and stress, the court said, were insufficient to trigger a legal duty to prevent suicide.

The court concluded that colleges and universities have a responsibility to try to prevent student suicides in cases where a faculty or staff member has *actual* knowledge that a student has (i) attempted suicide while enrolled at the school, (ii) attempted suicide shortly before enrolling at the school, or (iii) has stated plans or intentions to commit suicide. Under those circumstances, the faculty or staff member has a legal obligation to act, either by initiating the school's suicide prevention protocol, directing the student to medical care, or reaching out to the student's emergency contacts.

During the fall of 2018, members of the Mental Health Task Force, student affairs professionals and University Counsel reviewed the protocols and practices across the university in place for responding to students in distress across the university. Each school has its own protocol and administrative procedures for responding to students in distress. Student affairs professionals at each school and TTAM teams collaborate on assessing and taking action regarding reports of students of concern. Currently, there is no uniform training across the university for faculty and staff on responding to students in distress.

RECOMMENDATION: The Mental Health Task Force, in consultation with student affairs leaders and University Counsel, carefully developed the following recommendations and guidance for all schools.

¹⁶ National Vital Statistics System, National Center for Health Statistics, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017. <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/LeadingCauses.html>.

- Review and update the existing “A Guide for Helping Students in Distress” issued by CMHS on the Medford/Somerville campus. Create a companion Students in Distress Protocol for the graduate and professional schools, with appropriate resources and contact information. Distribute the updated guide to faculty and staff at all the schools across the university.
- Strengthen university-wide “Students in Distress” training to provide faculty and staff with the tools to appropriately identify and respond to students in distress.

Implementation Progress: Across the university, administrative teams are updating or drafting equivalent guides specific to each school. A “Students in Distress” training for faculty and staff with Jeanne Kincaid, a nationally known disability lawyer and consultant, was piloted in February 2019 on the Medford/Somerville campus. Thanks to a scholarship awarded to the university by the HBC Foundation, the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses began participating in a four-year strategic partnership as a JED Campus in fall 2019. This partnership includes a comprehensive assessment and enhancement of Tufts mental health, substance use, and suicide prevention policies.

Data Collection

There is no uniform data collection tool utilized across the university to track student attitudes, behaviors and needs with respect to mental health, and trends in service utilization. Since 2007, CMHS has collected and tracked health and wellness data for undergraduate and graduate students on the Medford/Somerville campus through the Healthy Minds Survey, which focuses exclusively on student mental health. The 2018 data collected through the Healthy Minds Survey is the first data set to include students on the Boston SMFA campus. On the health sciences campuses, any data relevant to student mental health has been collected by individual schools and has not been part of long-term coordinated strategy.

RECOMMENDATION: The Task Force recommends the inclusion of the health sciences campuses in the biennial implementation of the Healthy Minds Survey to examine student attitudes, behaviors and needs, and trends in service utilization. The Task Force encourages schools and campus-wide resources to utilize survey data to develop and inform health promotion and outreach efforts.

Implementation Progress: The Healthy Minds Survey was administered on the health sciences campuses in the fall of 2017 for the first time.

Creation of Steering Committee

The decision to launch the Task Force reflected the fact that no single existing administrative office or working group brought together the range of participants needed to address the critical emerging issues in student mental health holistically across the entire university. The experience of the Task Force has confirmed that supporting the mental health of Tufts’ students requires a coordinated approach that draws on the expertise and engagement of students, staff, faculty, and off-campus stakeholders, supporters, and experts. We also believe that student mental health and wellness will benefit significantly from ongoing coordination across our campuses and schools, leveraging opportunities to share best practices and gain economies of scale in important programs and initiatives.

Looking forward, we see no sign of a lessening in the demand or need to support student mental health. It will be essential that we maintain the momentum generated by the Task Force. We have helpful internal models to follow in the university's work on both sexual misconduct prevention and diversity and inclusion. With respect to each of those vital issues, an ongoing university-wide oversight group was established to continue the work of an initial Presidential Task Force or Council. Such a structure responds to Tufts' school-based administrative model while providing a university-wide mechanism for promoting and assessing the implementation of recommended actions and responding to subsequent developments as they emerge.

RECOMMENDATION: The Task Force recommends the university establish a university-wide Steering Committee on Student Mental Health to ensure continued attention to this critical issue for the health and well-being of all of Tufts' students. This Steering Committee should be chaired by the president and include a broad range of stakeholders from across Tufts with the expertise and commitment to spearhead the university's ongoing efforts.

