

TUFTS UNIVERSITY

A photograph of a Tufts University sign on a hill. The sign is black with gold lettering. Below the sign, a set of stairs is painted with a rainbow pattern, winding up the hill. In the background, there are trees and a large building.

An Entrepreneurial University Revisited

The Continuing Transformation of Tufts
2002-2017

Written By:

The Students of The Sociology of
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FOREWARD

By Sol Gittleman

I am honored to be asked to contribute a few words to the “revisiting” of my book which took Tufts and American higher education history to 2002. Professor Freedom Blume Oeur’s seminar on the Sociology of Higher Education will now make the journey to the present. His students’ great challenge will be to blend two different perspectives: one almost exclusively faculty-oriented that examined the dramatic change in the prospects of Tufts University; the other from a student-centered viewpoint, focusing on the equally dramatic changes in campus culture. Both are valid, and together they tell us a great deal about change in the American college and university. My book reflects the observations of a seventy-year-old teacher looking back on a half-century of extraordinary change in this country; the “revisitation” comes from a current generation of undergraduates who are located somewhere along the spectrum of a four-year Tufts experience from 2014-2018. I was born in 1934 when most state laws forbade anyone of “the white race” from marrying *anyone of a different race: black, yellow, red, or brown*. College was an almost exclusive preserve of a few privileged people, and Americans were generally not interested in what higher education could contribute to the nation. There was little conflict on campus, because everyone was the same, and most everybody got along. Immigration was at an all-time low, because our doors were tightly shut.

We certainly were not interested in what was happening in Europe, China, or anywhere else in the world. Campus life was civil; intellectualism was suspect. Hollywood knew how to reflect this: almost every college movie was a dumb-downed football story. Tom Buchanan, the bigoted Yale athletic hero from F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* (1925), would have examined the Table of Contents of this class’s “revisitation” – “Transgender Students ... Latino Students ... Afro-American Students... Sexual Assault ... Mental Health” – and would have thought that he had landed on another planet.

The students in the seminar are experiencing the results of this change: different people, a diverse community, different sexual orientations, a general celebration and acceptance of “being different.” The American college campus is a much better place for this change. Since the end of World War II we have created the greatest higher educational enterprise in the world, because we have been able to embrace change.

But, you pay a price, and the current national political and campus climate reflects that price. It’s not easy to have diversity, civility, and extraordinary change in a relatively brief period. There are those who look nostalgically to a time when their lives were simple, people knew their place in the scheme of things: that’s only been fifty years ago. At times our campuses are roiled by conflict and confrontation, and, human nature being what it is, differences can cause conflict. Where once campus life reflected what most Americans accepted, today’s college campuses are often at odds with their surrounding communities. Race, conformity, traditions, gender, and faith have always been at the heart of the American experience, but we never really wanted to talk about it. Students are bringing about change that sometimes their elders don’t like.

But, there is no going back.

**INTRODUCTION:
AN ENTREPRENURIAL UNIVERSITY REVISITED
By Freeden Blume Oeur**

I first stepped foot on the Medford campus of Tufts University in November 1998. It was the day before Thanksgiving and I was a 17-year-old high school senior. Eager to spend my college years at least a few states away from where I had grown up in Virginia, I had set my sights on a trio of old private colleges in Massachusetts. I had only learned about them that previous summer. I was a hopeful men's lacrosse recruit who had overestimated his college-playing potential, and so one of the first things I learned was that all three colleges were members of an athletic conference called the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC). Even then, I suspected Tufts was the oddball of the NESCAC, from its mascot (the Jumbos) to its significantly larger undergraduate population.¹ I learned that Tufts had a reputation for being "quirky," whatever that meant.²

My family – my parents, my sister, and I – had planned to spend Thanksgiving that year with relatives in Lowell, Massachusetts, a city up Route 3 from Medford. And so they all accompanied me to my meeting with the Tufts head men's lacrosse coach that day. It was an awkward visit. I remember cringing when the coach had us watch several minutes of a poorly edited VHS tape of my game highlights, which I had mailed to him earlier in the fall; and when he inquired into the low grade in Calculus I had received my junior year. My parents were not at all keen on my decision to pursue lacrosse in college, and I was sure the coach sensed their disappointment.³

I recall leaving campus and feeling I would never be a student there. That much was correct, but I was oblivious to several things that day. The first was that two months later, the inauspicious hiring of Mike Daly as head men's lacrosse coach would eventually transform a perennial cellar dweller into a dynasty and a three-time national champion⁴; and that the team's extraordinary success would bring more prosperity and wealth to the Tufts Athletics program. (Catie DiRe pursues this very topic in Chapter 2.) The second was that I would return to Tufts 14 years later as an assistant professor. The third was that I would teach a course on the sociology of higher education. Having honed my own "sociological imagination," I would find that the course helped me to understand my own personal college experiences in light of hitherto unknown socio-historical processes and patterns within post-secondary education. The fourth was that in 1998, the venerable Sol Gittleman was entering the twilight of his long tenure as Provost of Tufts,⁵ and that several years later he would publish a history of Tufts: *An Entrepreneurial University: The Transformation of Tufts, 1976-2002*, a period of remarkable metamorphosis bracketed by the hiring of Jean Mayer as president and the year that Gittleman stepped down as provost.

* * *

The present e-book, *An Entrepreneurial University Revisited: The Continuing Transformation of Tufts, 2002-2017*, is the result of the collective efforts of the members of Fall 2017 class The Sociology of Higher Education. Its 18 chapters tackle a different issue of significance for both Tufts. Some topics, such as Greek life, have long been mainstays across the higher education landscape, while others, such as the experiences of undocumented students, have only recently emerged as political flashpoints. In picking up where Gittleman left off, this book provides fresh perspectives on the last 15 years (2002-2017) at Tufts. As Gittleman notes in the Foreword, his book is written from the vantage point as the university's Chief Academic Officer who took up his post just several years into Mayer's presidency. While the authors of this volume provide student perspectives, they, too, adopt a sociological imagination which grounds biographies in the macro social forces of present and near past, all in anticipation of the university's future.

Two important themes for *An Entrepreneurial University Revisited*, and for higher education more generally, can be gleaned from the title of Gittleman's book. The first is that the Tufts is an entrepreneur. As Alexis de Tocqueville famously described in his monumental tome *Democracy in America*, based on his observations of the U.S. in the early 1830s, entrepreneurship was part of the essential make-up of the United States. The entrepreneurial spirit emanated in the embrace of independence, creative ideas, cutting-edge innovations, and bold (even risky) investments in capital and resources. Tocqueville would have found in his fellow Frenchman Mayer an entrepreneur extraordinaire. As Gittleman describes, Mayer had been determined from the outset to change the fortunes of "a university that had a history of conservative, cautious management, poor in resources, with no particular reputation for creative and innovative research."⁶ Having come from Harvard University, where he had served for nearly three decades as a widely-respected Professor of Nutrition, Mayer blazed a path that rankled many on campus, challenged the institutional status quo at every turn, and that eventually earned Tufts a place among the nation's elite institutions of higher learning.

While Gittleman himself never discussed Mayer's presidency in these terms, the charismatic leader's vision for higher education was shot through with the principles of neoliberalism, a social policy doctrine that is hegemonic today. What Mayer understood as well as any college administrator in the 1970s was that Tufts needed to behave like a business. In a particularly shrewd maneuver, Mayer spearheaded the country's first-ever "academic pork barrel," securing millions in federal funding for university initiatives. Under his watch, the university founded a School of Veterinary Medicine, a School of Biomedical Sciences, and a School of Nutrition. Ten years after the start of his presidency, *The New York Times* showered Mayer with praise, noting achievements such as a raised international profile and a considerably larger applicant pool.⁷ Just several years after the introduction of the *US News & World Report's* first college rankings, college guides gushed that Tufts had shed its frumpy reputation, and was known to applicants around the world as "stylish" and "hot."

Yet as critics have observed, blind adherence to market principles are frequently at odds with the democratic goal of universities serving the public good.⁸ Tufts' vision of being a "beacon standing on the hill" (in the words of the university's first president, Hosea Ballou) has perhaps given way to the university's reputation as an institution that is largely run *by* and is *for* the elite. More generally, the tension between democracy and markets casts light on a number of other contradictions in higher education, which we discussed in our course this semester: between a well-rounded course of study encouraged by a liberal arts mission and the pressure to specialize in a certain field; between a commitment to teaching students (colleges' primary "consumers") and a commitment to research; between the well-rounded student and the well-rounded student body; and between the need to preserve tradition and the need for change.

Neoliberalism has become the native tongue of higher education in the 21st century. As Sonia Groeneveld writes in Chapter 1 of this volume, a "neoliberal multiculturalism" repackages diversity to serve economic ends. Drawing on the work of the sociologist Natasha Warikoo,⁹ Groeneveld describes how the corporate world has encouraged the "leaders of tomorrow" to take special care to learn about diversity during their college years. As numerous authors in this volume describe, the "diversity rationale" sanitizes difficult conversations about race and suggests that a community should learn from the diverse viewpoints of all without having to address the inequities that undergird those viewpoints.

Ben Reytblat examines in great detail in Chapter 12 how neoliberalism speaks the corporate language of cost-cutting, efficiency, and the careful management of resources. In a contemporary moment of austerity, this language has even made its way into the university's "Value Proposition," a proclamation found immediately after the university's mission statement:

Creating and sustaining an environment that prepares to launch all our students into the world fully prepared to chart a course for success requires effective stewardship of our resources during a time of significant challenges in higher education. Operational costs and the need for financial aid are rising, while research funding, philanthropy and returns on endowments remain uncertain. New and changing regulations, compliance requirements and standards of assessment are appearing alongside rapidly evolving digital technologies that will push the boundaries of, and reinvent the methodologies for, how we teach, learn and conduct research.¹⁰

The belt-tightening at our "student-centered research university" has gone hand-in-hand with surging tuition costs, which have led to student calls to "halt the hike" and more generally for greater transparency with the university's financial investments.¹¹ Indeed, against a backdrop of increasing wealth inequality in the United States, Tufts holds the regrettable distinction of ranking in the "top 10" of colleges which enroll more students whose families come from the top 1% than those from the bottom 60%.¹²

The second theme which can be gleaned from the title of Gittleman's key text is *transformation*. While the university certainly transformed under Mayer's leadership, the word carries a specific meaning in research on the sociology of higher education. As

Mitchell Stevens writes, attaining a college degree matters, but it matters for two quite different reasons. The first is that educational attainment reveals postsecondary education largely to be an engine of *social reproduction*. Here, those who get into good schools and those who succeed in them largely come from privileged groups. The opposing reason is that a college education matters for *transformation*. Colleges are vehicles for those from less privileged backgrounds to achieve social mobility. As a first-generation son of Cambodian refugees, I was taught that education—and college especially—was this vehicle of transformation. Success could be mine. The catch was that I would have to outwork everyone else. Yet “worthiness” and “merit” are explosive terms, and sociologists understand full well that educational success is strongly correlated with racial and social-class background. As Lani Guinier has written, the enduring belief in a meritocracy is a myth, replaced by “testocracy” where colleges gush about the high test scores of their students, but are silent about how they work to support the less privileged students among them to graduate at the top of their classes.¹³ As Sam Watson examines in Chapter 13, “the remedial rationale” demands that colleges support not only equality of opportunity—the chance for the less privileged to enter their ranks—but equality of outcome—support for students once they get there (for example, in the form of Bridge programs and special interest housing).

While the following chapters canvass a breadth of topics, I encourage readers to consider a theme that links them: how postsecondary education and Tufts are both engines of reproduction and transformation. What has changed about higher education and what has stayed the same? How can positive change happen and what are the impediments to that change?

* * *

The first of the 18 chapters examines an important but volatile issue for higher education. As Sonia Groeneveld writes, *affirmative action* has been diluted of progressive potential, advancing a message of diversity wrapped up in a colorblind ideology. Chapter 2, by Catie DiRe, uses the rise of the men’s lacrosse team to demonstrate how *athletics* have assumed a more prominent place at Tufts, with the once modest Division III institution even starting to resemble its big-time Division I peers. Yohanna Georgis, in Chapter 3, examines the continuing marginalization of *Black students* on college campuses, and how #TheThreePercent movement at Tufts has held the administration accountable for change. In Chapter 4, Maddie Oliff takes up the issue of *college and community* (or “town and gown”) *relations*. Despite the fact that “university and city officials carefully craft the looks of a formally functioning relationship,” Oliff writes, local community members in Medford and Somerville often resent the university for what they see as the colonization and “studentification” of their local communities.

In Chapter 5, “The Haves and the Have Nots,” Shiobhan Shamlian addresses the *elitism* at places like Tufts, where the democratic goal of social equity has given way to the market-imperative and its peculiar tendency to exacerbate wealth inequality. What should Tufts do with **Greek life**? Madeleine Rossi takes up this question in the next

chapter. Citing its many systemic problems (and writing not long after the university handed down its most severe sanctions ever to several Greek houses for violations including sexual assault, hazing, and alcohol abuse) Rossi concludes that dissolving Greek life at Tufts is the best solution. In Chapter 7, Nora Maetzner peers into a new Tufts-sponsored educational program for *incarcerated persons*, the Tufts University Prison Initiative at Tisch College (TUPIT). As Maetzner describes, TUPIT is an opportunity for the incarcerated to rehabilitate and resist through engagement with formal academic curricula taught by college students. Jerusalem Estifanos next turns to the place of *international students* on colleges campuses. She challenges the notion that international students “steal” spots from U.S.-born applicants and discusses more generally the valuable contributions of this population.

Many *Latino students*, writes Yanelle Cruz in Chapter 9, have found their “home away from home” in college, but more can be done to support them. She cites the discouraging statistic that since the 2004-2005 academic year, Latino student enrollment has consistently remained under seven percent of the total student body. “In the Words of Drake, ‘Keep the Family Close,’” turns to a longstanding form of preferential treatment in college admissions. What will be the “legacy of *legacies*?” Whitney Miller asks in Chapter 10. Next up, in Chapter 11, is the important topic of *mental health*. Rachel Wahlert describes how Tufts took a step forward by convening a mental health task force, comprised of staff from several of the university’s schools, in Fall 2016. The task force’s challenge is daunting, however; Wahlert demonstrates how neoliberal ideology is a major culprit in mental health suffering on college campuses. In Chapter 12, Ben Reytblat links many chapters here in his critical assessment of *neoliberalism* in higher education. He shows how economic value and the bottom line have become priorities over serving the public good, as colleges are deeply immersed in the world of financial solvency, austerity, and productivity.

Sam Watson’s focus in Chapter 13 is *the remedial rationale*: the principle that colleges should focus not on increasing “diversity,” but on redistributing resources to support historically marginalized student groups on campus. In the next chapter, Zoe Gregorace investigates an issue which has commanded much public attention in recent years: *sexual violence* on campuses. In Spring 2014, Tufts found itself in the national spotlight when the Office for Civil Rights determined that the university was out of compliance with Title IX policy. Gregorace describes how Tufts students joined many others nationwide to push for increased support for victims of sexual violence. Chapter 15, by Arianna Burnham, scrutinizes how universities treat *transgender students*. As she describes, place like Tufts may forsake real substantive change in favor of an image that is friendly to trans persons. In Chapter 16, Sam Zinn builds on and extends the conversation initiated earlier by Shiobhan Shamlian to show how rising *tuition* costs have helped to widen the gap between the affluent and the less economically privileged. In Chapter 17, Emily Sim focuses on the experiences and place of *undocumented students* in higher education. She stresses the dual needs of considering the heterogeneity among this student population, and of considering how elite colleges like Tufts stratify this population by rescuing the “good undocumented immigrant” from a harmful popular discourse which characterizes undocumented persons as threats to the welfare of native-

born citizens. Finally, Amina Dieng concludes our volume with a powerful chapter on the operation of *whiteness* on college campuses. Dieng asserts that “higher education is only able to cohere itself through the active centering of Whiteness on all fronts, beginning with admissions.”

* * *

The conclusion to *An Entrepreneurial University* marked a year that was one to remember for Tufts. In 2002, the university celebrated its sesquicentennial. Larry Bacow was in his first year as president. During his ten-year presidency, the university wrapped up a “Beyond Boundaries” campaign which raised \$1.2 billion for various academic priorities, and strengthened Tufts’ position as a leader in civic engagement. That year, when Gittleman himself stepped down as Provost, he held the distinction as the longest-serving provost in the history of U.S. higher education. Gittleman imagined “some future time twenty years from now,” a “magical moment” when old Tufts presidents returned to celebrate the university with today’s president and faculty. At that congregation, current Tufts president Anthony Monaco would no doubt take pride in the university’s recent accomplishments, including a new Science and Engineering Complex, the mental health task force, the hiring of a renowned cybersecurity expert, the university taking the lead in declaring itself sanctuary campus for undocumented students. Monaco might even plug the university’s new “Brighter World” fundraising campaign!¹⁴ I suspect a major topic of conversation would be the inevitable radical transformation of campus life when the Green Line T stop finally comes to the intersection of Boston and College Avenues.

At that meeting, Gittleman imagines that a Tufts historian would present the next volume in Tufts history. I am certainly not that historian, and to be fair, only 15 years have elapsed since Gittleman penned those words. But taken together the chapters here provide a rich history of a university still transforming and still in transition; and clearly, despite its many achievements, a university with much still to improve. Whoever that future historian is can learn much in these pages. Perhaps the greatest lesson that *An Entrepreneurial University Revisited* can provide is that histories should be told collectively and critically.

Thank you to my students who shared in the telling of this critical history, and to Sol for inspiring me to take up and lead this collective task.

Endnotes

¹ The Wikipedia entry for the NESCAC notes rather humorously that the conference is home to “ten small liberal arts colleges and one medium-sized research university.” See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_England_Small_College_Athletic_Conference.

² Though as a campus tour guide who visited our class this semester informed us, the “quirky” reputation is so pervasive that the Admissions Office discourages guides from using the term on their tours.

³ However, the possibility of a generous financial aid package from Tufts assuaged some of my father's concerns, and my mom saw Tufts as an opportunity for me to connect with the Cambodian-American community in Lowell, the largest of its kind on the east coast.

⁴ As I learned on the visit, the team had won a grand total of *three* games over the previous two seasons. I eventually enrolled at Williams College. My sophomore season, Tufts beat Williams along its steady march to the top of the NESCAC.