Conclusion

Supporting the evolving mental health needs of a diverse student body is a continuous challenge, one that we can best meet with a shared understanding of our community's goals and strengths. While an increase in the number and type of clinician providers and other individual resources is necessary and recommended by the Task Force, it is clear that the complexity of our students' needs also requires the implementation of a broader, more strategic suite of services—services beyond the short-term model of care practiced at Tufts and most other colleges and universities in the United States. The major findings and recommendations presented in this report outline a multifaceted strategy to supporting student mental health.

Given the research, discourse, and hard work that has led to the development of these recommendations, Tufts is now better poised to elevate student mental health as a university-wide priority. In the coming years, Tufts stands to augment its natural resources and capacities toward fostering a healthier university community. Partners across the university have already begun efforts to implement many of the recommendations included in this report. Advancing these recommendations and the broader dialogue surrounding student mental health at Tufts will depend on the sustained involvement of contributors from across the university. Accordingly, it is the sincere hope of the Task Force that this report may serve not only as an advisory document for the central administration, schools, and divisions, but also as a call to action for the entire community to remain engaged in the important ongoing work of making Tufts a healthier and inclusive community.

As Tufts continues to monitor utilization trends, evolving student needs, and the regulatory landscape, the university's focus must expand to include greater attention to a coordinated holistic community health approach in supporting student mental health. In pursuit of these efforts, Tufts is creating a standing Student Mental Health Steering Committee that will serve as a dedicated, standing, governance structure to continue the work of the Mental Health Task Force. The Steering Committee will comprise students, faculty, and staff. President Monaco will chair the Steering Committee.

The work ahead is significant. We welcome all those who share in this commitment going forward and thank all those who have already dedicated so much time, energy, and personal sacrifice to this issue. We especially appreciate the advocacy of our students and the commitment of our faculty and staff who endeavor to make Tufts University a healthy community for all. The Task Force is grateful to everyone who has contributed to its work and looks forward to an ongoing community conversation concerning student mental health at Tufts.

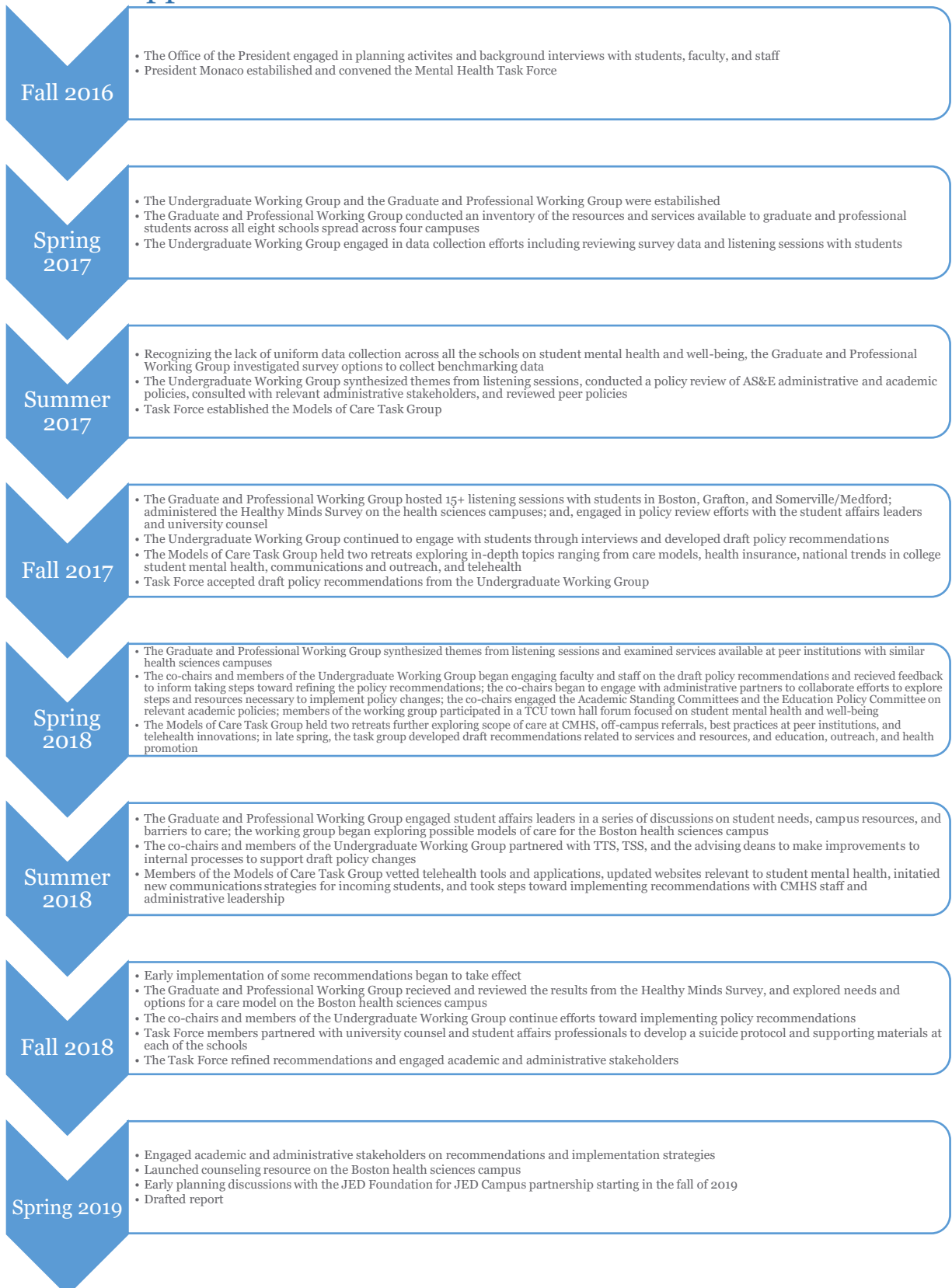
Appendix A: Purpose and Charge

The purpose of the Mental Health Task Force, as announced at its establishment in December 2016, was to conduct a university-wide review and assessment of student mental health, wellness, and holistic engagement, including the current student experience, the services offered, available resources, and potential areas for additional collaboration and enhancement.

The overall goal of the Mental Health Task Force was to ensure that Tufts University is meeting the needs of our student populations, fostering resilience, and providing a healthy and supportive community. The charge of the task force was to:

- Examine the state of student mental health university-wide with attention to the needs and experiences of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students in all of Tufts' schools. This should include (1) careful attention to the normative personal development of students and discussion of the faculty and university's role in supporting it, (2) comparisons to national trends and data, and (3) the intersection between academic and curricular policies and practices with student mental health.
- Assess mental health services and related resources available to help our student populations to address mental health needs, paying careful attention to the particular experiences and needs of diverse groups within the student population and comparison with best practices in evidence-based treatment.
- Review university policies and practices to identify (1) possible barriers to access and utilization of services for students in need, (2) opportunities to strengthen support, and (3) potential updates to ensure Tufts' continued compliance with applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines.
- Make recommendations that promote the mission of the task force with respect to: (1) education, outreach, and mental health promotion, (2) services and resources, and (3) policies and practices.

Appendix B: Mental Health Task Force Timeline



Appendix C: Mental Health Task Force and Working Group Members and Collaborators

Individuals are identified by their titles during the time of their services on the Task Force. The names of Task Force members who have retired or left their roles at the university at the time of release of this report are presented below in italics.

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COLLABORATORS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Tufts Graduate Student Council
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The Task Force is grateful to all of the students, faculty, and staff who participated in listening sessions, one-on-one interviews, department meetings, or submitted online comments to help inform our efforts.

Appendix D: Undergraduate Working Group Outreach

The outreach conducted by members and staff supporting the UWG between 2016 and 2018 included:

- One-on-one and small group interviews with students and student leaders
- Eleven listening sessions, including at least one with each of the identity-based centers
- Discussions at regularly scheduled meetings of student organizations the Tufts Community Union Senate, the Pan-Asian Council, the Africana Advisory Alliance, Tufts Emergency Medical Services, and the Interfaith Council
- One Community Health class of approximately 70 students was engaged for a lecture period and asked to complete a survey related to their perceptions of mental health issues and services at Tufts
- Senior Week luncheon for the Class of 2017
- Attended community events such as the Mental Health Monologues
- Participation in TCU Senate community discussion on mental health and well-being on campus, April 2018

Formal outreach to AS&E faculty and staff during the spring of 2018 by members of the UWG included:

- A&S Steering Committee Meeting, 1/18/2018
- A&S Department Chairs Meeting, 2/14/2018
- Engineering Dean's Cabinet Meeting, 2/5/2018
- Provost Council Meeting, 2/20/2018
- AS&E Faculty Meeting, 2/28/2018
- Engineering Faculty Meeting, 4/11/2018
- AS&E Education Policy Committee Meeting, 4/10/2018
- Academic Standing Committees Meeting, 5/18/2018