⁵ To honor Gittleman's career and retirement at the 2017 Commencement, David Harris, the current provost and himself a sociologist, jokingly observed that he held "Sol's job."

⁶ Sol Gittleman. 2004. *An Entrepreneurial University: The Transformation of Tufts, 2002-2017*. Medford, MA: Tufts University Press, p. 24.

⁷ Colin Campbell. 1986. "Jean Mayer's Decade at Tufts: A Stamp of Passion." 8 June. <http://www.nytimes.com/1986/06/08/us/jean-mayer-s-decade-at-tufts-a-stamp-of-passion.html>.

⁸ Henry Giroux. 2014. *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.

⁹ Natasha K. Warikoo. 2016. *The Diversity Bargain: And Other Dilemmas of Race, Admissions, and Meritocracy at Elite Universities*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

¹⁰ <https://www.tufts.edu/about/mission-vision>.

¹¹ Daniel Caron. 2014. "Tufts Student Action Releases HaltTheHike Demands Following Tuition Increase Announcement." 14 November. *The Tufts Daily*. <https://tuftsdaily.com/news/2016/11/14/tufts-student-action-releases-haltthehike-demands-following-tuition-increase-announcement/>.

¹² <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/01/18/upshot/some-colleges-have-more-students-from-the-top-1-percent-than-the-bottom-60.html?mtrref=www.google.com&gwh=FCE619BC13D919D0727391BFABA53C83&gw t=pay>.

¹³ Lani Guinier. 2014. *The Tyranny of the Meritocracy: Democratizing Higher Education in America*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

¹⁴ <https://alumniandfriends.tufts.edu/brighterworld>.

1. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: A JUMBO DEBATE By: Sonia Groeneveld

At elite American universities such as Tufts, college admissions offices every year dispense informational packets to visitors filled with images of manicured lawns and pristine facilities. These pamphlets make it difficult to miss the smiling, attractive, and unmistakably racially diverse model students adorning the cover. An inside peak into how admissions offices view applications based on race currently reflects a historically disputed practice that originates from discriminatory methods but is upheld through rationales of diversity and remediation. Nevertheless, as this chapter will describe in detail, affirmative action has become a controversial yet crucial part of the American higher educational system. The tensions found in the practice of affirmative action between these rationales for diversity and remediation stem from the strain between equality, selectivity, elitism, and heterogeneity in higher education. All in all, affirmative action is a practice that aims to both promote an educational culture with students from a variety of backgrounds and life experiences and to even the playing field: a field that has never been color-blind.

The Diversity Rationale

A substantial factor that plays into the desire for admissions offices to use affirmative action is that a diverse student body is expected at any elite college. College admissions websites advertise the diverse racial makeup of their incoming classes in order to promote their status as an institution that attracts students of all backgrounds. However, this advertisement often entices white students more than it does minorities. When colleges talk about diversity, they often do so in a way that speaks of it as a means for improving the white experience at their respective school. The current climate provides evidence that students “needed racial diversity and integration to bolster their self-worth and to develop their identities as non-racist elites.”¹ Thus, by being in a diverse classroom, white students are able to feel upstanding about their newfound exposure to different cultural backgrounds. This perpetuates a white centered ideal for admissions practices.

Universities often advertise diversity as one of their biggest selling points to prospective students and families. Admissions offices reach this diverse student body through affirmative action. The diversity rationale is supported largely through the idea that it contributes to the collective merit of the campus community.² The concept of neoliberal multiculturalism³ is also brought to the table when it comes to the merits of racial diversity on campus. This asserts that ethnic identities and exposure to diversity produces market assets for the leaders of tomorrow who are educated in elite colleges today. However, this idea of neoliberal multiculturalism emphasizes the benefits that white students rather than the minorities themselves receive from affirmative action for diversity. The concept assumes a colorblind neutrality in society that does not and has never existed. It claims that the product of such programs as affirmative action will be collective merit in that a diverse workforce will be more successful. Neoliberal

multiculturalism disassociates with the “racist America” and presents diversity in an overly palatable way. It fails to acknowledge that fact that campus diversity will not benefit all racial groups equally, because incoming students will inevitably treat others differently because of their race whether it be explicitly, implicitly, or as has become more common recently through microaggressions. Later in this chapter Tufts will be used as a case study on how these intentions for diversity can lead to tangled racial tensions on college campuses.

Nevertheless, research has shown that many minority students see the collective merit produced from diversity as also benefitting themselves. Interviews show that “black and Latino students did not see it as their responsibility to teach their white peers; instead, they too saw themselves as benefitting from campus diversity.”⁴ The push for the diversity rationale is accompanied by the caveat that campuses are historically white and wealthy. This norm is practically impossible to avoid on most campuses, where the culture, character, and typical students are all predominately white.⁵ Many hope that affirmative action practices will move to being thought of more in the context of this elitism, and more thoughtfully as to how increasing diversity can be used to unify rather than stratify a student body. Despite this, racial diversity is inarguably a valuable part of a college experience. This is a central reason as to why colleges still keep up racial preferences in admissions practices today.

The Remedial Rationale

The remedial rationale for affirmative action emphasizes the idea that race has an impact on a student’s application. This rationale is often at odds with the belief in meritocracy in higher education.⁶ Many law suits have recently been brought to court against the remedial rationale. One example is the 2016 Supreme Court Case *Fisher vs. University of Texas* where a white Abigail Fisher went all the way to the supreme court in suing the University of Texas for denying her admission. She claimed that affirmative action unfairly privileges black and Latino applicants and hurts white students. Fisher ultimately lost her case, but the message that she sent out is dangerous in that it hinges on an overreliance of the “testocracy” in college admissions.⁷ GPA and test scores should not be considered as the only markers for merit. One’s life experiences, which are inevitably tied with one’s race, still are important factors for admissions. Although the court ruled in favor of affirmative action in *Fisher*, the ruling actually declared the remedial rationale as unconstitutional where they stated that universities are not equipped to determine both the extent of the existence of and potential remedies for racial discrimination.⁸ Justice Kennedy was quoted in his conclusion for the case saying that diversity benefits are “the only interest that this Court has approved in this context.”⁹ The truth of the matter is however, that as long as racial inequalities exist in America, remedial admissions processes can be seen as a fair solution to balancing these inequalities. A college application is about the student as a whole; in order to evaluate students holistically, knowing their racial background can oftentimes give admissions officers a feel for certain struggles minority students may have faced that their white peers wouldn’t understand.

Just as the notion of elitism ties in with the diversity rationale, it also fits with the remedial rationale. With affirmative action being a widely acknowledged admissions process among college communities, it is inevitable that white or Asian students, such as Abigail Fisher, may resent minority students. Students who do not benefit from affirmative action may feel that since the racial minority sitting next to them in class was perhaps only admitted on the basis of the color of their skin, they are entitled to a sense of superiority over the fact that they didn't receive this admissions boost. This plays into the ideal of political correctness on college campuses, because these mindsets are absolutely prevalent across elite education. However, since this sort of racial resentment¹⁰ towards minorities is likely to be met with sharp criticism, students will keep these latently racist thoughts to themselves and never be able to discuss them in order to learn. The stigma that comes with affirmative action admitting processes leads to such comments from black students as "I'm tired of having my achievements doubted."¹¹ Thus, the largely hushed-up intrinsically racist culture of American society that we see today is evidently reflected in communities of higher education.

The financial aspect of college also promotes a sense of elitism among the racially and financially privileged on college campuses. Historically, financial privilege and racial privilege often go hand in hand. Underrepresented minorities are much less likely to be able to afford the hefty price tags that come with private four-year colleges in America. With a different race and socioeconomic status from the majority of campus, it is no wonder that "black students, in particular, often experience the social side of college life on predominately white campuses as a struggle."¹² Affirmative action opening the gates to admission for underrepresented minorities is one thing, but actually ensuring that these students feel as if they are a welcomed part of the campus community is a whole other ordeal that administrations often are failing in. Thus, the benefits and drawbacks of affirmative action are felt on varied levels by different racial groups.

Exclusion and Inclusion

In the present day, high performing Asian Americans are having affirmative action work against them in the college admissions process. There are too many overqualified students in this demographic to fit the racial make-up desires of colleges. In 1996, citizens of California voted to put into law proposition 209¹³, which prohibits public universities from using race as a factor in their admissions procedures. The effect of this is that California public universities enroll a disproportionate number of Asian-American students as compared to the general state population. This in turn has led to significant declines in Latino and Black student enrollments at these schools and the increased feelings of alienation among these minorities¹⁴. The exclusion of Asian Americans has led to many wrongly assuming in the discourse of affirmative action that Asian Americans share a social location with either African Americans or whites.¹⁵ This tension between a complete meritocracy and racially inclusive practices is one that needs a fine line drawn. Affirmative action has become a tool for colleges to try to balance this strain.

In essence, affirmative action has become a vital part of the elite college admissions process. It allows for racial diversity to promote collective merit and provides

remediation to advance racial equality in the American higher educational system and beyond. Despite its deviation from meritocracy, affirmative action has done its intended job in further diversifying college campuses and opening opportunities for minorities; however, the competing goals of the process often produce a tangled web of who truly gets the most benefit out of race decisions in admissions.

Emphasizing Diversity at Tufts

The Tufts University Office of Undergraduate Admissions has throughout the decades shifted to support the ever-growing entrepreneurial desires of the school. A racially diverse student body will bring higher elite status and increased outside monetary donations to Tufts. College administrators have shifted to prioritizing positive marketing such as “the ratings game of *U.S. News & World Report*...[which] led admissions officials to pressure their institutions to provide better and more attractive services and amenities”¹⁶ One such amenity is the student-turned-customer expectation for a diverse campus. Thus, universities such as Tufts are incentivized by market gains to promote affirmative action through the diversity rationale especially. The current dealings at Tufts with regard to affirmative action focus on the administration’s desire to be a diverse campus along with the need to reconcile racial tensions from those who promote neoliberal multiculturalism and minority students who feel largely ignored.

Along with most other elite institutions, Tufts has emphasized the diversity rationale as their primary reason for upholding affirmative action. On the admissions website, a “Diversity and Inclusion” page highlights the racial breakdown of the student body in 2016. The undergraduate student body is advertised to be 43.4% non-white,¹⁷ a number likely to impress prospective students who are looking for their expected diverse elite college experience. In an interview on Tufts affirmative action policies with former provost Jamshed Bharucha in 2007, Bharucha noted “the importance of building a diverse class because that’s critical to the educational experience of all of our students.”¹⁸ These examples highlight how universities predominately emphasize the diversity rationale over the remedial rationale when it comes to defending affirmative action. Since the former is thought of as producing more for the collective merit of the university, schools like Tufts will promote this notion of campus diversity heavily because it is more likely to appeal to not only students of color but also to white students who see a diverse campus as a more elite one.

However, with advocating for the diversity rationale, Tufts is susceptible to promoting neoliberal multiculturalism in that it sees diversity with a colorblind lens that justifies affirmative action as benefitting all racial groups evenly. In reality, “to dismiss the societal implications of race by simply not seeing it would be to buy into the White supremacist notion of society as a meritocracy.”¹⁹ Thus, the inherent issue with neoliberal multiculturalism is emphasized. The principle itself is explicitly advertised as a route for racial equality, yet it fails to acknowledge that a colorblind ideal is implicitly racist. When Tufts supports the diversity rationale in defending affirmative action, it often fails to acknowledge that when this selected diverse class comes to campus, the “collective merit” that is so palatably advertised is not so evenly distributed among whites and

minorities. This oftentimes leads to racially charged tensions on campuses; the university's recent history exemplifies some of these strains.

Tension-filled Results

The Tufts admissions office however does in a way factor in the remedial rationale by utilizing a holistic approach when reviewing applicants. A handful of Tufts students have expressed their dissent for this rationale and its implications in seemingly giving minority students an unfair upper hand in admissions decisions. Up until its disassociation in 2013, a large amount of student dissent to affirmative action policies at Tufts were voiced in the conservative student publication *The Primary Source*. The publication created a notable controversy when they released "O Come All Ye Black Folk", a self-stated satirical Christmas carol claiming that Black freshman were only at Tufts because of affirmative action. A line from the song read "We need you now to fill our racial quotas...O come, let us accept them...Fifty-two black freshmen."²⁰ This song received widespread criticism across campus, but school administrators advised students not to overreact. This staunch retaliation against affirmative action in Tufts admissions policies highlights the tension between the ideal of a meritocracy and both the diversity and remedial rationales when it comes to admissions policies.

Despite affirmative action acting with the intention to diversify the student body and provide greater opportunity for minorities, too often these minority groups still feel isolated and underrepresented on campuses like Tufts. In 2015, around 200 Tufts students marched from Barnum Hall to stand in solidarity for the lack of action that administrators have shown in combatting racism on college campuses. The march titled "the Three Percent" was similar to other protests happening at other elite schools. During the march, a Tufts student read aloud "we, the Black students at Tufts University, have been overwhelmed with anger, sadness, and pain at the violation of the humanity and dignity of Black students throughout college campuses across America."²¹ Among other items for increased racial justice, the student activists called for an increase in the number of black-identifying students admitted to Tufts, as recent statistics advertised that only three percent of the student body are Black.²² These protests highlight the fact that affirmative action alone is not enough to paint the pleasantly diverse student body that admissions officers desire. American society still has not fully broken out of its history of marginalizing minorities, so why would the American college campuses that feed from and into this society be any different? Still, affirmative action is a necessary process in admissions in order to be able to produce a student body where these tensions can be discussed and minorities can have a larger voice; even if the underlying intentions for affirmative action are not always for the benefit of those who it is advertised.

All in all, affirmative action at Tufts and other schools across America has been able to produce more diverse student bodies and open up opportunities to underrepresented minorities. However, oftentimes colleges lean into neoliberal multiculturalism when advocating for diversity and forget that no member of the campus community is actually colorblind. Therefore, schools like Tufts must use affirmative action in such a way that they promote diversity beyond using it as a marketing strategy. These tensions surrounding the intentions of affirmative action are what admissions

offices must resolve today in order to bring about a more promising future for all of higher education.

Endnotes

- ¹ Warikoo, 110, *The Diversity Bargain*
- ² Warikoo, *The Diversity Bargain*
- ³ Warikoo, *The Diversity Bargain*
- ⁴ Warikoo, 99, *The Diversity Bargain*
- ⁵ Stevens, *Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites*
- ⁶ Warikoo, *The Diversity Bargain*
- ⁷ Poon and Segoshi, *Review of The Tyranny of the Meritocracy: Democratizing Higher Education in America*
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- ¹⁰ Warikoo, 101, *The Diversity Bargain*
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- ¹³ Chan and Eyster, "Does Banning Affirmative Action Lower College Student Quality?"
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- ¹⁶ Gittleman, 314, *An Entrepreneurial University*
- ¹⁷ Tufts Undergraduate Admissions Diversity Data
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- ¹⁹ Chatillon-Reed, 19, *An Investigation into White Tufts University Students' Awareness of Issues of Race and Racism*
- ²⁰ Saviano, "Our Forgotten Publication"
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2. SPORTS, POWER, AND HIGHER EDUCATION

BY Catherine DiRe

College athletics has grown into a multi-billion dollar industry that is taking over higher education.¹ A university's power relies upon that university's status and reputation and the prestige that comes with being a graduate; college athletics have become essential in maintaining that power². A school's athletic ranking has become an indication of that school's overall status, placing great pressure on universities to expand their athletics programs and to invest in athletic facilities in order to improve a university's prominence and make the university competitive. The importance of college athletics has also grown as neoliberalism – the favoring of free market capitalism – has become more popular within the world of higher education and as athletics have proven to be a profitable investment. It is clear that a strong athletics program has become a key element of higher education as it is a way for universities to demonstrate prestige while also bringing in money, both of which are essential in maintaining status, and therefore power.

Sports and Masculinity

In a patriarchal society, masculinity is essential in exhibiting power and importance; therefore, sports hold an almost sacred place within American society, as “macho” sports, like football, etc., function as a means of showcasing masculinity and accumulating respect. In the mid 19th century, when intercollegiate sports began with boat racing, it was insignificant in relation to college life in general and was controlled solely by students.³ It wasn't until 1869 that the first intercollegiate football game ever took place between Rutgers and Princeton. Shortly after that first football game at Rutgers, universities everywhere would begin forming their own sports teams. Although sports originally were unimportant in the world of higher education, by the 1930's, the size and grandeur of a university's football field would become a symbol of that university's status, showing the power that sports possess in higher education². Around the same time that college athletics rose to prominence, there was, as Stevens puts it, “a cultural anxiety surrounding the fate of masculinity.”⁴ The Industrial Revolution contributed to corporations becoming increasingly bureaucratically complex as they grew in size. Men were now spending most of their time sitting behind desks, which made many feel emasculated. In response to the growing number of bureaucratic jobs, new forms of masculine recreation evolved that enabled men to connect with their masculinity and reject any feminization. Sports, seen as being masculine and competitive, became fundamental to the re-establishment of masculinity. The game of football, arguably the most macho of sports, took on new importance within American society. Football, whether you were watching or playing it, became viewed as the ultimate way in which one could prove their masculinity.⁵ Sports began to have a greater presence within American society and became heavily valued as they served as a means of exhibiting masculinity in a strong patriarchal society.

At the same time as this gender crisis, many universities sought ways to expand their clientele, primarily to wealthy men. The desire to attract a student body composing of wealthy men would not only help that university gain large donations, but it would

also expand that university's cultural influence.⁶ Many universities went about attracting this masculine, wealthy clientele by producing an undergraduate life that was fun and appealing, with a focus on sporting masculinity. Sports, especially football, became greatly emphasized in college life in order to attract more male students at a time when many men were in search of a way to engage with their masculinity. Administrative support for college athletics grew and almost instantly, sports became a vital aspect of college life. Thousands of fans flocked to games each weekend and rivalries between schools increased passion for the sport, as well as school spirit. It soon became apparent how profitable investing in sports could be, as the Harvard-Yale game of 1905 generated more than one-third of the money that Harvard made from tuition from all its students⁷.

Neoliberalism's Influence on College Athletics

Giroux discusses how the lure of lucrative partnerships within college athletics has become almost irresistible to universities and that it has changed the culture of universities across the country. In a capitalistic society that values profit, sports are an easy way to bring in money. Many universities, even small, Division III schools, engage in relationships with private sector corporations, whether it be through sponsorships, media contracts, or merchandizing; these deals can generate millions of dollars. Universities also invest millions of dollars to attract star athletes, pay coaches, maintain facilities, and buy equipment. Giroux argues that, "the circulation of money and power on university campuses mimics its circulation in the corporate world."⁸ Universities are now acting like major corporations, working to generate as much profit as possible, which often means spending millions of dollars each year investing in their athletics programs, as the sports industry is highly lucrative. Not to mention, alumni favor big time athletic empires, especially ones that win, which puts a greater pressure on these universities to maintain and expand their sports programs.⁹ Sports now have an immeasurable presence on college campuses and in American society as a whole. The NCAA has become a hugely successful organization, with over 450 employees, some being paid more than \$1 million a year.¹⁰ The profit that sports programs have generated has given them immeasurable power within the university.

Sol Gittleman argues that the NCAA has become "guardians of authority and academic standards as coaches gradually replaced university presidents as the standard bearer of the institution."¹¹ The money that big sports generates has given these programs enormous influence in shaping agendas within the university.¹² Often times, these agendas are shaped to play to the advantage of sports programs, which are unregulated by any central authority. What can be seen now is the growing emphasis of college athletics at universities across the country and across all divisions. Even at small, Division III schools, college athletes can make up over 40% of the class and many of these schools often field more teams, on average, than Division I schools.¹³ As sports teams are given more power within the university, it is no wonder that sports have become institutionalized within higher education and a fundamental part of college life.

The power that sports now hold within most universities can be seen as a direct contradiction of the original ideals of higher education. Universities were initially meant to educate and enlighten students, not focus on athletics; this changed, however, as the world of higher education became increasingly competitive in a strongly capitalistic

society. Universities became forced to find other means of creatively bringing in revenue in order to maintain competitiveness.¹⁴ Athletics proved to be an effective way of bringing in this necessary outside revenue, so sports became increasingly important among universities. The increasing importance of sports within higher education has often pulled valuable resources and attention away from academics. This leaves many wondering if universities are getting sidetracked by the capitalistic allure of sports that they are no longer prioritizing education as they are intended to. Instead of spending money on giving scholarships or investing in new academic buildings, a lot of this money is going towards recruiting athletes and improving athletic facilities. Instead of maintaining academic selectivity, many universities are admitting athletes who are often under-qualified.¹⁵ Universities are no longer places that are centered on getting an education, but have become places that are also focused on athletics. It can be difficult for universities to operate while attempting to fulfill two functions, like academics and athletics, which can at times be contradictory to one another.

Sports as a Means of Measuring Excellence

College athletics have risen to such a position of prominence that athletics have become a fundamental aspect of most universities and influences most other aspects of university life. Mitchell Stevens states, “status is a particularly important feature of higher education, because the fundamental social power of colleges and universities lies in their ability to confer status, in the form of academic credentials, to graduates.”¹⁶ If status is a fundamental aspect of the success of a university, then sports have also become fundamental to a university’s success. College universities have been left to create their own systems of status, one of which being athletic league affiliation, which is often times at odds with other means of measuring status, like academic selectivity.¹⁷ College sports have become a symbol of status and prestige for many universities, making sports essential in maintaining a competitive university, academically and not just athletically.

Universities are often assessed on how elite they are based upon who their top competitors are and how well they perform against these competitors. There is a great pressure among universities to compete with elite universities in order to establish their own status as an elite university.¹⁸ The best example of the importance of league affiliation can be seen with the Ivy League. The Ivy League – originally created based upon a football league – has come to signify great academic excellence.¹⁹ By competing athletically against competitive schools, schools are securing their ranking within the academic hierarchy, increasing their cultural presence and affording them great power. A competitive sports program may distinguish a university by fostering a strong school identity and a strong sense of community, distinguishing that university from other schools and garnering overall support for that university. Students often feel a sense of school pride and loyalty when sports teams beat other competitive schools, as it is a concrete way of comparing elite universities and naming one supreme. Maintaining a competitive sports program has now become essential to maintaining a selective, elite university that can be compared to other elite universities.

The influence of neoliberalism in American society has had a direct effect on higher education and the role that athletics play within it. Universities, now acting like large corporations, are interested in profiting in any area possible. As soon as college

athletics were seen as being lucrative, universities across the country began to heavily invest in their own athletics programs. The emphasis on college athletics has grown tremendously in recent years and, as a result, the competitiveness of a school's sports programs have become an indicator of the competitiveness of a school's academics. It is through the power that athletics hold in the everyday operating and decision making of universities that it can be seen how academics and athletics are intertwined in the world of higher education.

Athletics at Tufts

A university's power lies in the status of that university and in the esteem behind the university's name and reputation.²⁰ The importance of college athletics has increased dramatically among schools across the country as sports have proven to be a valuable way of gaining university recognition and prominence, as well as bringing in profit. Tufts University has proven to be no exception to this trend, as the university has invested billions of dollars in its athletics programs just in the past decade.²¹ Tufts, like many other universities, has begun to prioritize its athletics programs more so than it did in the past. The rise of sports at Tufts can be attributed to the success of its men's lacrosse team, the first team at Tufts to ever win a national championship. The success of the Tufts men's lacrosse team brought recognition and prosperity to Tufts, prompting the university to invest more in its athletics programs.

Tufts, a small, Division III school, initially did not place a great emphasis on athletics. The administration viewed athletics as being a distraction from academics and was hesitant to direct funds that could go towards academics towards improving athletics programs.²² Unlike large state schools, small universities, like Tufts, could not afford to allocate large amounts of resources to its sports programs; doing so also didn't serve to benefit schools like Tufts in the same way that it did larger universities. Even after Tufts joined the New England Small Colleges Athletic Conference in 1971, athletics remained relatively insignificant.²³ The role of sports at Tufts changed, however, in 2010, when the Tufts men's lacrosse team won their first ever NESCAC championship, followed by their first ever NCAA Division III National Championship. Both of these championship wins were not only the first for the team, but for the school, as well. Prior to 2010, no team at Tufts had ever won a NESCAC Championship, nor a National Championship; never mind both, in the same year.²⁴ The 2010 National Championship was the first time that Tufts experienced national recognition in the world of athletics.

A Turning Point

The 2010 National Championship became a turning point for the athletics program at Tufts; the men's lacrosse team went from never winning a championship to winning 7 consecutive NESCAC championships from 2010-2016 and 2 consecutive NCAA National Championships from 2014-2015.²⁵ During this time, Tufts was at the top of Division III lacrosse and became prominent in the world of college sports. The team was suddenly experiencing a great deal of publicity and news coverage as public interest in the team, and the school, increased.²⁶ The Tufts men's lacrosse team's YouTube channel, which posts clips and highlights from games, increased in popularity; thousands were suddenly viewing videos that once only had a few hundred views.²⁷ The most significant marker of prominence, though, was in 2015, when STX, a sports equipment company, sponsored

the men's lacrosse team. The sponsorship made the Tufts men's lacrosse team the first Division III team to be sponsored by a major company,²⁸ signaling to other schools and teams that the Tufts men's lacrosse team was one of the best in the nation. For one of the first times in history, Tufts athletics was gaining national recognition.

The Power of a Name

The winning streak of the men's lacrosse team uplifted the athletics program as a whole at Tufts, which had a positive impact on the university academically. As Tufts athletics become more competitive, the university gained name recognition and prestige, which is essential in the world of higher education. The power of a university lies in its status and its reputation; the more prominent the university, the more meaningful a degree from that university is.²⁹ Building a name is, therefore, an important component to being a powerful, high-ranking university. When the Tufts men's lacrosse team began to prosper, they gave Tufts a lot of exposure and name recognition. Many people began to hear about Tufts as the Tufts athletics programs rose to prominence, making Tufts relevant among elite institutions. It was through the success of its athletics programs that Tufts was able to prove its competitiveness. By competing against, and beating, academically strong rivals on the field, Tufts was not only gaining notability, but Tufts was also proving that it was a force to be reckoned with in the world of higher education.

The success of the lacrosse team brought in an influx of higher quality student athletes who previously may never have considered Tufts. Student athletes often want a school that is strong academically, but that also has competitive athletics; as the men's lacrosse team got more exposure and won more games, better high school athletes were more inclined to choose Tufts over other rival schools.³⁰ Tufts was always academically competitive against other NESCAC schools, but what would truly set Tufts apart from rivals would be its ability to beat those other schools on the sports field. A strong sports program is indicative of the overall competitiveness of a school and a good way to attract student athletes who are looking at similarly academically ranked schools.³¹ Private, for-profit universities, make most of their money through tuition. This tuition dependence means that schools must be competitive and adaptable in order to attract and retain students.³² The stronger that Tufts' sports programs were, the easier it was to bring in better student athletes who would help to further strengthen the athletics programs. Tufts, a school that once had never won a league championship, was quickly becoming a leader in the world of college lacrosse, and college athletics, in general.

Tufts Chooses to Invest In Sports

Around the same time in which Tufts began to see success with their men's lacrosse team, Tufts also began to invest in its sports programs and sports facilities.³³ As the Tufts sports teams became more successful, Tufts saw an increase in donations from big donors. The more successful the university's athletics teams were, the more inclined alumni were to donate.³⁴ The men's lacrosse team, arguably the most successful team at Tufts, receives more alumni donations than any other team on campus.³⁵ It became clear to administrators that investing in sports would not only garner name recognition, but that it would also prove to be a profitable investment for the university. After a large donation from alumni Steve Tisch, Tufts built a brand new, state of the art sports facility in 2012, just two years after the men's lacrosse team won their first NCAA National

Championship.³⁶ In just the past five years, Tufts has invested a tremendous amount of money towards upgrading its fields and weight rooms.³⁷ Prior to the 2010 championship win, athletics were not a priority for administrators. This indifference clearly changed as Tufts has spent billions of dollars in just the past 7 years revamping its sports facilities.³⁸

Neoliberalism has become a strong part of higher education as universities strive to bring in as much money as possible in order to invest in the school. As David Labaree discusses, American universities could not survive in such a competitive market on just donations and tuition; so, universities were forced to develop a self-supporting, decentralized system that functioned in a capitalistic society.³⁹ The influence of neoliberalism has made it so that the more money that a school is able to bring in, the more powerful that school is. Harvard, one of the most powerful, well known universities, has the largest endowment.⁴⁰ Part of this competitive, capitalism system includes creatively pursuing any forms of outside revenue; athletics are just one way in which universities can bring in money in order to improve their status.⁴¹

The success of the men's lacrosse team prompted the Tufts administration to begin putting money into its athletics facilities as it began to see how beneficial having a strong sports program could be. The wins of the men's lacrosse team brought sponsorships, donations, and publicity; all, which not only helped the university to gain prestige, but also helped the university profit.⁴² Having new, cutting edge sports facilities, therefore, became essential. High quality athletics programs bring in revenue and signal that that university is prosperous and competitive. Powerful, successful universities will often have the best facilities, as it is a way to display status and show that that university has the power and resources to invest in its athletics. Outdated facilities can be a sign that a university is struggling financially and incapable of being competitive.

Impacts of a Sports Revolution

Athletics went from being insignificant at Tufts, to being an essential part of campus life, due in part to increased administrative support and the success of various sports teams. Since 2010, varsity sports teams at Tufts have won 15 national championships, and in 2018, Tufts will establish an Athletics Hall of Fame.⁴³ The excitement and energy surrounding athletics at Tufts closely resembles that of a Division I school; it is clear that sports have become an integral part of the Tufts atmosphere.

The more that athletics dominate life at Tufts, the more power that athletics hold in the everyday operations of the university, which could drastically change the original mission of a university, creating a conflict for administrators.⁴⁴ As previously discussed, universities have become market driven and have looked to athletics to provide much needed outside revenue. The result of this is that many schools have become reliant on their sports teams, which can cause conflict for administrators when it comes at odds with other aspects of a university.⁴⁵ Administrators are then forced to decide which to prioritize, adhering to a university's original intent, or compromising that intent in order to make the university stronger in a highly competitive market.

An area where this conflict is evident is with admissions policies. Gittleman discusses this tension, explaining how the decision to commit to a big time athletics program means not questioning whether to admit athletes by a different academic standard, as athletes are often under-qualified.⁴⁶ Gittleman goes on to emphasize

how this decision impacts a university, stating, “That means a change in admissions policy and a profound shift in the university’s focus.”⁴⁷ A school’s academic standards are often indicative of the overall priorities and goals of that school, therefore, changing admissions policies means to change the objectives of a school. Consequently, administrators are forced to decide whether or not they are willing to compromise their original objective in order to be more competitive.

As Tufts athletics grew, the university was forced to deal with the conflict of how to handle their admissions policy with regards to athletes. The university decided to maintain a similar standard for athletes as it did for regular applicants. Coaches at Tufts must work with admissions directors to recruit athletes who are also academically strong. The men’s lacrosse team must have a GPA of roughly 3.5 and an average ACT score of 30, which is only slightly lower than the overall school average of a 4.05 GPA and a 32 ACT score.⁴⁸ The university, however, is still lenient with the admissions of athletes. The more qualified athletes that are recruited to a team, the more room a coach has to recruit under-qualified athletes. Tufts handled this tension by mandating a team average GPA and ACT score so that coaches had more leniency with recruiting as they were able to decide for themselves which athletes to prioritize in order to meet the average.⁴⁹ Requiring high team average scores allows Tufts to be both academically rigorous and athletically competitive so that they are not forced to sacrifice their original focus.

A School Transformed

The 2010 NCAA Men’s Lacrosse National Championship proved to be a turning point for Tufts University as it prompted the university to invest in its athletics programs; this would forever change the role that sports held at Tufts. As higher education became more competitive and market oriented, universities sought ways to establish themselves and bring in external revenue in order to better compete with rival schools. The success of the Tufts men’s lacrosse team, which began with their 2010 championship win, proved that sports can be valuable in this endeavor as it helped Tufts gain the name recognition and outside revenue to rise to prominence, both athletically, and academically.

Endnotes

¹ Weaver, Trophies, Treasure, And Turmoil: College Athletics At A Tipping Point

² Stevens, Creating a Class

³ Stevens, Creating a Class

⁴ Stevens, Creating a Class

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⁶ Stevens, Creating a Class

⁷ Schonfeld, The Game of Life

⁸ Giroux, Neoliberalism’s War on Higher Education

⁹ Giroux, Neoliberalism’s War on Higher Education

¹⁰ Weaver, Trophies, Treasure, And Turmoil: College Athletics At A Tipping Point

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 13 Bowman, Reclaiming the Game
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 17 Labaree, A Perfect Mess
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3. EXCLUSION OF BLACK STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION By Yohanna Georgis

As higher education is becoming increasingly relevant in the lives of students across the nation, both its purpose and the selectivity in has recently been under tight scrutiny. Universities often boast about their selective admissions process which includes a series of steps and systems to ensure that they are admitting only the brightest and most qualified students. Universities are then meant to serve as a catalyst for these high-promising students to carry out the school's purpose, which although varies from institution to institution, places a heavy emphasis on acquiring and applying knowledge to become an active and engaged citizen. With this supposed system, students should be admitted based solely on their merit, and universities should be invested in all of their students to ensure that they successfully fulfill the university's mission-based purpose. However, with this system being rooted in the same unequal socioeconomic and sociopolitical systems that have existed historically, it is instead designed to benefit its white, male, protestant applicants over anyone else. Of the many groups of people discriminated against in higher education, this paper will examine the experience of Black students in particular. Black applicants are excluded from higher education due to selective admissions processes being disguised as a meritocracy and the change from a mission-driven to an admission-driven higher education system overlooking the black students.

Meritocracy

Many of the supposed measures of merit used to classify students in the admissions process are ineffective and based on prolonged white supremacy. For example, ^{elite} universities place a great emphasis on admitting students that have highest standardized testing scores in the country, particularly SAT scores. The reason for the large emphasis on SAT scores is that college admissions claim that SAT scores are an indicator of a student's performance in their first year of college. Not only is this correlation weak, with only 2.7 percent of grade variance in the first year of college being effectively predicted by the SAT, but there is a stronger correlation between SAT scores and wealth as well as race. White students on average score 298 points higher than black students, and those with a family income of \$20,000-\$40,000 score 312 points lower than their peers who have a family income of more than \$200,000¹. Because of institutionalized racism, white students generally come from wealthier families that have the resources to put them through SAT prep and rigorous high school educations that adequately prepare them for the exam. Given these additional resources, they have an advantage over their black peers. In addition to "underperforming" on the SAT due to lack of preparatory resources, black students also underperform because of a phenomenon called stereotype threat. This threat "describe[s] the anxiety a person may experience when he or she has the potential to confirm a negative stereotype about his or her social group,"². Therefore the SAT is not an accurate measure of merit, rather it is a accurate measure of privilege.

Another way admissions deviates from a meritocracy is by the preference given to legacy students, those whose parents or grandparents had attended the institution before

them. The motive for this preference is that by having a family line attend the same institution, they are more likely to become regular donors. In addition, alumni donation directly correlates to prestige, as the U.S. News & World report lists alumni donations as one of their criteria for college rankings³. Given that black people have historically been excluded from higher education, the number of black applicants who have legacies in these institutions is drastically smaller than their white peers. Admissions also actively recruits wealthy students to be admitted with the intention of inviting their families to be donors. These students, known as “development admits,” are “substantially under qualified and have no familial connection to the school... their primary qualification is the money their parents are expected to give to the school upon acceptance.”⁴ Not only do black people generally possess less wealth due to historic socioeconomic oppression, which would make this type of recruitment impossible for them, but these under-qualified students are taking up spots in the incoming freshman class that could have possibly been given to a qualified black student.

In addition to recruiting wealthy students, college admissions also factor in relationships with high school guidance counselors. Active guidance counselors which are usually present in private schools and very well-funded public schools contact admissions to advocate for particular students, which in some cases is enough to admit a student that the admissions committee previously was unsure about. Many black people do not have access to good public schools and cannot afford private schools, so they do not have the opportunity to be supported by guidance counselors this committed. It is evident that in the admissions process, a great emphasis is placed on privilege and wealth, which black students are unable to benefit from.