Appendix E: Summary of Recommendations

EDUCATION, OUTREACH, AND HEALTH PROMOTION RECOMMENDATIONS

Student Life Experience (pp. 11–12)

- Supports the recommendations of the Student Life Review Committee and continued implementation of changes to undergraduate orientation and residential life.
- Explore the possibility of developing a 100-level course for first-year undergraduate students around mental health and well-being.
- Encourages continued attention to mental health issues faced by students undertaking study and research abroad.

Academic Environment (pp. 12–14)

- Encourages the schools and academic departments to consider ways to reduce stress, support student development, and promote healthier behaviors.
- Enhance training opportunities for faculty and staff to deepen their knowledge about student mental health.
- Explore the feasibility of extending services at the ARC to include Fletcher students.

Mental Health Awareness and Stigma Reduction (pp. 14–16)

- Develop stigma reduction programming with an emphasis on graduate and professional students to reduce barriers to help-seeking and promote mental health as a life skill necessary to succeed in their prospective fields.
- Strengthen partnerships with student leaders on mental health awareness campaigns, outreach, and wellness activities.
- Increase administrative support through a designated administrator or coordinator for Student Advising and Health Promotions on the Boston health sciences campus.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the programming offered by the wellness advisor at Cummings School in the context of a long-term health promotion strategy for veterinary students.
- Hire a dedicated mental health outreach and education specialist for the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses.

Communications and Outreach (pg. 16)

- Expand communications efforts to ensure that new and returning Tufts students have consistent and accurate information and awareness of resources available through the university.

SERVICES AND RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS

University-wide (pp. 17–18)

- Explore developing an Integrated Wellness Outreach Center.
- Engage University Advancement to explore opportunities for philanthropic support to advance initiatives in mental and behavioral health and wellness.
- Supports further adoption of evidence-based telehealth resources.

Boston Health Sciences Campus (pp. 18–19)

- Encourage students to identify a primary care physician in the local community.
- Enhance communications around health insurance options.

- Establish an on-site counseling resource.
- Establish a 24/7 telephonic service for students in distress to be able to access a licensed clinician.

Grafton Campus (pg. 19)

- Continue to evaluate the utilization and success of on-site counseling resources.

Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA Campuses (pp. 19–23)

- Enhance referral processes at CMHS to better support students seeking ongoing mental health treatment from local community based mental health clinicians.
- Increase capacity at CMHS through establishing and meeting preferred on-campus clinician-to-student ratio by hiring additional clinicians, enhancing group therapy offerings, and extending clinical hours.
- Continue to evaluate operations and staffing practices at Health Services and CMHS to reach optimal use of clinical resources.
- Develop and implement a retention strategy to ensure Tufts continues to retain a team of highly skilled on-campus clinicians
- Continue to evaluate staffing structures and internal processes in DOSA to best to meet the needs of students with complex circumstances.
- Explore student affairs models and structures to better support the graduate student experience on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses.

POLICIES AND PRACTICES RECOMMENDATIONS

AS&E - Medical Leave of Absence (pp. 24–26)

- Streamline steps necessary to take and return from a Medical Leave of Absence.
- Explore and promote possible benefits of broader use of tuition refund insurance.
- Reduce barriers and stressors associated with returning from a Medical Leave of Absence.

AS&E - Undergraduate Personal Leave of Absence (pp. 26–27)

- Establish procedures to ensure students receive guidance and support for their individual circumstances prior to and upon returning from a Personal Leave of Absence.

Accommodations and Reduced Course Load (pp. 27–28)

- Increase awareness of Student Accessibility Services and the benefits of the Reduced Course Load policy for undergraduate students and academic accommodations available for AS&E and Fletcher students.

Academic Policies and Practices (pp. 28–29)

- Evaluate current academic policies and administrative practices to ensure early identification and intervention to help encourage struggling students to engage with resources.

Suicide Prevention (pp. 29–30)

- Review and update the existing "A Guide for Helping Students in Distress" issued by CMHS. Create a companion guides for faculty and staff at the health sciences schools.
- Strengthen university-wide "Student in Distress" training for faculty and staff.

Data Collection (pg. 30)

- Include the health sciences campuses in the biennial implementation of the Healthy Minds Survey to collect university-wide data.