Diversity Rationale

Although affirmative action may appear to have been designed to reverse these setbacks that black students encounter in the college admissions process, it is more of a tool used by institutions to make themselves look appealingly diverse. Critical race theory posits two legal rationales to justify the use of affirmative action. In the remedial rationale, affirmative action is used as a “remedy to compensate for past and current racial discrimination against students of color.”⁴ The diversity rationale, on the other hand, reasons that affirmative action should be maintained so that, “students of color are admitted so that they can help White students become more racially tolerant, liven up class dialogue, and prepare White students for a job in a multicultural, global economy.”⁵ It is evident from the constant emphasis that elite institutions put on the importance of a diverse class, that they use their diversity as a selling point to potential applicants. Even in the language used by Brown University’s website of admissions, this point is made clear: “throughout our long history of encouraging diversity, we have learned that it is this dynamic mix of individuals that makes for the most fascinating and productive undergraduate community,”⁶. Students of color are being exploited as diversity training tools for white students to be more functional in the professional world, and for white students to have an enhanced educational experience. If higher institutions were using remedial rationale as their justification for affirmative action, then these institutions would have implemented more initiatives to solve the issues their Black students

encounter, and not overlook them. In other words, they would have been more concerned with the well being of their Black students than the appealing image that Black students create for the school when they are admitted.

Supporting Students

Universities are not as focused on fulfilling their mission as they are on the selectivity of their incoming class, which causes them to overlook the support that black students need to succeed. With the mission of most universities being to utilize the knowledge that higher education provided them with to be successful, it is the duty of the university to ensure that its students are in fact thriving academically so that they can fulfill this mission. After the *Fisher vs. University of Texas Austin* case which upheld affirmative action, Justice Clarence Thomas argued what Guinier calls the “mismatch effect”; he argued that as a result of Black and Hispanic students being admitted into elite institutions that they are not necessarily well equipped for in terms of academic preparation, their underperformance is inevitable⁷. Although this may be true, the issue with his argument is that it views academic performance in university as a sink or swim environment. With a university claiming to grow students into future leaders, this should not be the case. Students should be given the resources they need in order to be successful in fulfilling the universities mission. There are many ways colleges are working to close this gap, however with the remaining disparity that remains between white and black students, these initiatives are not enough and black students are still being overlooked. For example, studies show that bridge programs or transitional programs have positively affected academic skills, academic self- efficacy, and first semester performance in college⁸. However, only 23% of colleges have summer bridge programs that give the opportunity for low income and students of color to benefit from these experiences⁹. In addition to being underprepared for the rigor of higher education, black students also suffer from the phenomenon mentioned earlier called stereotype threat, which is also a cause of their low achievement compared to their white peers. Whatever initiatives universities are taking to combat that, whether it be through counseling or additional programming, it is clearly not enough which is demonstrated by the fact that in 2004, 21% more Black students than white students who started college don't finish¹⁰. It is evident that as a whole, black students are not being brought up in the university setting in a manner that effectively sets them up to become more knowledgeable and successfully apply that knowledge in their lives and for the greater good.

In addition to not taking enough action to remedy the low academic performance of black students that are preventing them from being successful, universities also do not ensure the emotional and mental stability of black students that is necessary for them to not only be healthy but to succeed. Being in a predominately white institution, blacks struggle with social isolation, academic setbacks, and racial stereotyping, which takes a toll on their mental health that their white peers do not face. Therefore, it is necessary for there to be additional support for the mental health of black students so that they can perform as well as their white counterparts. Case studies of black students who obtain counseling from college mental health clinics, illustrates four modes of coping: withdrawal, separation, assimilation, and affirmation¹¹. It is necessary for mental healthcare

professionals to understand this so that black students can be given the support and treatment they need. In addition, general mistrust of whites from the black community is associated “with more negative general attitudes about seeking help from clinics staffed primarily by Whites and with an expectation that services rendered by white counselors would be less satisfactory,”¹². This sentiment from black college students reflects the need for diverse mental health care staff, so that black students are more comfortable seeking help so that they can thrive academically, and most importantly be healthy. However, most universities do not reflect this demand¹³. With such a large emphasis on the admissions process, universities have not adequately met the needs of black students once they arrive on campus.

Institutions of higher education have increasingly prioritized the importance of being selective in their admissions process by admitting students through a meritocracy, with the expectation that the university would provide these promising students with the tools they need to be excellent global citizens. However, meritocracy is a proxy for wealth that whites primarily benefit from, and universities have shifted away from a mission-based purpose and placed a greater focus on admitting students that “match” its rigor. These skewed system leaves black applicants at a disadvantage compared to their white counterparts, and the needs of black students to be overlooked and neglected. Ironically, even with affirmative action in place to supposedly remedy the discrimination that black students face in admissions, its purpose seems more to make the university look appealingly diverse to a majority of its applicants, as the university does not demonstrate adequate support black students once they matriculate.

PART B

The admissions process in higher education is generally understood to be designed in a way that assesses a student's merit and admits them so they can utilize the university's resources to grow into knowledgeable and active citizens. However, due to institutionalized racism, Black students are not assessed fairly in this supposed meritocracy and are not fully supported by the university due to an emphasis on admissions-based rather than mission-based admissions. This is evident by the disadvantages that Black students have in standardized testing, socioeconomic standing, and familial and fiscal ties to the university. Even with affirmative action in effect, the lack of support given to black students once they are admitted suggests that universities are more focused on making their admissions statistics appealing by diversifying the class rather than ensuring their students are adequately supported to fulfill the mission of the university. Even our home institution, Tufts University, is subjected to this criticism. Black students are not only discriminated against in the admissions process, but they are not properly supported as students by Tufts either. In response to the protests by Black students at the University of Missouri in 2015, Black students at Tufts began #TheThreePercent. The purpose of the movement was to liberate Black students at Tufts, and those who lead the movement wrote a list of demands in a letter issued to President Monaco, University Administrators, and the Board of Trustees. These demands were designed to be remedy the fact that the, “Black community has historically had [its] needs both dismissed and deferred by this institution,” and provide solutions to some of the

problems that the Black community faces at Tufts¹⁵. By analyzing how Tufts administration has attempted to remedy these problems through various programs versus how Black students have taken it upon themselves through the student-led #ThreePercent movement, and analyzing the admissions process, it is abundantly clear that Black students at Tufts are also excluded.

Meritocracy

Although Tufts does not release much official information about admissions that exposes its discriminatory system, it is clear even through limited information that black students have to overcome many barriers in the admissions process. During an interview with the Tufts Daily, Susan Ardizzoni who is the director of undergraduate admissions stated that being a legacy can certainly help an applicant¹⁶. With this being factored into the admissions process, black applicants are absolutely at a disadvantage as they historically have been excluded from higher education, decreasing their likelihood of having legacies compared to their white counterparts. This makes Tufts no different than other prestigious universities that also highly value familial connections. Another factor that harms black students in the Tufts admissions process, even more so than most universities in the country, is the economic disparity that exists between the black population and the rest of the country. Tufts is one of the few top-tier universities that is need-aware, not need-blind, meaning that family income plays a role in a student's admission decision in about 5% of applicants¹⁷. This means that Tufts reserves the right to admit a student they normally may not have because that student does not demonstrate any financial need. This is problematic to black students because they are at the lowest portion of the income curve in applicants, meaning that if they fall into that 5% pool of applicants, they could be denied on the basis of their high financial need. In addition, in an article recently published by the New York Times detailing the economic diversity of universities, Tufts was in the top-10 of a list of schools that had more students from the top 1% than the bottom 60% of the income scale¹⁷. The income distribution is highly representative of the accessibility of higher education; Tufts being dominated by students in the top 1%, who are almost entirely white, demonstrates the advantages that these students have over black students who have historically been excluded from the admissions process. Although Tufts releases close to no official information about racial breakdown of standardized test scores, guidance counselor interactions and developmental admits, it is evident even through this limited information that applicants are evaluated beyond their merit in ways that disadvantage black students.

#TheThreePercent

Discrimination of black applicants in higher education has not only been showcased through Tufts admissions, but also by the inadequate support that Tufts administration gives its black students. This lack of accountability for the Black community is caused by higher institutions becoming increasingly focused on creating a "diverse" class that makes them look desirable to applicants and donors. As a result, these institutions including Tufts are content with the presence of Black students on campus, and feel less inclined to ensuring that their Black students have the adequate resources and support

they need to utilize Tufts to fulfill its mission. One of the ways higher institutions are assured to have a “diverse” class is by admitting students through the basis of affirmative action. As previously mentioned, critical race theory posits both diversity rationale and remedial rationale to justify affirmative action. However, based on the issues present in the black community, it is evident that Tufts admissions used diversity rationale as their incentive for affirmative action. The problematic nature of this was well phrased in the Three Percent demands. In response to a letter President Monaco had sent out suggesting an increase in cross-racial dialogue to build a more inclusive community, the demands stated, “...the reality is that taking this suggestion would disproportionately benefit White students. An increase in cross-racial dialogue puts the burden of educating White people about race on people of Color, on whom the majority of the burden already is being placed, and this education is a labor... the perpetuation of institutional racism”¹⁸. To remedy this indirectly by implementing admissions policies that intentionally benefit black students, the first demand was to increase the number of Black identifying students to 13%¹⁹. Strategies to do this included recruiting Black students from urban public schools and implementing a need-blind policy. This fixes the previously mentioned problem of affirmative action mainly benefiting wealthier, more privileged black students. It is important to note that all these initiatives were made by students, not Tufts administration itself, suggesting that they are not as focused on the support of their students as they should be.

In addition to not regarding the greater good of black students in admissions policies, Tufts University administration also does not offer sufficient emotional and mental health support for its black students. This is particularly detrimental to black students who are attending Tufts already disadvantaged, and need additional resources to succeed. For example, as previously mentioned, Black college students face many issues being in a predominately white institution that takes a toll on their mental health, including the ones at Tufts. The 2013 Diversity Report highlighted this by addressing the issue that adequate counseling services were not provided for Black students²⁰. In response, Tufts issued almost no new changes, and did not hire a single full-time Black counselor in two years. As a solution, #TheThreePercent demanded the, “Hiring [of] no less than two full-time Black counselors that specifically cater to the needs of Black students.”²¹ Again, this ties into the priorities of elite institutions including Tufts; because a class is more defined by its demographics and admissions statistics, the needs of its students are not as prioritized as they should be.

Even prior to #TheThreePercent, funding for the Africana Center was limited, but this financial need is especially increased given that the demands have asked for an increase in enrollment of Black students. Therefore, one of the demands asks for increasing funding for the Africana Center, but recognizes that, “additional money to the Center that is not directly tied to additional student agency will undermine not only the mission of the Africana Center, but the university as a whole”²². The demands therefore implement specific strategies, including giving the Africana Center its own Peer Advising and Pre-Orientation program, and setting up an activities fund for the Africana Center to limit racialized budget distributions by the Tufts Community Union. Tufts administration itself did not think to increasing funding and provide more students

support through programs, highlighting that Tufts is so blind to the needs of Black students that students need to heavily advocate for themselves.

Tufts Administration Initiatives

Although the student lead #ThreePercent demanded the implementation of many programs and policies for the benefit of Black students, Tufts administration itself has taken some initiatives to also benefit Black students or more specifically, students of color. Summer bridge programs like BEST and BLAST have a “vision is to develop a strong cohort of scholars from multiple backgrounds who strive for academic excellence, active citizenship, and leadership”.²³ Other programs such as Health Career Fellows function with a similar purpose. Tufts also participates in nationwide scholarship programs such as Questbridge to aid students. The commonality between all of these programs is that they have a purpose of supporting underprivileged students, including but not limited to Black students, in finances, academics, and mental and emotional support. Although these programs do truly aid students and enrich their college experience, considering the issues that #TheThreePercent moved to fix, these programs are not merely enough to support Black students.

As a whole, Tufts University is no different from other higher education institutions in that its meritocracy is skewed and does not apply fairly to all of its students, and an emphasis is placed on Black students to fulfill their “diversity role” rather than their needed support. This excludes Black students from accessing their proper education. Although Tufts has implemented strategies to help all people of Color, the initiatives they have taken have not done complete justice. Fortunately, at Tufts, the Black community is composed of strong individuals who gathered together and advocated for their rights in #TheThreePercent movement, allowing the Black community to move towards liberation regardless.

Endnotes

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2. Guinier, *Aptitude or Achievement?*, 22
3. Gittleman, *An Entrepreneurial University*, 308
4. Unknown, *Recruiting the Rich*, 54
5. Yosso, Laurence, Soloranzo, *From Jim Crow to Affirmative Action and Back Again: A Critical Race Discussion of Racialized Rationales and Access to Higher Education*.
6. Unknown. *Merit and the Diversity Bargain*, 95
7. Guinier, *Aptitude or Achievement?*, 23
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9. Strayhorn, *Bridging the Pipeline: Increasing Underrepresented Students’ Preparation for College Through a Summer Bridge Program*.
10. Adams, *College Offer Incoming Freshman a Summer Bridge*
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12. Gibbs,). *Patterns of adaptation among Black students at a predominantly White university*

13. Nickerson, Cultural mistrust, opinions about mental illness, and Black students' attitudes toward seeking psychological help from White counselors
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4. UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY RELATIONS: A RELATIONAL DECAY FOR EDUCATIONAL EXPANSION

By Maddie Oliff

Introduction to University Relations

Waldo Tobler's *First Law of Geography* states that "everything is related to everything else, but near things are more related than distant things." Institutions of higher education equip their students with the skills and knowledge to navigate a globalizing world and the residential aspect remains central to retrieving that knowledge. The unique identity of the school and the residential community in one intertwined place necessitates a relationship, both bringing to the table prerequisites and motivations. The expanding role of higher education in today's economy and culture requires a physical expansion of campuses nationwide, one that decays relationships between colleges and their respective neighborhoods.

Town and Gown Relations

Community relations between universities and the bordering residential communities are often dubbed "town and gown" relations.¹ Secondary education has and continues to be considered a place of elite status and the sanctification of modern truth² by those who neighbor the academic community. The outside veneration protected and verified these institutions' existence in the past, letting slide the ways in which schools functioned independently and sometimes intrusively. Yet, student enrollment increased dramatically over the past century: based on the progressive trajectory, "...the Cold War prompted the United States to invest an enormous amount of money in university enrollments and research."³ More recently, enrollment in "postsecondary institutions increased... 17 percent, from 17.3 million to 20.2 million,"⁴ from 2004 to 2014. The rise in student populations warrants more facilities to educate these students. This constraint sparks the pivot in relationship between the respected educational institutions and their communities from mutually beneficial to disadvantageous for the locals.

These institutions of higher education relate differently to their shared towns based on the structure of their institutions. Research-based, public universities create stronger relationships, based on their direct funding from the state. These universities, establishing their own "college towns," provide educational outlets and employment opportunities for residents. Despite influencing a majority of the economic happenings and controlling a wide scope of the physical space within the town, these larger universities allow the community to mutually benefit from and feel activated by the institution. Private colleges, often in urban or suburban settings, on the other hand, may share a weaker relationship with their counterpart towns. These colleges have a stronger focus on community engagement through volunteering rather than a financially-oriented connection; while it remains mutually beneficial, these interactions are less genuine and less vital to either community than the aforementioned relationships. Lastly, smaller liberal arts institutions in rural areas fabricate a closer-knit relationship to their neighboring communities and increased potency, "...especially in situations where there may be no alternative higher educational opportunities within any reasonable driving

distance.”⁵ The land that an academic institution consumes in relation to its neighboring town corresponds to their centrality of impact and dominance over the town.

Each community shares different motivations and intentions. Residential communities desire safety as well stable and affordable housing options, and requires the economic means to ensure those. Campuses also warrant safety to secure remnants of the concept of *in loco parentis*,⁶ the responsibility of the university to ensure students’ health, welfare, safety and morals without the presence of their guardians. These academic settings, despite administrators’ best wishes, allow an ever-expanding student body more autonomy in activity and housing opportunity, therefore each community is at risk for their desires. These realities limit the separate governing bodies with conflicting allegiances and priorities to share in the same restrictive space.

Compensation to Local Communities

The non-profit status of institutions of higher education proves a more abstract limitation on the residential communities. The expenses of universities are often tax-exempt, and with the expansion of academic facilities that do not require taxes, there is less and less revenue coming into these towns. As a replacement, the Payments in Lieu of Taxes, or PILOT, program has been implemented. When enforced, state governments are required to reimburse local governments for part of the tax revenue that would otherwise be collected, as the state of Connecticut does for Yale University. Otherwise, educational institutions make a direct payment in order to maintain good relations, like Harvard University.⁷ Boston’s enforcement of this policy solidifies PILOT’s requisite, as the population erupts during the school year as a result of the 35 educational institutions housed within the city.⁸

Yet, these reparations do not fully compensate for the infrastructural damage that is done. Not only are the institutions they attend tax-exempt, but students may continue paying taxes to their home state rather than the local government. This temporary population in college towns limits economic commitment despite using and abusing their local amenities, like roads and law enforcement, without the same responsibility to sustain these amenities. And especially after the negative perception of campus life solidified after the 1978 release of the movie, *Animal House*,⁹ towns hesitate to welcome the reckless reputation of the student community that infringes on their safe neighborhoods and destructs public facilities; unfortunately, the local community lacks authority in curbing student expansion into their neighborhood.

Studentification

Student infiltration into the nearby residential community limits existing residents’ stability in their place of origin. Similar to gentrification, “studentification,” refers to an increased population moving in large numbers to traditionally non-student neighborhoods.¹⁰ College over-enrollment sparks this phenomenon, which results in lack of capacity in campus-owned residences and requires students to move off-campus. Whether required or desired, approximately 85% of students opt into off-campus housing at some point in their college careers. This benefits landlords as the student-renters combined financial resources often exceed those of single-family renters. As the demand

for the land increases and the cost of living parallels that, the students move in at the expense of displacing local residents.

Despite edging into the local community, students still yearn for a connection to campus. Therefore, they recreate the culture that was contained safely on campus based on university police departments and institutional restrictions, including alcohol, drugs, and other irresponsible behaviors. This intrusion into the local community, while acting as if on campus, blurs the lines between what it means to be a student and a resident. The infestation of the neighborhood hinders the town and gown without control from the administration who lacks authority over off-campus students. It reflects poorly on the entire institution, fueling negative public opinion of their students.

The economic inflation universities create, as an effect of studentification, also restricts the staff and faculty of higher education living near their institutions. Most employees commute to work, often relying on forms of public transportation. While public transportation is seen as an imperative public good, the implementation of new public transportation avenues is a major public investment, itself increasing value of the educational neighborhoods. What economically drives faculty out of college towns is what ironically allows them to transport into these towns every weekday morning.

Especially in the 21st century, higher education and the meaning of a post-secondary degree constantly evolves, therefore, community relations at these institutions take a variety of changes, as well. With the Internet as accessible as ever, online degrees have become more popular. This deconstructs the concept of a “gown” requiring a “town” to communicate and coexist with, as online education prides itself in the flexibility it provides. Another growing option is the community college, especially with places like Chicago and the state of Tennessee providing tuition-free post-secondary options.¹¹ The reduction of property necessary for the college to exist based on limited housing requirements curbs the schools ability to burden the community. These alternative options to the traditional universities and colleges, based on their structures, have limited influence on their neighborhoods by operating on less physical land.

Conclusion

The entwining of the academic and residential communities is complicated, to say the least. Their individual identities and determinations are at odds when sharing a neighborhood. The ever-expanding academic arena requires to invade these towns and strip them of land in order to accommodate for this growth. Despite best efforts and changing landscapes to alleviate this relational decay, universities are strained to protect their positive relationships with their neighboring towns when they prioritize their own success and development at the expense of their community partner.

Introduction to Tufts University and its Neighboring Communities

Tufts University, who finds its' home in both Somerville and Medford, Massachusetts, exemplifies this strenuous relationship between town and gown. Located in the outskirts of the city of Boston, these communities welcome a diverse collection of people, from blue color workers to growing families to retired folks, and of course, students. Somerville, specifically, is the most densely populated municipality in New

England,¹² indicating that both neighboring cities attract their residents without the help of the University. But, there has been a geographic shift in Somerville and Medford over the past decade in response to the increasing student enrollment. Tufts University attempts a balanced a positive community effort with Somerville and Medford while falling short when fueling tension from intrusive and autonomous expansion of the physical university, particularly in regards to housing opportunities.

The university and city officials carefully craft the looks of a formally functioning relationship. The Lincoln Filene Center for Community Partnerships serves as an avenue of research prompted by the interests and questions of the neighboring community members,¹³ which demonstrates an interest in local academic partnership. Tufts also lends its' expertise in helping local students with the college process, offering Somerville and Medford High School students an inside look on expectations of an admissions officer. If local students apply to Tufts, their application fees are waived, automatically regarded for the Doris W. York Endowed Scholarship Fund, and personally read by the former Dean of Admissions, Lee Coffins.¹⁴ Tufts commits to these local students and smooths their matriculation process from application to graduation. But, the most prominent of community-building efforts is the tradition of Community Day. Beginning in 2003, Tufts has invited the Medford and Somerville communities to visit campus, enjoy cultural entertainment, engage with educational demonstrations, and more. Mayor Michael Glynn of Medford reminisced of the 30 community members attending the inaugural event, and five years later, the audience grew to over 1,000 attendees.¹⁵ This visible effort evidences the outward commitment Tufts holds towards their community, and the acceptance of that endeavor on behalf of Medford and Somerville.

The Institution and the Government

These institutionalized efforts produced an effective facade of harmony between the University and the neighboring communities. In a letter to the community, President Lawrence Bacow and Mayor Joseph Curtatone co-authored their sentiments on the relationship:

“Tufts is proud to play a key role in the economy and social fabric of Somerville. The essence of a Tufts education is a commitment to active citizenship; working with Somerville, the university has an opportunity to practice what it preaches. And Somerville is proud to have a world-class institution of higher education within its city boundaries. It is an engine for the local economy as the students, faculty, staff and visitors to the campus frequent the local businesses.”¹⁶

The mutuality of this relationship regarded by both parties confirms both the past and future commitment to the other. The benefits that the University and community of Somerville exchange provides the all-encompassing ability to grow and work together.

But this public statement disregards the lack of transparency, lack of coinciding vision, and lack of respect that poisons the relationship. The strain stems from the shift in complaints of the Board of Alderman's in Somerville “...from student rowdiness to administrative inadequacies.”¹⁷ Despite the perception of students dismantling the sanctity of a residential space, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, these officials blame the administration as the constructors of a damaged relationship. The absence of

cooperation roots these inadequacies, as Alderman Mark Niedergang of Somerville remembers conversations "...with Tufts administrators where they've basically told me that it's not a priority to build housing,"¹⁸ despite the communities' candor in expressing their apprehension over the University's detrimental trajectory in the housing market.

The aforementioned positive efforts shield the harsh ways that Tufts impacts the local economy and landscape. Due to its' tax-exempt status, Tufts committed \$1.25 million to Somerville and \$1.75 million to Medford over the course of ten years through the Payment in Lieu of Taxes policy. Yet, the \$286 million of tax-exempt property owned by Tufts in Somerville alone would amount to over \$5.5 million per year in taxes without exemption status.¹⁹ This discrepancy paralyzes the ability for both Somerville and Medford to function, while Mary Jeka, the Vice President of University Relations, aimed to veer this strain away from numbers and "stressed the value of the University's non-monetary contributions to Somerville and Medford."²⁰ While there are invaluable benefactions, the funding struggle debilitates the functioning of these cities as Tufts protects their personal assets. To limit this exploitation of these cities, State Representative Denise Provost is pushing for a bill that could require Tufts to pay local property taxes, due to the fraction that it has been required to pay.

Expansion and Exploitation

This trajectory taken by Tufts projects their motivation to span the functions of both a liberal arts college as well as a highly regarded research institution. Investments funneled into University properties were granted to 574 Boston Avenue and the Science and Engineering Complex, both hubs for research, particularly in the STEM fields. This bulk of financing aimed to attract more students, and successfully accomplished that: "Between 2002 and 2016, Tufts' undergraduate enrollment increased by more than 500 full-time-equivalent students," yet the one dorm that was built to accommodate these students has a capacity of 126. In total, there are 3,374 beds for 5,084 undergraduate student.²¹ Therefore, the expansion of academic spaces venturing off campus further pushes students, about three out of ten undergraduates, to acquire external housing due to the lack of Tufts' own capacity.

In attempts to facilitate this balance, Tufts inquired about purchasing a four story apartment complex for graduate students, faculty, and staff in Powderhouse Square, which was assessed at \$5.1 million.²² This deal was in the works without the knowledge of Somerville, who was displeased that this would be another opportunity for Tufts to limit affordable housing opportunities in the community. Despite intentions of accountability of housing, this illustrates the independent and non-analytical approach Tufts embarks towards finding a solution and building a rapport with their neighbors. Edward Beuchert, the co-founder and current Board member of the West Somerville Neighborhood Association, bluntly refers to the project as "...a colonization of Medford and Somerville residential areas,"²³ emphasizing the exploitation Tufts yields.

This exploitation applies through other means, as well. Based on the studentification of the Medford and Somerville areas, the price to rent around the Tufts Campus rises consistently. The residential areas to the west of Carmichael Hall is "...populated mostly by students," and is consequently the area known for the highest

rent prices. This correlation is not a coincidence when considering the landlords' understanding of how to profit off of students. In 2015, "off-campus rentals had risen to about \$10,000 per student per year, so a landlord who packs an extra four tenants in reaps \$40,000 of additional income annually—more money than the University pays some of the people who work on its campuses..."²⁴ The landlords navigate financial exploitation based on the multiple streams of financial resources that an apartment of students bring, which reverberates to community members unable to compete with the students to pay rent. In regards to landlords' exploitation of students, and impact on neighboring residents, Alderman Niedergang asserts that "[t]his is America, this is capitalism, it's perfectly legal, but...basically these people are making money on the fact that our community is a desirable place for people to live."²⁵

The proposed Green Line Extension project will only broaden the possibilities of exploitation. This project intends to lengthen the rail by six stops, including a College Avenue and Boston Avenue stop in Medford, and echoes the potential impact that the Davis Square Red Line had on the Somerville community. The station improved the local economy and even equated to a 15% increase in Tufts applicants the year consequent to the opening of the station,²⁶ as the University offered a new proximity to the city which increased desirability. Tufts will reap the same benefit from the Green Line Extension project, despite the destructive effects it can have on Medford, such as the necessity of relocation of local businesses, displacing residents, and driving up rent prices, potentially an increase of \$300 per month within a half-mile walking distance of the stop.²⁷ Supported by students and Tufts for projected benefits, this form of studentification represents the prioritizing of the temporary residents over analyzing the long-term impacts it will bring to residents, who may not be able to sustain themselves in the Medford area, leading them to displacement.

Next Steps

The Residential Strategies Working Group was called upon by President Tony Monaco in 2016 to understand the issue of studentification around campus and implement changes. Their recommendations were to create more on-campus housing for upperclassmen, improve existing residential facilities, specifically Miller and Houston Halls, charge different prices for different living arrangements, and investigate the aspects of a new dormitory to increase student housing on campus. While these are venerable and realistic improvements, it's imperative for the University to analyze their impacts towards fostering a beneficial relation with their neighbors.

Tufts University is far from being on the right track in terms of creating a harmonious and honest relationship with Somerville and Medford. Former Provost Sol Gittleman reminisced that "'[p]leasing the customer' became one of the mantras handed down from trustees to administrators."²⁸ This narrow maxim remains, without administrations' recognition of the critical and concerned student body; extending the concept of a "customer" to the University's neighbors would initiate a more progressive and interactive town-gown relationship. Tufts' use of space hinders the neighboring communities' financially and physically. Positive community relations are necessary for

the flourishing of a university, and until Tufts University realizes that, their restrictive outlook and actions will consequently reverberate back to straining their own institution.

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5. THE HAVES AND HAVE NOTS: WEALTH INEQUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

By Siobhan Shamlian

The reason that higher education was created has fallen to the wayside as our world has become increasingly market-based. What was once established to provide quality education for all has fallen short of this, leaving many behind and giving only the richest and brightest the opportunity to take part. The stratification of higher education caused by our market-based economy serves to exclude the lower class from higher education, even though they need it the most to attain upward mobility. This exclusion starts far before the application process even begins and lasts long after the student has matriculated. Even if a low-income student receives admission to an elite institution, they are still at a disadvantage as opposed to their wealthy peers.

Higher Education Loses its Intended Purpose

Historically, higher education has had two primary goals: economic efficiency and social equity¹. Accomplishing these goals would mean higher education that is accessible to all, no matter their economic resources, which would in turn, create a skilled labor force in which all could take part, furthering the public good. Ideally, higher education's role in the class system would support the transformation thesis which says that traditional forms of hierarchy can be replaced with educational forms of hierarchy². But, with our neoliberal model of education that favors free market competition, higher education is used to drive economic growth, causing tuition to increase³ and in turn, perpetuating inequality. There is a blatant correlation between educational attainment and socioeconomic background⁴, proving the reproduction thesis which states that higher education is merely a way to perpetuate existing socioeconomic differences⁵.

Since American universities receive little funding from the state, they are much more reliant on tuition⁶ and must think about their financial needs when admitting students. Tuition has increased sharply, making higher education only accessible to the most academically and financially gifted students⁷, which falls short of the "equitable for all" model on which higher education is based. In addition, with our emphasis on admissions based on meritocracy backed by the creation of rigid testing requirements, colleges and universities have lost their goal of creating students who will make an impact and instead focus on collecting students with the best qualities for admission⁸. Schools put so much emphasis on SAT scores when in reality it is barely a measure of scholastic aptitude. Instead, it has a positive correlation to family income; the higher a family's income, the higher the student scores on the SAT⁹

Whom Does this System Benefit?

Because of the financial hurdle that comes with the increasing tuition costs of higher education, low-income students have turned toward two-year postsecondary education and are underrepresented at four-year institutions¹⁰. The differences in the socioeconomic status of students is starkest at top colleges, as these are the institutions that are both the most difficult to gain admission to and also come with the highest price

tag. The student body of top colleges is made up of 75% of students from the wealthiest 25% of American families, while only 3% of the student body is from the poorest 25% of American families¹¹.

It is important to note here that this is not because there are insufficient numbers of students from low-income families to keep up with the rigorous academics of top colleges. A study by Gordon Winston and Catharine Hill found that about 13% of what they describe as “high-ability” students come from the bottom 40% of familial income brackets, which is more students than top colleges have room to take¹². This proves that it is not the qualifications for admissions that low-income students are lacking; there is something else coming into play. So, we must look into other reasons why low-income students are blatantly underrepresented at elite colleges.

Barriers for Low-Income Students

With the college admissions process comes many hurdles, and judging by the socioeconomic distribution of top colleges, the wealthy have an advantage. The selection process obviously is not equal for all as youth from the highest socioeconomic class tend to be most overrepresented at the most-selective schools in the country¹³. There are two main reasons for the dominance of wealthy students at elite colleges: legacy admits and “development admits,” or what admissions officers call economically privileged children who are not legacies. These two categories of applicants are more likely to receive admissions to universities, even with lower test scores. Since colleges are reliant on students’ tuition to improve resources, they recruit these students for the economic boost they will provide. As colleges have become more needy financially and the income gap has grown, this practice has become increasingly common¹⁴. Legacy preference boosts alumni donations, and the parents of “development admits” are expected to donate as well¹⁵. Although all students at the institution benefit from donor contributions, this practice discriminates against students whose families are unable to donate, as they must meet higher standards in order to gain admission.

Those who do not benefit from this practice are often those who need higher education the most because of the upward mobility it would provide, in accordance with the transformation thesis. The admission of wealthy students leads to the exclusion of more qualified low-income applicants¹⁶. Competing with wealthy students for admissions proves challenging in more ways than one. Wealthy parents may go to immense lengths in order to ensure their children’s’ educational success while low-income parents may lack the same resources and knowledge¹⁷. Because many low-income students are also first-generation college students, their parents are not knowledgeable about the complexities of the college admissions process. They are less likely to be able to maneuver through financial aid, understand testing requirements, and assist their student in other decisions¹⁸. Children from wealthy families are expected to go to college, and parents put in much time and energy in order to help their children gain admissions to elite colleges. Low-income families may not be able to devote this same time and resources and often do not even expect that their children will attend college.

On top of the knowledge low-income students lack from their parents, they also lack the institutional support provided by the high schools of upper-class students. Schools in poor neighborhoods are often of lesser quality and lack the resources and rigor that college preparatory schools and well-funded public schools offer¹⁹. Students of these schools lack the same institutional support are at a disadvantage against their well-off peers. High schools serving affluent students often have ample college counselors to best serve their students' needs while high schools serving underprivileged students do not have these same resources²⁰. In addition, guidance counselors at high quality high schools may have relationships with admissions officers at colleges and can negotiate with them in order to get their students accepted into their college²¹.

Low-income students who are lucky enough to gain admissions to elite colleges given the institutional barriers in their way still have many hurdles ahead of them. There are many financial problems that come with the price tag at elite colleges, and financial aid has not been doing enough to keep up with this growing price tag. Though financial aid as a whole is rising, merit-based aid has been replacing need-based aid, which is the part low-income students benefit from the most²². The problems do not stop here, though, as financial aid moved from providing grants to offering loan packages which accrue interest and must be paid back²³. Students graduate with about \$23,000 of debt²⁴, and this affects students far into the future as part of their paycheck must go toward repaying loans which can limit upward mobility. Student loans especially affect low-income students, as many wealthy students are able to pay for their education in full. Even though financial aid exists, it must be reformed in order to best help students who need it most.

Our current structure of higher education perpetuates inequality, as those with the least financial resources are often only able to attend the lowest-quality institutions of higher education²⁵. Low-income students know about the financial burden that comes with attending an elite college and must be mindful of the loans that await them once they graduate; they do not have the same freedom to choose a school based on sheer preference that wealthy students do. The worries do not end after low-income students, enroll, though, and there are a whole new set of obstacles these students face as they adjust to a completely new environment. Low-income students have to deal with the culture shock of being surrounded by so many wealthy people. Low-income students often face alienation from both their peers and their families back at home, as they grapple with the adjustment to their new environment²⁶. They are stuck somewhere in between fitting in with those at home and fitting in with those at school. They cannot relate to the economic capital of affluent students as shown through their expensive commodities such as electronics, frivolous spending, and vacations, and they also cannot relate to those they left behind back home as they gain social mobility²⁷. It becomes difficult for them to connect with friends and family back at home after their new-found cultural capital they gain from their collegiate peers, and they must try to avoid judging those they left behind and also the judgement of those they left behind²⁸.

Higher education which was started with good intent has become a sieve, excluding low-income students who need it most, which is made evident by the underrepresentation of low-income students at elite colleges. In the college application

process and beyond, low-income students face many barriers, both socially, academically, and financially. Programs must be put in place to help educate and support low-income students in the college process if we hope to have a model of education that truly is equal for all and supports the transformation thesis. If not, we will continue to perpetuate class inequality and the reproduction thesis by funneling wealthy students into the country's most elite colleges and universities.

Socioeconomic Diversity and Admissions

We see these problems play out at Tufts just as they do in higher education in general. Wealth inequality is an immense problem on this campus, as the median family income on campus is about \$250,000, and over 75% of students at Tufts come from families whose income puts them in the top twenty percent²⁹. In this way, wealthy students are over-represented, in agreement with the reproduction thesis. On the other hand, the average low-income graduate of Tufts will have an income almost the same as their wealthy peer by the time they reach age thirty-four³⁰, showing that the transformation thesis does exist, as underprivileged students who are able to attend elite institutions will be able to move up the socioeconomic ladder. We must work toward increasing socioeconomic diversity in order to give low-income students the opportunity to climb the socioeconomic ladder. The lack of socioeconomic diversity at Tufts is not impossible to remedy, as seen by measures taken by other schools. Vassar College has increased its acceptance of students receiving Pell Grants by about 10% in 2007 while Tufts decreased their acceptance from 2008 to 2014³¹.

Tufts has said that increasing socioeconomic diversity has become a priority to the University and has proved their commitment to this cause through the 2012 creation of Bridge to Liberates Success at Tufts (BLAST) and the decision to accept and provide aid for undocumented students³². While these initiatives are important prove measures are being put in place, admissions does not necessarily take into account socioeconomic diversity when admitting students³³. Admissions must evaluate both academic and extracurricular merit of applicants and they must also stay within the confines of their financial aid budget³⁴. This may become problematic, though, because as we saw earlier in the chapter, low-income students may not be able to perform as well as their wealthy peers because of limited resources from both parents and schools, and they may look less attractive when compared to a peer who can pay full price.