Creation of Steering Committee (pp. 30-31)

- Establish a university-wide steering committee on student mental health.

Appendix F: Overview of Current Services and Resources

Resources and services to support student health, well-being, and personal development are primarily offered to students at the school level, although there are some services available at the university-wide or campus-wide level. Highlighted in this overview are selected resources and services that play a particularly important role in leading efforts to support student mental health and well-being across the university.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE SERVICES AND RESOURCES

University Chaplaincy: The University Chaplaincy supports religious, spiritual, ethical, and cultural life for all members of the Tufts community. The Chaplaincy is a critical player in the holistic network of support; the Chaplaincy's offerings include pastoral care (counseling offered by spiritual leaders), as well as supporting religious and philosophical communities, educating about spiritual and ethical issues, and promoting multi-faith engagement across the university. Staff chaplains meet with students both by appointment and in group settings across all university campuses. The University Chaplaincy is a confidential resource available to members of the Tufts community. The Buddhist in Residence offers biweekly mindfulness meditation sessions with guided meditation and discussion to help relieve stress and help students develop skills to maintain mental balance and build resilience.

Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO): The primary responsibility of OEO is to establish uniform guidelines in order to promote an environment at Tufts University that is free from discrimination and harassment, and to affirm Tufts' commitment to equal opportunity, Title IX, and affirmative action. OEO delivers this support through education and training initiatives for faculty, staff, and students and by resolving allegations of discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct. The Center for Awareness, Resources and Education (CARE) offers confidential resources, reporting options, and interim support for all students impacted by sexual misconduct. CARE also provides campus-wide bystander intervention trainings.

Tufts Department of Public and Environmental Safety: Tufts is committed to maintaining an environment in which individuals are safe to learn, work, and live. Tufts University Policy Department (TUPD) and Tufts Emergency Medical Services (TEMS) are often the first responders on our campuses ensuring student safety and tending to emergency needs. Through the TUPD non-emergency line, students in need can be connected to the on-call counselor or on-call chaplain. The Tufts Threat Assessment and Management (TTAM) program identifies, evaluates, and addresses potentially threatening situations affecting members of the Tufts community. The Mental Health First Aid training program is available to members of the Tufts community through the Department of Public Safety.

BOSTON HEALTH SCIENCES CAMPUS

Campus-wide Services and Resources

Student Advisory & Health Administration (SAHA): The Student Advisory & Health Administration (SAHA) supports students on the Boston and Grafton health sciences campuses by providing advice regarding general well-being, collection, and screening of all immunization documentation and oversight of the student health insurance program required by Tufts University and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Student Wellness Advising and Health Promotion: Student Wellness and Health Promotion is the primary source of mental health and wellness promotion efforts for the Boston health sciences campus. The wellness advisor works with students to offer practical approaches to manage every day stressors and challenges. Students can learn to manage personal problems and situational crises effectively, learn strategies to cope with academic stress, and develop self-awareness, personal responsibility, and skills for lifelong learning. In addition to offering health and wellness programming, the wellness advisor makes referrals to mental health providers in the local community. The wellness advisor also hosts health promotion activities to support student overall well-being.

Talk One2One Student Assistance Program: Launched on April 1, 2019, Talk One2One provides confidential access to counselors both in person and by telephone for students matriculated in the Boston health sciences campus schools. This counseling resource provides support for students for a broad range of issues like emotional and mental health concerns, substance use, and relationship challenges. This program is based on a short-term model, offering six counseling sessions free of charge to students for each presenting mental health or behavioral health concern. These services are provided by AllOne Health, a contracted service provider.

School of Dental Medicine

Office of Student Affairs: The Office of Student Affairs supports academic and personal development of dental students. The Office of Student Affairs helps students connect with services and resources, assists with disability accommodations, supports student organizations to foster community, and provides guidance to students navigating challenges.

Office of Academic Affairs: Through the Office of Academic Affairs, the assistant dean of academic affairs manages a TA program and a tutoring program, both of which focus on facilitating student success. The Office of Academic Affairs provides academic support and advising to dental students to strengthen their study strategies, time management skills, and acculturation to dental school.

Mind-Body Wellness Program: Mind-Body Wellness is a mandatory three-week course for all first-year dental students, which incorporates the teaching of mind-body evidence-based self-regulation, stress management, and coping skills in the curriculum. These skills support students from the start of dental school and throughout the four years of their training.