Another way in which socioeconomic diversity is hindered during admissions is through early decision. Low-income students may have an even more difficult chance of getting into elite universities as many well-off students are admitted through early decision, making acceptance rates lower come regular decision. Since early decision is binding, admissions departments may offer less financial aid, which discourages low-income students from applying early decision³⁵. Early decision applicants to Tufts are 16% less likely to receive financial aid than their regular decision counterparts, and this may be because those who apply early decision do not need financial aid³⁶.

As Tufts is one of the most expensive schools in the country³⁷, many students rely on financial aid in order to attend. Those who are not reliant on financial aid are given an easier pathway into Tufts, further stratifying the admissions process. About half of

domestic students receive financial aid while about 30% of international students receive financial aid since there is less of a budget for aid for international students³⁸. In order to allow those in need of financial aid to be able to attend, the financial aid department is making steps toward equalizing the admissions process. Although Tufts is one of the only universities committed to meeting demonstrated financial aid, this term is very broad and does not necessarily mean that admissions accepts more students who are in need of financial aid³⁹. In this way, “demonstrated financial aid” serves as a buzzword to hint that things are improving while in reality, the issue of socioeconomic diversity is still prevalent, as we saw earlier in the chapter.

One way Tufts supports financial aid is through fundraising. As Sol Gittleman mentions, fundraising is always a priority, and universities are always engaged in fundraising campaigns⁴⁰. Tufts is no exception. In September 2005, Tufts received a \$25 million gift to be put toward reinstating need-blind admissions that Tufts, and many other schools, had moved away from in the 1990s⁴¹. Need-blind admissions is a policy where the admitting institution does not take a prospective student’s financial situation into account when making admissions decisions. Need-blind admissions favors low-income students, as they are on more of a level playing field since they will not get denied because they require a costly financial aid package. Tufts’ need-blind policy was only in place for two years until they ran out of funds to continue it. Tufts now practices a need-aware admissions system where they take into account a student’s socioeconomic background when making admissions decisions which may be why little socioeconomic diversity exists on our campus⁴².

Our cost of attendance continues to rise every year, and with this has come the #HaltTheHike campaign that focuses on tuition transparency⁴³. Tufts Student Action (TSA) has promoted this campaign to put pressure on administrators so they will provide justification for rising tuition costs that directly contradict their desire to increase socioeconomic diversity⁴⁴. With this, TSA has promoted a “tuition freeze” which means that students would pay the same tuition for every year they attended Tufts⁴⁵ which would be especially helpful for low-income students. Many low-income students struggle because they do not know how much money they will be charged for next semester⁴⁶ and may have to take up extra jobs to make up the deficit. Tufts administration asserts that they are doing all they can to remedy this problem and in January of 2017 reinstated a Financial Aid Student Advisory Board to serve as a channel between students and the financial aid office, but it is unsure if this will actually lead to change⁴⁷.

The Presence of Wealth on Campus

The staggering presence of inequality on this campus does not go unnoticed. Although Tufts’ student body consists mainly of wealthy students, usually a person’s perception of the socioeconomic class of the average Tufts students is inverse to their own socioeconomic class, which researchers coined the “Canada Goose jacket” effect⁴⁸. The name of this effect refers to a status symbol on Tufts campus, as this jacket costs more than \$1000, and there is even an Instagram account to document sightings of these jackets⁴⁹. What they mean by this effect is that lower-class students might say they saw a higher number of these jackets on a cold day since they are more cognizant of the wealth

around them than are wealthy students⁵⁰. In this way, poor students are more aware of the wealth around them as they struggle to relate to and fit in with wealthy students.

Often, wealthy students are unaware of the struggles low-income students on campus face. In accordance with what we saw earlier in the chapter, low-income students may also face a culture shock and may feel alienated from wealthy students around them. A Tufts student says he cannot relate to the kids on his freshman floor, stating that the relatives of these kids are CEOs or economists and very dissimilar to his own relatives⁵¹. These students from wealthy families will likely go on to be equally as successful as their relatives, perpetuating the reproduction thesis, but we also know that low-income students will perform almost equally as well later in life, showing that the transformation thesis exists for the small percent of economically disadvantaged students who attend Tufts.

Low-income students may also feel different from their peers as they may have to hold jobs during their time at school. In order to pay for tuition, low-income students face many roadblocks and are often overworked and stressed⁵². Having jobs to pay for tuition can take away from study time, giving wealthy students yet another leg up. 86% of students who come from households with income less than \$200,000 have at least one paid job while in school compared to only 49% of students from households with that more than \$200,000⁵³. Money is essential for low-income students to be able to pay their tuition bills and other expenses that come along with college.

Since Tufts does not guarantee housing for all four years, paying for housing can also be a burden for low-income students. With the housing shortage currently going on both on campus and in the surrounding neighborhoods, the cost of off-campus housing is rising, and many low-income students may not be able to afford housing or rent⁵⁴. To combat this, Office of Residential Life and Learning has created a new position called Associate Director of Housing Operations to help students find affordable housing in addition to setting aside twenty beds in Carpenter House for low-income and first-generation students as of Fall 2017⁵⁵.

In addition to having trouble securing affordable housing, low-income students may also be unable to participate in certain clubs and activities or be in certain social spaces. With the added costs that come with some clubs, low-income students are unable to participate. Within clubs, the median parental income is the highest in Greek life, varsity sports, and religious groups while it is the least in student government, cultural, and performance groups⁵⁶. This likely stems from the extra money needed to participate in certain activities in the form of dues, equipment, and apparel. In addition to being excluded from some clubs, low-income students may be excluded from social spaces including Greek life and dining halls, since one requires dues and the other requires a meal plan, which many low-income students are unable to pay for⁵⁷. A space for low-income students should be created in order to connect them with similar in order to decrease the alienation and exclusion they feel on campus.

Progress that has been Made

Low-income students face many problems both before and during their time at college, and Tufts administration recognizes that this is a problem. Administrators

acknowledge that low-income students need support and resources in order to thrive on a campus that excludes them. Many programs have been put in place already to help remedy the issue. Dean Mack highlighted an initiative called Equity, Access for Student Equality (EASE) which in 2017 collected input from over 300 low-income students to best gauge their needs⁵⁸. The T10 Strategic plan released in November 2013 cited increasing financial aid as one of the biggest priorities⁵⁹ which will increase the ability of low-income students to attend Tufts.

To address food insecurity on campus, the Swipe It Forward initiative has been put in place. This program allows students to donate extra meal swipes to those who need them and hopes to eliminate the financial barrier associated with food that some students face⁶⁰. In addition, programs such as BLAST and QuestBridge aim to allow low-income students to attend and thrive at elite colleges. BLAST aims to support underprivileged students through a residential program prior to freshman year while QuestBridge helps low-income students combat the issues they may face in applying to colleges by connecting them with elite institutions⁶¹.

As we have seen through the lack of socioeconomic diversity represented on Tufts campus, there is still much work to be done in order to make Tufts a place that is equal for all and a place that furthers the goals of higher education as a whole. Tufts must focus on improving resources for low-income students both before and during their time at Tufts in order to bridge this gap. An Enigma survey cited that 84% of financial aid recipients think economic diversity is important while about 20% fewer of those who do not receive financial aid have the same opinion⁶². In order for Tufts to be a truly diverse school, they must possess students of all kinds of diversity: racial, cultural, religious, geographic, political, sexual orientations, and also socioeconomic, and this cannot happen without providing support to those who need it most.

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6. COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST IN GREEK LIFE: BAND-AID SOLUTIONS TO SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS

By Madeleine Rossi

Although the first Greek organization can be traced back to 1776, Greek life as we know it today did not begin to take shape until the 1820s and 30s.¹ These organizations emerged in the nineteenth century in conjunction with college students' desires to have more strongly developed social environments on their campuses. Greek life began, as with most systems in higher education, as an all-male and strictly white environment. It wasn't until coeducational universities in the Midwest and South became more socially organized that sororities emerged.² The first of these began in 1870 and was started by a woman who had been denied admission to her brother's exclusive fraternity.³ Similarly, other minority groups soon established their own Greek organizations in response to the exclusionary practices of those already existing. For example, the first intercollegiate black fraternity was developed in 1906 at Cornell, at a time when small numbers of black students were beginning to gain access to higher education. These first female and black Greek life organizations were modeled after their white, male peer institutions. They took part in similar rituals, housing arrangements, and social events. Greek life has expanded exponentially since these first institutions came about. Between the nationally recognized and unaffiliated Greek societies on campuses today, there are over three hundred that students can choose from. Most of these can trace their roots back to the eighteen and nineteen hundreds, as only a handful have been newly started in the last seventeen years. Indisputably, Greek life is ingrained in higher education and its accompanying social atmosphere. Despite the historic expansion of minority-identity based fraternities and sororities and the space it makes for those communities, Greek life today is still positioned on a bed of power and elitism that is harmful to the many populations it excludes.

Section 1: A New Age for Community-Based Greek Life

Today, Greek institutions construct their organizations around a myriad of identities. There are self-identifying Christian, Latino/a, LGBTQ+, and Asian fraternities and sororities among many others. In the past century, universities have largely expanded the options provided by their Greek life systems to meet the demands of students who did not feel welcome in traditional Greek societies. This, of course, began with the black fraternities of the early twentieth century. Although in many ways those organizations did behave like the traditional fraternities, they often had an element of space-making for black students to discuss racial justice issues and promote the struggle against racism.⁴ These community groups formed in direct opposition to the white institutions that shunned them.⁵ Today, identity-based fraternities and sororities act like communities of interest within the broader community group formed by Greek life as whole.⁶ The newest wave of these communities focuses not on race but rather on sexuality. Both of the two existing LGBTQ+ focused Greek societies have been formed within the last fifteen years. These were formed to create a space "based on common interests" that would give LGBTQ+ "members voice and identity" within a

heterosexually dominated group.⁷ It clearly reflects a demonstrated need for space within Greek life for a minority group that had been rapidly emerging on American college campuses.

In many ways, communities of interest such as these can be interpreted as using a “separate but equal” approach.⁸ Students who have identities that fall outside of social norms – whether these be racially, sexually, or otherwise based – do not feel comfortable in traditional Greek chapters. To combat this, they create their own spaces. This “separate but equal” approach exists in contrast to a different method in which they might try to change the accepted norms in Greek life and make space for themselves within the existing structure. In Peter Magolda’s words, “creating space for marginalized enclaves does not disturb the existing power structure”.⁹ His worry is that communities of interest may help to appease certain groups, but they do not change the minds of those in power. On the basis of this statement it could be argued that instead of creating separate spaces for marginalized communities to exist within Greek life, schools should instead mandate diversity within the existing chapters. This critique can be applied to all communities of interest of these types, not just those that exist within the Greek community.

While it is true that these communities do not change the social power structure, they may benefit marginalized communities in other ways. For example, creating these spaces helps to develop leadership and networks among minority communities. Creating space in the traditional Greek culture that is explicitly and exclusively for marginalized communities also acts as a remedy to compensate for their past exclusions.¹⁰ For a true remedial process to exist, it must focus solely on the well-being of the marginalized communities. A mandate of diversity within Greek chapters forces a burden onto minority students to act as educators instead of giving them a space that it is solely theirs. Additionally, communities of interest provide a space for students to gain the benefits of Greek life without the added labor of restructuring Greek institutions.

Section 2: Power, Privilege and Oppression in Today’s Greek Systems

While segregation in the form of communities of interest has both its advantages and disadvantages for minority students, the majority of fraternities remain largely white. Of the hundreds of chapters alive today, only nine are nationally-recognized, all-black chapters. Additionally, most schools do not report the demographics of their students participating in Greek life, and so the racial disparity between Greek students and the student body as a whole is unknown. One school, Princeton, has made this information available. Although Greek life is less of a social presence on Princeton campus than their infamous eating clubs, Greek students still comprise about 15-20% of student body. Between seventy-three and seventy-seven percent of those Greek students identify as white. This contrasts with forty seven percent of their student body as a whole. If this disparity is the general trend on many campuses, why then do most colleges still support Greek life? One reason may be its many benefits to alumni of the Greek system. According to Cornell University’s website, “only 2 percent of America’s population is involved in fraternities, however 80 percent of Fortune 500 executives, 76 percent of U.S. senators and congressmen, 85 percent of Supreme Court justices, and all but two presidents since 1825 have been fraternity men”.¹¹ Clearly Greek systems offer some kind

of boost in the labor market. A study in labor economics from 2012 found that Greek membership signaled higher ability to employers, thus giving those resumes an extra boost.¹² Greek affiliated resumes were more likely to receive callbacks and interviews.

But who is receiving these benefits? Is it the graduates of communities of interest in Greek life, or those in traditional fraternities? Considering that the groups mentioned in the quote from Cornell are majority white males, it seems that white men are still receiving most of the benefits. Beyond that, traditionally white, male Greek chapters are the oldest and most established Greek institutions and therefore have the strongest networks. It has only been in the last century that communities for racial minorities have developed, and within the last fifteen years that communities have risen for LGBTQ+ students. If students with non-conforming identities attempted to join traditionally established Greek chapters they would find it only marginally easier today than they would have centuries ago. This is evidenced by the racial disparities between Greek life and the overall student body that continue today. Monetarily it is difficult for students of lower income to join Greek life. Fees to join fraternities can be upwards of five thousand dollars a semester at some universities.¹³ Unfortunately, this automatically excludes many minority students. In addition, recruiting practices have remained open-ended and unregulated. There are no formal applications to join Greek chapters, rather a “rush” in which fraternities and sororities pick and choose those students that fit their prescribed image. Much like universities that at one time excluded Jewish students and other minorities on the basis of “personality and character”, Greek chapters do the same.¹⁴ If a minority student does find themselves in one of these traditional Greek chapters they may find themselves alienated from rituals and social practices that are built on racism and sexism. Just two years ago a fraternity at the University of Oklahoma was filmed performing a racist chant that included the lyrics “There Will Never Be a N***** In SAE”. This is evidence that systemic exclusion in the form of explicit racism still exists in the Greek structure today.

Although the rise of communities of interest in Greek life in the past century, and especially the last fifteen years, may signal some growth towards a more accepting college environment, it does not change the systems of power inherent in Greek life. The fact that recruiting practices remain largely unchanged in the twenty-first century and that “top tier” fraternities and sororities are still majority white shows that elitism continues to reign. The majority white, upper-class alumni of Greek chapters gain labor market advantages over the marginalized communities that find it more difficult to participate. Hurdles such as financial burdens and implicit or explicit racism still discourage many minority students from participating in the Greek system. Overall, getting rid of Greek life, both the communities of interest and the traditional chapters, would benefit minority students. There are many other organizations and communities on college campuses that support marginalized communities outside of the Greek life system. Most colleges today have Black Student Centers and LGBTQ+ houses as well as explicit spaces for other minority groups. Therefore, losing the ones provided in Greek life would not be a large detriment.

Section 3: Greek Life at Tufts

For a school that claims to be diverse and progressive, Tufts' Greek system exhibits many of the typical problems discussed above. These include exclusion of minorities and low-income students and extend to the national crisis of sexual assaults in fraternities. Because of both local and national attention, a movement to abolish Greek life on campus has gained traction in the past few years. What used to be a relatively accepted part of campus social life is now met with protests at organized events for clubs and activities. Signs reading "Ask me about other ways to find community" and "F-ucked up R-acist Ableist T-ransphobic S-exist" are common occurrences at these events. Like many schools, Tufts does not publish concrete data about the demographics of its fraternities and sororities, so it can be hard to tell just how exclusive they are. However, as a student on Tufts' campus it is immediately apparent that not one of the four sororities or eight fraternities is explicitly identity-based for minority communities. There are two historically Jewish fraternities on campus, Alpha Epsilon Pi and Zeta Beta Tau, although the former disaffiliated from its Jewish national organization in 2015. These are the only two Greek houses that may be considered identity based. Beyond this, students have the option to participate in city wide multicultural fraternities, although none have a permanent standing or prominent social position at Tufts.¹⁵ For the rest of the fraternities and sororities it can be difficult to put an estimate on the number of minority students that are members. In the wake of the campus wide movement in 2016 to highlight the problems that Greek life presents on campus, some former sorority members of Chi Omega shared their experiences in an opinion article. Through this article, other publications on Tufts' campus, and the little information Tufts publicly provides about Greek life,

Chi Omega is widely regarded as one of the two "top" sororities on Tufts' campus. In December 2016 a group of nine women shared their experience with Chi Omega in an article calling for the abolition of Greek life at Tufts.¹⁶ The experience that they shared mirrored the experience of many low-income students looking to join Greek life. The authors wrote that "Chi Omega only offers one scholarship for low-income members, and the information about this is very inaccessible and unclear. In order to maintain membership, some of us had to spend months worth of money from work to maintain our membership, or were literally forced out once we could no longer pay dues."¹⁷ When I interviewed one of these women she explained further that issues brought to the board about the financial burden that their fees posed were largely ignored.¹⁸ Typical dues for Tufts' sororities range from 400 to 650 dollars. Without scholarships or a payment plan this price is unpayable for many people. Ultimately, only higher income students are able to feasibly afford these dues. She did acknowledge that most fraternities on campus have a scholarship system for paying dues, and thus they may be more accessible for lower income students.

When students who don't fit the typical white, upper-middle class mold of the sorority system do experiment with rush, and aren't scared away by the dues, not many make it to the final step of joining the sorority. At Tufts there are two days of recruitment. The first day each potential member visits every house and the second day they are called back to one or two houses that would like to get to know them better. During this process, many women of color drop between the first and second days. From the personal

experience of a former Chi Omega member, “On day one, there are a "diverse" group of women from all parts of campus life. I say "diverse" because in terms of racial diversity, you can see a significant lack of Black women even on day one of rush. On day two, the process inevitably reveals who is welcome in Greek life because the demographic of the room completely changes.”¹⁹ In her experience, the women who made it to the final round of recruitment were mostly the white women. Some sororities had callbacks that were slightly more diverse than others, with Alphi Phi (the other “top sorority”) having the least diverse group of women.