School of Medicine

Office of Student Affairs (OSA): The OSA provides guidance, support, and administrative assistance to students. The OSA also acts as a liaison to faculty and administration, assists with academic advising and personal counseling, and coordinates the residency application process for medical students. The OSA also works with students to provide reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities covered under the ADA.

Office of Educational Affairs (OEA): The OEA is responsible for the medical education program that includes evaluating the learning environment and supporting the school's curricular key themes including physician well-being, which promotes student physician wellness in medical school and beyond. They provide curricular wellness programming such as Co-Leader Orientation in Mindfulness for Patient and Student Support (COMPASS), Practical Approaches to Wellness (PAWs), and the Healer's Art elective course.

Office of Multicultural Affairs: The Office of Multicultural Affairs offers programs, initiatives, and training to promote diversity and inclusion and provides tools and support for students of diverse backgrounds. The Office of Multicultural Affairs supports students across TUSM.

Sackler School of Graduate Biomedical Sciences

Dean's Office: The associate dean provides guidance, support, and administrative assistance to students on all academic, personal, and professional issues including degree completion, mentoring questions, personal counseling, and navigating challenges. The Office of the Dean supports student organizations to foster community and develops career related programs and services. The associate dean acts as a liaison to faculty and program administrators who provide academic advising and direct mentorship. The associate dean also works with students to provide reasonable accommodations for those with documented disabilities covered under the ADA and all Title IX or other harassment concerns.

Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy

Office of Student Affairs (OSA): The OSA helps students navigate their experience at the Friedman School by assisting students with course registration, helping students find resources for health and wellness, and supporting student activities and organizations.

GRAFTON CAMPUS

Student Affairs Office (SAO): The SAO at Cummings School supports students by integrating resources throughout the school and community. The SAO provides the guidance, resources, and assistance needed to succeed.

Cummings Support Center: The mission of the Cummings Support Center (CSC) is to create a positive environment to nurture and sustain the overall well-being of the Cummings School community. The CSC aims to assist students throughout their time at the Cummings School—including during periods of critical transition and crisis—by providing support, guidance, and, when needed, intervention. Students are supported through the Academic Affairs Office, the Career Counseling Service, and Cummings Behavioral Health Service.

Cummings Behavioral Health Service: The aim of this service is to offer support and intervention to students, drive programs that support help-seeking behavior, and implement critical campus-wide mental health programs and policies. Support is available by appointment, through walk-in consultation, and during any crises that may involve a student at the Cummings School. Mental health education and promotion workshops are hosted by the on-site clinicians throughout the academic year. These services are provided by AllOne Health, a contracted service provider.

Cummings Thrive: Cummings Thrive is a student-led initiative that runs monthly workshops throughout the year intended to introduce participants to important concepts that will help them thrive in veterinary school and during their professional lives. Monthly workshops focus on concepts such as: emotional intelligence, self-awareness, resilience and determination, physical and mental health awareness, team building/team communication, conflict management, personal leadership, and advocacy in leadership.

Office of Academic Affairs: The Office of Academic Affairs is committed to maintaining a well curriculum and supporting students as they conduct their studies. The office provides a venue

for addressing academic issues that commonly arise during the veterinary school experience, including difficulties related to course load, performance, academic “burn out,” or emotional stressors. The Office of Academic Affairs manages faculty advising and tutoring services.

MEDFORD/SOMERVILLE AND BOSTON SMFA CAMPUSES

Campus-Wide Resources and Services

Health Service: The Health Service offers free, confidential primary medical to all students on the Medford/Somerville and Boston SMFA campuses who have paid the health fee. Health Promotion and Prevention, a department within Health Service, provides a range of wellness offerings including programs and information on sleep, nutrition, exercise, alcohol and drug abuse, stress reduction, and mindfulness. Through partnerships with other campus departments, student organizations, and the community, the Health Service seeks to enhance the health of the inclusive Tufts community and advocate for a respectful environment that enables healthy choices and fosters positive health decisions.

Counseling and Mental Health Services (CMHS): CMHS offers a range of free and confidential services to all undergraduates and to graduate students who have paid the health fee. CMHS is committed to helping prevent and address behavioral and mental health challenges that may become impediments to students’ academic and personal goals. In addition to providing direct services to students, CMHS conducts outreach in the Tufts community, providing students with the information and access they need to prevent or mitigate crises. CMHS also provides training and consultation throughout the Tufts community, assisting faculty and staff to recognize and respond effectively to those in distress.

Student Accessibility Services (SAS): SAS works with undergraduate and graduate students in the School of Arts & Sciences, the School of Engineering, and The Fletcher School, one-on-one to determine what their accommodation needs may be, to implement those accommodations, and to help students self-advocate for their needs while at Tufts. SAS also collaborates with campus partners and resources to provide timely, comprehensive, and appropriate services for students with disabilities.

The Haven at College: The Haven offers on-campus drug and alcohol treatment and recovery support services. Tufts’ collaboration with The Haven is based in the Office of Health Promotion and Prevention and includes: an outpatient center adjacent to campus that provides a safe and relatable place for students to meet, grow, and recover from substance use and co-occurring disorders like anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress; an on-campus recovery residence for students who want to participate in a sober living program that can support them while they explore or struggle with substance-use issues; and staff dedicated to developing programs, trainings, and Tufts-specific resources for students and student groups. This resource was first made available to students in fall 2019.

School of Arts & Sciences and School of Engineering

Dean of Student Affairs Office (DOSA): DOSA supports dynamic cocurricular learning and engagement for all undergraduate and graduate students within the School of Arts & Science, the School of Engineering, and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University. The department partners closely with colleagues across Division of Student Affairs (Fraternity and Sorority Life, the Group of Six, Judicial Affairs, Residential Life, and Campus Life) on a wide variety of campus programs and initiatives. DOSA is central resource that supports the safety,

dynamic engagement, and well-being of all Tufts AS&E students. DOSA also assists students with Medical Leaves of Absence.

Academic Resources Center (ARC): The ARC offers one-on-one consultations in writing, time management and study strategies, and oral communication, as well as tutoring for introductory-level courses in STEM fields, economics, and foreign languages. The Time Management & Study Skills program helps students develop more effective strategies for motivation, planning and organization, life balance, and other academic skills. The English for Academic Purposes program enhances students' academic experience by helping them improve their English language competency. Two of the ARC's flagship programs are the Writing Fellows Program and the Study Group Program. Both programs provide focused support for specific courses through faculty collaboration, advanced training for undergraduate tutors, and targeted strategies to enhance students' critical thinking skills. All programming is offered free of charge.

Academic Advising: Academic Advising fosters student growth, empowerment, and success by serving, advising, guiding, nurturing, and celebrating students. Academic Advising works with students and faculty to solve problems so that students may successfully navigate the university. Academic Advising focuses on the academic aspect of students' lives at Tufts, providing information, advice, and support to help them successfully complete their degrees in a timely manner while ensuring that students have an enriching and rewarding academic experience. Academic Advising also provides academic enrichment programs and opportunities. The department collaborates with faculty and other departments to advocate for students and improve the academic experience for all students as well as the policies governing undergraduate study at Tufts.

Office of the Dean of Graduate School of Arts and Sciences: The Office of the Dean supports graduate programs at all levels and serves as the liaison between students, faculty, and administration on all aspects of graduate education.

Dean of Graduate Education for the School of Engineering: The dean of graduate education for the School of Engineering is a vital advocate and resource for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows. The dean is the liaison between students, faculty, and administration on all aspects of graduate education including advising, professional development initiatives, and graduate education policies. The dean is also the Title IX coordinator and liaison to the Office of Equal Opportunity.

Tufts Active Minds: Active Minds is a student group that supports and promotes mental health awareness, education, and stigma reduction. The Tufts chapter of Active Minds plays a vital role in mental health promotion through outreach campaigns, campus-wide programs like the Mental Health Monologues, and advocacy efforts with university leaders. The Tufts chapter of Active Minds has been recognized multiple times at national conferences for their contributions to mental health advocacy on campus.

Ears for Peers: Ears for Peers hotline is a free, anonymous, and confidential resource for students available from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. daily during the academic year. The hotline is staffed and operated by trained student volunteers. Ears for Peers receive about 100 calls and instant messages each semester. Call topics include, but are not limited to: roommate issues, loneliness, academic stress, difficulty adjusting to Tufts, difficulty making friends, anxiety, depression, questions about sexual orientation, difficulty with eating or body image, self-harm, and suicidal ideation. Student volunteers serve as judgement-free peers who lend an ear and suggest campus resources that may help a caller find support for their individual needs.

The Fletcher School

Office of Student Affairs: Student affairs assists students with navigating their experience at The Fletcher School by helping students find resources for health and wellness and by supporting student activities and organizations.