Another big concern raised by the original article was the use of a rush system in which potential members were judged on their ability to be “Chi Omega material”.²⁰ The hopeful candidates were judged on their “Positive Personal Presence”, a matter which was entirely subjective.²¹ This method of subjective interpretation of character allows Chi Omega the opportunity to exclude women based on “implicit race and class privileges”.²² Unfortunately when women of color brought up this issue, they were met with the same silence that low income students found when asking about financial aid.²³ While not much has been shared about the vetting process in the other fraternities and sororities, there is no oversight on Tufts’ part to ensure that the recruitment process is free of bias. However, after the complaint about Chi Omega was brought, Tufts’ did impose “a requirement to establish a Diversity Chair and committee to educate members and assess the group’s progress” on them.²⁴ Prior to this requirement, there was no formalized acknowledgment of a need for different practices surrounding diversity.²⁵

Conclusion: Greek Life Should be Dead at Tufts

Tufts lacks a clear vision for improving the systemic problems of its Greek life institutions. It has no cultural Greek houses, and the houses that currently exist provide little accessibility for low income or minority students. In contrast, there are many spaces on campus that provide community for marginalized groups, such as the Group of Six, that could be expanded. The problem is that American Universities everywhere love Greek life. They produce active donors, promote networking, and many incoming students specifically look for them during their college search. As Sol Gittleman wrote, students used to use “familiarity and proximity” as a gage for which colleges to apply to.²⁶ Today that is far from the case, and Greek life is ingrained many incoming freshmen’s decisions. That is even more reason for Tufts to capitalize on the current campus and national social climate surrounding fraternities and sororities. With more scrutiny now than ever, two fraternities kicked off campus in the last couple years, and rumors that one sorority will be leaving, Tufts can take this opportunity to shape its social landscape for the better by abolishing Greek life at Tufts.

Endnotes

¹ Torbenson, 40

² Torbenson, 40

³ Torbenson, 41

⁴ Torbenson, 41

⁵ Hernandez, 378

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- ⁶ Magolda, 39
⁷ Magolda, 40
⁸ Magolda, 40
⁹ Magolda, 40
¹⁰ Yosso, 8
¹¹ Chang
¹² Popov, 136
¹³ Chang
¹⁴ Karabel, 11
¹⁵ Tufts Student Life Website
¹⁶ Bonfiglio
¹⁷ Bonfiglio
¹⁸ Interview with Emily Sim
¹⁹ Interview with Emily Sim
²⁰ Bonfiglio
²¹ Bonfiglio
²² Bonfiglio
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²⁶ Gittleman, 311

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7. TASSELS NOT SHACKLES

By Nora Maetzener

Throughout American history, institutions and policies such as slavery, segregation, and Jim Crow laws have controlled racial groups and communities. Many of these operations are rooted in systemic racism and bias. One contemporary example of such an institution is the presence of carceral institutions in the United States, which has a dire history in racial inequality. The impact of societal restrictions and limits on higher education for both current and formerly incarcerated individuals perpetuates socioeconomic and racial inequalities. Recent initiatives to provide and improve already-existing programs of higher education in prisons reduce disproportionate gaps in opportunity based on class and race, facilitate decreased recidivism rates, and ultimately foster a much-needed sense of hope in an otherwise dismal environment.

Racial Inequality in the History of Colleges and the Penitentiary

The college system and the Department of Corrections are two powerful American institutions. Although one may be reluctant to draw correlations between these systems, thorough consideration of their histories illuminate important junctions and similarities. The foundations of both higher education and the carceral system have deep roots in racial inequality. For colleges, this is evident in the “capital on which” they were erected,¹ as well as the pivotal part they fulfilled in socioeconomic and racial inequality through selective admissions processes that favor wealthy applicants.^{2,3} The role that correctional institutions played in the construction of inequities in opportunity for different races becomes apparent through consideration of how the correctional system operates as a demonstration of “public power.”⁴ A critical consequence of the penitentiary is its contribution to and perpetuation of socioeconomic and racial inequality. Incarceration is disproportionately reserved for individuals who identify with and represent “poorer Americans” and minorities, the vast majority of whom do not possess a college degree.⁵ African Americans are vastly overrepresented in correctional facilities across the nation; they are incarcerated at more than five times the rate of white Americans.⁶ Incarceration has become normalized and an almost expected outcome among poor black communities, similarly to how privileged families have normalized elite education for their children. The racial disparity and disproportionate representation of blacks and Hispanics in prison populations undermines the experience and agency of minorities. In the realm of crime and punishment, this is manifested through the treatment and perception of incarcerated people by those in power.

Racial Demographics of the Teaching Force

In evaluating how education affects opportunity for disadvantaged communities in America, it is important to consider the racial background and demographic of the teaching force. In 2010, “people of color represent[ed] 40.0% of the student population in public schools, whereas only 17.0% of public school teachers [were] people of color.”⁷ This racial misrepresentation of the teacher:student ratio is, at least in part, a result of the high-profile *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954) court case, which ruled that school

segregation is unconstitutional.⁸ One implicit consequence of this ruling was that white, mostly female, teachers flocked to less affluent public schools with a high concentration of minority students in an attempt to equalize the school experience and education for black and white students.⁹ The legislature produced during this time period, such as the “changes in teacher-qualifying testing,” favored white teachers, and this prioritization is still in effect today, as today’s minority test-takers have “higher rates of failure” than their white counterparts.¹⁰ The impact of this systemic preferential treatment results in fewer teachers of color across the country, especially in schools with higher proportions of minority students.

This historical disproportionate representation of people of color within the public school teaching body is mirrored in the prison education programs across the country. According to data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2016, 63.4% of “probation officers and correctional treatment specialists” are white, and 82.8% of “directors” and educators employed in the field “community and social service” are white.¹¹ These demographics do not align with the racial representation of those behind bars. Although white teachers in correctional facilities may be well-intentioned and prepared, they must recognize the impact the social and racial hierarchy has on the teacher-student dynamic. These “hegemonic... norms” are aggravated in the carceral system, and therefore require specific attention.¹² Racism is rooted in power, and power relations are magnified behind bars. Therefore, the white teacher standing in front of a student body of color must acknowledge “the limitation of his role and a willingness to work within that limitation.”¹³

History of Education in Correctional Facilities

When education for criminal, or deviant, people was first properly instituted in the 19th century, there were two major theories driving the installation of “character training.”¹⁴ The first took a religious approach, and sought to instill a sense of “respect for the law, and dread of its wrath” in offenders.¹⁵ The second was more scientific, and prioritized the difficult, but not impossible task of changing prisoners to fit the mold of “suitable inhabitants of a free community.”¹⁶ As these theories were enacted in various carceral institutions, the religious approach overshadowed the scientific, thus creating a significant precedent for the prison educational programs that would come in the future. This influence is exemplified in the spread of solitary confinement in correctional facilities across the country. This concept was based on the Quaker principle of “Inner Light,” which postulates that inside every individual, there resides divinity.¹⁷ Through isolation, prisoners were compelled to “reflect, find the inner divine, and repent.”¹⁸ Although contemporary approaches do not explicitly incorporate or rely on religious conceptions, these practices continue to dominate the incarcerated experience today. The term “correctional facility” itself highlights an important perspective that serving time will “correct” inmates.

One example of progressive development in the realm of correctional education is the implementation of effective programs designed to provide higher education in correctional institutions. Prior to 1994, many prisons implemented such programs, which allowed and enabled incarcerated populations to experience and receive higher

education. However, when the Supreme Court passed the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, people in prison were prohibited from applying for or receiving Pell Grants. These government grants enable those unable to pay for education with the funds necessary to do so. Therefore, this act effectively eradicated the presence of higher education programs in prisons across the United States.¹⁹ The consequence of this act was severe; in New York, the number of higher education programs in correctional institutions “fell from 70 in the early 1990s... to just four in 2004.”²⁰ The severe racial and socioeconomic disparities in higher education and the penitentiary system highlight a dire necessity for careful change within these institutions. Today, the programs providing inmates in correctional institutions with higher education are privately funded and are often combined with elite universities through Prison Initiatives, such as the Bard Prison Initiative and the Tufts Prison Initiative at Tisch College. These initiatives have been catalysts for social change, forging the path towards equal educational opportunity across racial and socioeconomic boundaries.

Education as a Prevention of Recidivism

A significant motivation to implement, improve, and fortify secondary education programs behind bars is the remarkable statistics regarding recidivism rates of inmates who complete these programs in comparison to those who do their time without this exposure. Recidivism rates are calculated by measuring how many released offenders return to prison. Studies have shown that providing inmates with education will “reduce recidivism substantially, up to 50 percent.”²¹ Most return offenders commit crimes due to financial incentives, as many correctional institutions release their inmates without support systems, jobs, or housing. These setbacks are relentless, especially when coupled with the stigma and restrictions set upon and surrounding ex-felons. For example, individuals with criminal records are prohibited from voting, applying for food stamps or subsidized housing, and most employers discriminate against ex-convicts during job applications. Therefore, a crucial step towards successful rehabilitation of criminals and the reduction of return offenders is higher education in correctional institutions.

Education as a Source of Humanity and Hope

Another critical aspect to be mentioned in support of higher education in correctional facilities is how these programs provide inmates with a rare opportunity to interact with individuals who will treat them as more than criminals. Research has shown that the culmination of dismal factors at work in prisons, such as the lack of support systems, physical and mental abuse, and isolation, promotes mental illness such as depression.²² This self-identification is crucial to their self-improvement, as many of these individuals, through racial and socioeconomic prejudice, have been treated and regarded as potential criminals from a very young age. These societal norms represent a harmful self-fulfilling prophecy, which has the potential to be changed through education behind bars.²³ As Sol Gittleman describes, most students will eventually consider and ponder the lifestyle of their mentors and teachers. When pupils uncover the thrilling experience of learning, “the freedom to shape thoughts and ideas, the life of the mind, the exhilarating pleasure experienced at the first taste of teaching” will have a lasting impact on their

perception and life.²⁴ By offering incarcerated individuals the opportunity to experience this realization, higher education programs may instill a crucial sentiment of love of and appreciation for learning in its students.

Many incarcerated individuals experience feelings of despair and worthlessness, and programs providing higher education offer the ability to improve their sense of self-worth, will further foster and fortify their rehabilitation, as they will begin to believe in and see themselves as more than criminals.²⁵ As Professor Jill Weinberg, the Primary Collaborator for Educational Programming at Tufts University explains, a prevalent sentiment among prisoners who participate in college courses behind bars is that these college classes in prisons offer inmates preciously valuable moments during which they don't feel like they're in prison anymore.²⁶ These are the precise moments that foster the necessary development of hope in an otherwise depressing, dismal environment.

Tufts University's Prison Initiative at Tisch College

Tufts University has joined other elite institutions of higher education in America, such as Bard College and New York University in the creation and implementation of prison initiatives. Tufts University's Prison Initiative at Tisch College (TUPIT) was launched in the fall of 2017. According to an interview conducted with Professor Hilary Binda, the Founding Director of Educational Programming, the primary motivation driving the creation of TUPIT was the belief that "all state and private institutions have a duty to invest financially and otherwise in ending the problem of prisons."²⁷ This duty is magnified if the major focus of the institutions in question is education, which, as discussed earlier, is the "primary proven recidivism reduction tool."²⁸ The overarching objective of TUPIT is to develop an ability and desire "to become active citizens of change in the world" in participating students and faculty members.²⁹ Through the programs offered, TUPIT seeks to commit and provide educational "opportunities for incarcerated people," thereby contributing and further developing the statistically-proven decline in rates of recidivism for those who are exposed to college classes in prison.³⁰ The initiative addresses these objectives through two main channels; the educational program and research. In this chapter, I will focus on TUPIT's educational agenda.

The educational program addresses TUPIT's overarching goals through a variety of strategies. One noteworthy implementation is the Inside-Out course, which consists of an equal number of Tufts students and incarcerated students. This class, taught inside the medium-security Massachusetts Correctional Institution at Shirley, is instructed by Professor Binda. This Tufts-credit course, titled "Mass Incarceration & The Literature of Confinement," was offered for the first time in the fall semester of 2017.³¹ The course objectives include forming profound connections between individuals, while simultaneously understanding and appreciating the "deep differences" that may exist.³² This is achieved through "student-centered" class discussions, as well as weekly writing assignments.³³ Additionally, there is a final personal project, which includes an "autobiographical component."³⁴ Some of the works included in the curriculum are *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *A Raisin in the Sun*. These works, selected by Professor Binda, address "confinement and resistance" in meaningful ways, and reflect important "cultural experiences" with which she believes the students will be able to identify.³⁵ The

physical composition of the class is noteworthy, as the participants sit in a circle, alternating “inside” and “outside” students.³⁶ This, in conjunction with the emphasis on collaboration through communication and the sharing of writing, effectively works to allow the bridges and differences between the students to be crossed. Through these avenues, this course addresses and fulfills TUPIT’s objectives.

Another manifestation of TUPIT’s educational program is the national nonprofit Petey Greene Program, which formed a chapter at Tufts University in 2016. This organization provides incarcerated individuals with volunteer tutors. Volunteers meet with their tutee every week, and the tutoring sessions mainly involve preparation for the HiSET exam, which, when passed, will provide students with their General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Additionally, volunteers may also tutor in other realms, including resume preparation, as well as college-level math, reading comprehension, and writing. In conjunction with the prevalent objective of providing education, the Petey Greene program also aids in the destigmatization of individuals involved in the carceral system through communication and exposure to the reality of correctional facilities.³⁷

Further, in the interview conducted with Professor Binda, she included plans for the development of the Tufts’ Prison Initiative. Along with offering the Literature of Confinement course at the medium-security facility this upcoming spring semester and summer, this course will also be instructed at the maximum-security men’s correctional facility at Shirley. Further, there are plans for two “credit-bearing” inside-only classes in the next two years.³⁸ The content of these courses will focus on genocide and international policy, as well as a course on writing, and will “likely” be instructed by a professor from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.³⁹ In addition, long-term objectives for the Prison Initiative is to establish a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies, and certificates in Community Health Work, and Graphic Design. Also, Tufts will offer a weekly “lecture series,” at the medium-security facility, which TUPIT hopes will facilitate conversation and the opportunity for incarcerated individuals to learn, on an academic and focused level, about important topics that may be the center of future courses offered at the prison.⁴⁰

Conclusion

Higher education programs in prisons benefit society in multifaceted ways. This becomes evident through analysis and recognition of reduction of socioeconomic and racial disparities in regard to educational and economic opportunities, statistically-proven reduced recidivism rates, and improved self-worth, all of which result from implementation of higher education programs behind bars. These programs serve as a critical step towards a societal focus on true rehabilitation rather than incapacitation. It is only through an intentional, purposeful emphasis on these programs and initiatives that impactful, lasting developments towards social justice for marginalized and incarcerated populations becomes possible.

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5. Parrotta, "Sociology of the Prison Classroom: Marginalized Identities and Sociological Imaginations behind Bars." Pp. 160.
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9. Taylor, *Paved With Good Intentions: The Failure of Race Relations in Contemporary America.* Pp. 128.
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13. Shephard, "The Non-Black Teacher, Black Literature, and Black Students." Pp. 1073.
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8. THE RECRUITMENT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

By Jerusalem Estifanos

International students have played a major role in the development of higher education in the United States over the past fifteen years. Their different cultural backgrounds undoubtedly help to enhance campus life on college campuses across the country. However, Americans are concerned about the large demographic makeup of international students in American colleges and universities. Many fear that these students are “stealing” admissions spots that should be given to hard-working, domestic students and that many international students are not even capable of being successful at American universities. Although the number of students from abroad is at an all-time high, international students play a vital role in the stability and success of a university. They not only benefit American universities, but they enhance and better campus life.

Historically, international students have been attracted to the academic rigor that universities in the United States provide. Likewise, American universities have made many efforts to recruit young and bright talents from all over the world. For example, after the end of World War 2 in 1947, Senator J. William Fulbright formed the Fulbright Program, which encouraged and funded international educational exchanges. This allowed over 26,000 international students to study in the United States.¹ More presently, American universities have made massive efforts to recruit even more international students. After the September 11th attacks, there was a drop in the enrollment numbers of international students.² This devastated universities, as international students not only enhanced college campuses, but also helped the university financially with their ability to pay full tuition. A short six years later, the global financial crisis pushed American universities to enroll even more international students.³ Because many universities were going through a tough time financially, they needed to admit more students who were capable of paying full tuition and who were wealthy enough to also be able to donate money to their universities. Although recruiting more international students proved to be a great decision on the part of universities, it left many domestic families feeling like talented U.S. students were being overlooked. Many families felt that they were promised easy access to higher education, and felt like this promise was not being kept by their local and national governments.

The state of California has one of the largest populations of international students in the country. At some UC schools, almost 20% of the incoming freshman class is from overseas. This large number has made Californians feel like they are not being accurately and fairly represented in the UC system. Similarly, Jerome Karabel writes about how the admissions process in itself was created because there were too many young Jewish men who were attending top universities. Because of the large number of Jewish men in top universities, there were fewer spots available for Protestant men.⁴ Similarly, Californians feel the need to drastically lower the number of international students in American universities because it is taking away from in-state talent. They see it as one more spot given to an international student is one spot that could have gone to a Californian. This is also similar to the *Grutter v. Bollinger* case, where Barbara Grutter felt that she was being

discriminated against in her application to the University of Michigan Law School.⁵ This case and the situation with international students both involve parties that believe they are being discriminated against based on uncontrollable factors.

This way of thinking is unfair and inaccurate. It is important to note that there is no “stealing” of spots. No one person or group of people is entitled to acceptance to any school. The admissions process is also so discreet and hidden that it cannot be assumed that a Californian is more deserving of a spot in a UC school than an international student. Simply living in a specific place cannot make you a better candidate than someone else. There is also no set quota that any university must abide by when selecting students for incoming freshman classes. Alia Wong states that “Treating affirmative action as a practice that either hurts or helps an entire racial group, for instance, prevents productive conversations about its role in college admissions.”⁶ Although there is some truth to the statement, it is unproductive to think that every admissions decision is something that creates winners and losers. Likewise, the influx of international students being admitted does not necessarily mean that all Californians are getting hurt. The idea that international students are “stealing” spots is completely irrational, as it disregards the fact that these students may have interesting qualities that domestic Californians have. Many international students probably have experiences and viewpoints that would be beneficial to the university. Likewise, in-state residents also receive a form of preferential treatment in the admissions process, despite an international student having different experiences than them.