Office of the Registrar: The registrar assists students throughout their Fletcher experience with course registration, academic advising, academic resources, and leaves of absence.

Appendix G: Demographics of CMHS Clientele

Table 1: Racial/Ethnic/National Identities (Federal Categories)¹⁷

AY		AsAm	AfrAm	AmerIn/Alaskan/ Pac. Isl.	White	Latx	>1 Race	Other/ Unknown	Int'l
18–19	CMHS	21%	6%	<1%	57%	9%	4%	3%	22%
	Tufts	13%	5%	<1%	64%	8%	<1%	5%	19%
17–18	CMHS	20%	6%	<1%	56%	9%	5%	3%	15%
	Tufts	20%	6%	<1%	61%	7%	---	6%	16%
16–17	CMHS	16%	5%	<1%	53%	7%	---	19%	16%
	Tufts	11%	4%	<1%	56%	6%	---	10%	13%
15–16	CMHS	18%	5%	2%	62%	5%	---	7%	13%
	Tufts	16%	5%	<1%	60%	6%	---	12%	14%

Table 2: Gender Identification¹⁸

AY	Female	Male	Gender Queer/nb	Trans*	Other/ Unknown	Prefer not to say
18–19	58%	32%	6%	2%	1%	<1%
17–18	60%	35%	---	1%	4%	---
16–17	66%	32%	---	<1%	1%	---
15–16	66%	33%	---	1%	---	---

Table 3: Sexual Orientation¹⁹

AY	LGBTQAI+	Hetero	Did not identify
18–19	33%	62%	5%
17–18	32%	64%	4%
16–17	27%	70%	3%
15–16	29%	67%	4%

¹⁷ Data taken from CMHS Annual Reports for AY 2015–2016, AY 2016–2017, AY 2017–2018, AY 2018–2019

¹⁸ Data taken from CMHS Annual Reports for AY 2015–2016, AY 2016–2017, AY 2017–2018, AY 2018–2019

¹⁹ Data taken from CMHS Annual Reports for AY 2015–2016, AY 2016–2017, AY 2017–2018, AY 2018–2019

Appendix H: Comparison of Leave Policies for AS&E Undergraduates

(As of Summer 2017 – Prior to UGW efforts)

	Medical Leave	Personal Leave	Academic Withdrawal
Policy Holder	Dean of Student Affairs	Dean of Undergraduate Advising	Academic Standing Committees
Circumstances for Leave	Fully tend to a physical or mental health need	Any	Academic performance meets the criteria for academic probation for a second semester
Exit Process	Involves consultation with DOSA, advising team and medical documentation; highly individualized but formal process	Initiated by student via SIS and approved by Alpha Dean	Notified by the Academic Standing Committee
Duration of Leave	Not defined; no limit	Typically designated at the time of departure	One semester
Financial Aid Considerations	- Refund calculations are based on date of leave; detailed worksheet used to determine percent of aid eligible for refund - Eligible for eight semesters of federal financial aid; leave/academic withdrawal may have an impact on academic progress rules - Mid-semester leave counts toward the eight semesters of eligible aid even if the student does not receive credit, nor are all funds dispersed - Student loans may go into repayment after six months - Students may appeal for ninth semester of funding through Tufts grants		
Other Financial Considerations	First six weeks of a semester, students are eligible for reimbursement of a percentage of tuition, decreasing as each week passes. No reimbursement after the sixth week.		
	Students with Tuition Refund Insurance may be eligible for tuition refund in accordance with insurance policy		
Transcript	Student may choose to have all courses removed from transcript for semester in which they seek leave	Leave recorded on transcript; normal deadlines for withdrawing from classes apply after the start of the semester	Recorded on transcript
Academic Considerations	A student with an official leave date after the tuition reimbursement period in a given semester will have that semester count toward the residency requirement		
Considerations for International Students	May stay in the United States for up to 12 months while seeking care	May not stay in the United States during personal leave; depending on duration of leave may need to reapply for visa	May not stay in the United States while on academic withdrawal; depending on timing, may need to reapply for visa
Presence on Campus during Leave	Not permitted on campus; may not attend cocurricular activities on campus while on leave	Permitted on campus	Permitted on campus
Participation in Housing Lottery Prior to Return	Not permitted	Yes	Yes
Class Registration Prior to Return	Not permitted	Yes	Yes
Return Process	Initiated by student sending notification of intent to return to DOSA; highly structured return process	Initiated by student via SIS; no formal return process	Initiated by student via SIS; no formal return process