Many international students come to the United States because of the opportunities that U.S. schools can provide them. In an article written by Douglas Belkin and Miriam Jordan, international students from China discuss their transitions from their homeland to universities across the United States. Chutian Shao (a student at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) describes how difficult it was to transition to college life in the United States. He speaks on how he specifically spent time with students from his same background, as he felt it was difficult to connect with American students.⁷ However, the most alarming thing in this article is how little support he felt he had from the university once he got on campus. It was only last year that the university “stopped separating international students into different orientations upon arrival” (Belkin and Jordan 2016). The fact that the university was even separating international students into different orientation groups is problematic. “Rebecca Karl, a professor of Chinese history at New York University, puts it more starkly: She says Chinese students can pose a ‘burden’ on her lectures, which she needs to modify for their benefit.” (Belkin and Jordan 2016) This is also extremely problematic. Professors and administrators should be willing to help international students adjust to the workload in the United States. It seems that professors and administrators are not trying their best to help international students integrate into American life. It is not that these students are not capable of the work they are given. It is that they do not have the support they need from their superiors to be successful both socially and academically. Haiyi Li, a student from Guangzhou, China attending Oregon State explained how she did not even know how to compile a résumé, something she feels she should have been taught by her university.⁸

International students bring a new perspective to college campuses across the country. Dennis Hanno states that welcoming international students to American universities “creates opportunities for U.S. citizens to connect to the wider world, it provides a significant source of tuition revenue that directly benefits domestic students, and it makes vital contributions to our nation’s standing as the world’s leader.”⁹ It is no coincidence that many of the said benefits are solely benefiting the university along with domestic students. Often times, specific language is used to mask the fact that universities are opening up their campuses mainly for their financial gains. Ideally, having international students study in the United States should be benefitting all parties involved, but that is unfortunately not the case. It is clear that the problem lies with the university and not the international students. Universities are drawn to international students because of the revenue they help build by paying full tuition. Universities are seeing international students as a way to fund and pay for their expenses rather than as individuals. In actuality, universities do not have the best interest of these students in mind.

No international student is “stealing” spots away from domestic students. International students are an important and vital component of campus life throughout the United States. Their backgrounds and experiences are one of the many things that give life and personality to a university. To attempt to purposefully lower down the enrollment rates of these students is unfair. Likewise, it is unjust to admit these students and then fail to support them as they transition to life in the United States. These students are individuals who deserve to be helped and given a chance to fairly go after all the opportunities they are presented. After all, isn’t that what the American Dream is all about?

The International Scene at Tufts University

At Tufts University, the international community is seen as an important and integral part of the school’s identity. The different backgrounds and life experiences of these students are embraced and cherished by both faculty and domestic students. Their mere presence helps with the diversity rationale, the belief that students of a minority group will help benefit non-minority students with their views and knowledge. This knowledge will in turn help non-minority students become more worldly individuals who are ready to work and contribute to the world. Although Tufts seems to display a sense of eagerness to admit international students, that is because the university benefits immensely from these students, not because the university genuinely cares about the wellbeing of the international community.

At first glance, it appears that Tufts is attempting to make international students feel comfortable on campus. For example, the creation of the I-Center was a major step for Tufts. It gave international students a physical space to come together and socialize with students from different parts of the world. Furthermore, Tufts created GO, a pre-orientation program that is marketed towards international students. The university boasts how life-changing of an experience GO is, and how it’s a 4-day event that no international student should miss out on. This draws a parallel to the experience of Chutian Shao in the article mentioned previously. International students at Tufts are

encouraged to mingle with other international students even before they step foot on campus. In a way, the GO pre-orientation program helps international students segregate themselves from the very beginning. I participated in GO this past year, and was one of very few domestic students who signed up for the program, despite Tuft's claims that there will also be many domestic students who participate in GO. The university marketed GO as being a life-changing experience, but did not fulfill its promise on helping international students integrate with domestic students.

A representative from Tuft's International Club spoke to me about how the university is now making an effort to remove the I-Center from being part of the Group of 6 (houses on campus that function to help minority groups feel a sense of community in their respective house). The university argued that international students are made up of mostly wealthy, white European students, and went against the foundational beliefs of the Group of 6, which is to create a space for minority students. This created an uproar from many non-white international students, as many of them found comfort and familiarity in the I-Center, and felt their voices would be unheard if they were not considered to be part of the Group of 6. However, according to that representative, the university has not made an effort to listen and discuss the demands coming from the international students. The representative explained to me that many non-white international students felt discouraged to even speak up about the matter because they felt they would not be heard anymore. This goes against almost everything the university markets Tufts to look like. The university illustrates Tufts as being an institution that embraces the international community and values their experiences and beliefs. Although this all began in the middle of the fall, there have been no new updates on this matter, although many students are beginning to refer to the Group of 6 as the Group of 5.

The Entrepreneurial University

Henry Giroux speaks about how higher education used to be a means to better one's self. However, in today's world, higher education is being turned into a marketable business that revolves around money and profits. This is true in the case of international students at Tufts. For example, on the university's website, the admissions team makes it very clear that financial aid is very limited at Tufts, and that only a small amount of this aid is available to highly talented international students. The admissions team then repeats how limited funds are, and that if a family is able to pay for Tufts without aid, they should not consider applying for financial aid. They then proceed to explain how competition in the pool of international students on financial aid is very keen and rigorous, discouraging families from applying for financial aid in fear that their child would not be able to compete in that application pool. This surely makes international families see paying full tuition as a better option than applying for aid, where the competition is much more steep.

As I mentioned previously, the GO pre-orientation program is an agenda that is heavily pushed to international students. However, what is not marketed as much is the price sticker of the program. GO costs students a couple of hundred dollars to participate

in the 4 day program. This aligns with the beliefs of Giroux, as Tufts specifically has been more focused on profits than its international students.

Sol Gittleman argues that American universities are transforming to imitate corporations, even drawing a parallel between university presidents and CEOs of corporations. I wholeheartedly agree with this claim. American universities are in fact mimicking large American corporations instead of caring for the wellbeing of their students. Although money is a major component of the running of a university, I do believe there has to be less emphasis on profits and meeting financial goals. Focusing so much on money causes universities to look for the wrong things in applicants during the application process. Although I believe that universities don't solely accept international students based on their financial status because the application process is holistic, it is very disheartening to see that Tufts and other universities alike do not take into account the feelings of this minority group on campus.

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9. LATINO STUDENTS

By Yanelle Cruz Bonilla

Despite what the current political discourse suggests, Latinas/os have been a strong presence in the United States for many decades. Immigrants and refugees began migrating to the United States many decades ago, and their families began establishing themselves in the United States since then. The inclusion of Latinas/os in American schools is not new to 2017, in fact there is documented history of how Latinas/os began establishing their presence in American education. One of the first developments that paved the way for Latinas/os in higher education were the Chicano and Puerto Rican youth movements of the 1960s and 1970s, which demanded meaningful access to higher education. Additionally, these movements called for curricula that reflected the changing composition of student populations, faculty members who could serve as role models for aspiring scholars, Hispanic cultural and research centers, and the financial means to realize these goals.¹ By the 1980s, college attendance rates amongst Latinas/os soared and dropout rates decreased. In 1988, the total number of Latina/o students enrolled in U.S. institutions of postsecondary education was approximately 680,000. This number accounts for 5.2% of all college students in the United States at that time.² Regardless of where they were enrolled, Latinas/os were slowly on their way towards more representation in higher education. But just how much representation has been achieved in 2017? This chapter will explore the state of Latina/o representation in American higher education since 2002. Additionally, this chapter will explore these questions using a critical race theory (CRT) and Latino Critical (LatCrit) theory analysis framework.

LATINO STUDENT REPRESENTATION IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

One of the biggest issues with Latinas/os and higher education has always been, and still is, the fact that they are not present in higher education in numbers proportional to their share of the United States population. Despite the impressive gains in numbers in the 1980s, the 1990s saw an interesting shift in Latina/o higher education representation and their education choices. Latina/o students were disproportionately concentrated in two-year institutions such as community and junior colleges. In 1990, 56% of Latinas/os were attending community colleges compared to 36% of White students.³ By 1994, the Latina/o college-age population had increased by 14%, however these gains were partly driven by enrollment increases at two-year institutions.⁴ According to the 2000 Census, approximately 13% of the total U.S. population, or 35.3 million, self-identify as Latinas/os and represented the largest underrepresented racial/ethnic group in the United States at that time.⁵ Given that children of Latino/a immigrants are now getting older and starting their own families, the number of Latinas/os in the United States is only expected to grow. Despite Latinas/os making up such a large part of the U.S. population, when you consider the populations of particular schools the numbers are not representative at all. For example, only 6.6% or 360 of enrolled students at Tufts in the fall semester of 2016 were Hispanic.⁶ Compared to the national population of Latinas/os that number is abysmally low. However, while these low enrollment numbers have been the norm at elite institutions it is not the case at all

higher education institutions. Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) are categorized as such for having at least 25% of their student body identify as Latina/o, and the majority of HSIs nationwide are two-year institutions.⁷

COMMUNITY COLLEGE: A HUB FOR LATINO STUDENTS

Community colleges offer the opportunity to working-class, first-generation Latinas/os to pay the low tuition while working full-time. These conditions prevent their likelihood of transferring to a 4-year institution and contribute to their inability to complete a degree.⁸ Even though 71% of Latina/o students who enter a community college desire to transfer to a 4-year institution, only 7% to 20% end up eventually transferring.⁹ One of the explanations for this phenomenon might be the poor academic guidance and counseling provided to Latinas/os in community colleges is often based on low expectations that counselors hold for Latinas/os. The effects of academic tracking and ability grouping in K-12 education often parallel tracking practices by community college counselors that steer Latinas/os toward vocational skills and job training programs rather than a college transfer track.¹⁰ Additionally, the differences in the cost of community college tuition versus tuition at a four-year institution is often too much for Latino/a students to afford on their own which can make transferring seem impossible financially. This is damaging to Latino/a students because there is very little prestige attached to a community or junior college degree. In a society where merit is highly valued, and measured by educational attainment, Latino/a students might find that despite the sacrifices and hard work they went through to earn their degree it does not mean American society values it as much as they do. While this might serve as inspiration to earn a more advanced degree, there are institutional and systemic barriers that make it challenging for Latina/o students to do so. The disparity in Latina/o student enrollments between 2- and 4-year institutions, their low transfer rates to 4-year universities, and their equally dismal retention and graduation rates at 4-year campuses illustrate the chronically persistent racial stratification of higher education in the United States.¹¹

THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF MERITOCRACY ON LATINO STUDENTS

At any given point in the educational pipeline—no matter how one measures educational outcomes—Latinas/os do not perform as well as most other students.¹² This is harmful because American society believes so strongly in the ideas of meritocracy and neoliberalism. Meritocracy has allowed for a culture in which higher the test scores and the better the grades, the more entitlements are granted to an individual by teachers, parents, administrators, other students, and even the general public.¹³ This cultural belief immediately places Latino/a students at a disadvantage because they have failed to “work hard enough to be successful” and earn their own merits in comparison to other non-Latino students. Meritocracy erases the notion that there are institutional factors that lead to the underperformance of Latino/a students in the United States. This system has also created a structure in which American universities are formally equal but functionally quite different, where institutions that are the most accessible provide the least social benefit, and those that are least accessible open the most doors.¹⁴ Considering

the vast majority of Latino/a youth find themselves enrolling in two-year institutions, one can see how harmful this belief can be, because their degrees might not lead to the upward social mobility or economic growth they are expecting from enrolling in a higher education institution.

LABELING AND TRACKING: CREATING PATHWAYS FOR LATINO STUDENTS

Additionally, Latino/a youth must find themselves fighting prejudice and stereotypes that are imposed upon them in educational settings. For many immigrant parents, education is one of the ideal instruments towards achieving the American dream for their children. However, American public schools are sites of stratification, often reinforcing and widening societal inequalities as well as exacerbating divisions amongst students by reinforcing dichotomous identities.¹⁵ This is important because middle and high school years can severely impact access to higher education for Latino/a students, and whether they choose to pursue an education beyond high school. As evidenced by Robert Gonzales' book *Lives in Limbo*, Latino/a students are tracked into two pathways: early exiters and college-goers. Latino/a are victims of labeling, a practice where teachers will assign students labels based on their own personal, cultural, and institutional ideas and values.¹⁶ These labels remain with students for years, shaping their interactions, goals, and aspirations they wish to pursue. If the labels are positive, as it is with the college-goers, they can enhance a student's educational experiences and place them on a pathway to success. If the labels are negative, as it is with the early exiters, they cause a sense of alienation in school settings that may cause students to stop pursuing education all-together. This message that Latino/a students are inferior and not agents of knowledge continues to affect the institutional level and also translates into overcrowded and underfinanced schools, low graduation rates, and overrepresentation of these students in special education classes.¹⁷

FAMILISMO: A BARRIER TO FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

Another factor to take into consideration when it comes to Latinas/os higher education choices are cultural and familial values. Research shows that many Hispanics "undermatch," not choosing a four-year college even though they are eligible, because of a desire to stay close to home or because of a concern over finances.¹⁸ One of these cultural values is *familismo*, known in many Latin American communities as a firm belief in strong family ties, with the family as the primary source of support and loyalty to the family taking precedence over one's personal desires.¹⁹ Many Latino/a youth feel the strong urge to support their family which can sometimes lead to them sacrificing their hopes of attending a higher education institution. Additionally, because Latino families consider strong family ties as one of their most important values, Latino/a youth may find it difficult to adjust to life without their family and might feel isolated if they attend a higher education institution away from home. Roberto Gonzales' book *Lives in Limbo* provides many examples of familismo, such as the story of Scarlet, a Latina senior attending California State University who lived with her mother and strongly depended on that in order to keep affording her education. Even though she held aspirations to find a place of her own, Scarlet knew both of them relied on each other to survive financially, so she

knew she could not get her own place to live anytime soon.²⁰ Scarlet's story may not be typical of every single Latino/a student in the United States but it is certainly not as uncommon as one would think. While it may seem as if familismo is a negative aspect of Latino/a culture that only holds students back, there are positive aspects related to those values. Studies have found that in comparison to White students, Latinos/as enter college with higher levels of altruism, stronger interests in pursuing careers serving their communities, and stronger interests in "helping their communities." Latinos/as refer to their commitment to their families and communities as a source of inspiration and motivation to overcome educational obstacles.²¹ Other studies have found that for Latinos/as attending college full-time, maintaining family relationships is among the most important aspects that facilitates their adjustment to college.²²

CRT AND LATCRIT: AN ANALYSIS INTO LATINO STUDENTS IN THE U.S

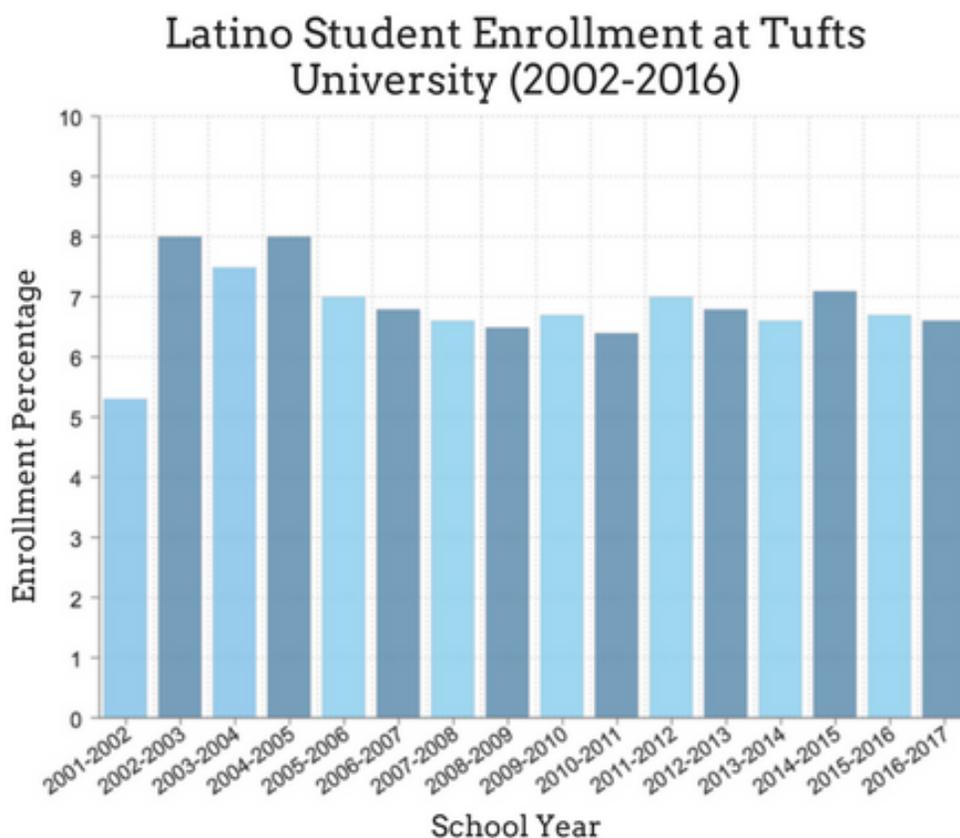
Critical race theory (CRT) and Latino critical theory (LatCrit) challenge the dominant discourse on race and racism as they relate to education by examining how educational theory and practice are used to subordinate and marginalize Latina/o students. LatCrit is a theory that considers Latinos/as multidimensional identities and addresses the intersectionality of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression. These frameworks challenge dominant liberal ideas such as colorblindness and meritocracy and show how these ideas operate to disadvantage people of color and further advantage Whites.²³ CRT scholars in education have theorized, examined, and challenged the ways in which race and racism shape schooling structures, practices, and discourses.²⁴ CRT argues that higher education in the United States cannot separate itself from the historical fact that its current identity and practices have been shaped by legal and sociopolitical forces that have continuously redefined concepts of race, ethnicity, national origin, language, class, and justice.²⁵ Together, CRT and LatCrit form a lens for educational research that acknowledges and supports systems of knowing and understanding that counter the dominant Eurocentric epistemology which centers American European values and ideals as the norm for all students enrolled in American schools.²⁶ Despite representing the largest ethnic/racial group in the United States, Latinas/os have the poorest educational transition rates among all groups.²⁷ It is not uncommon for Latinas/os to drop out of middle school or high school, making it much more challenging for them to ever transition to higher education. CRT offers an explanation to this based on the fact that low-income and low-resource schools are often schools where the majority of the student body are students of color. Because of the history of racism in education in the United States, there are no real efforts to make education truly accessible for all on a national level. There is a lack of commitment amongst stakeholders and actors in the education sector to improve low-resource, low-income schools and hold accountable those schools that stratify their students. Much of the discourse surrounding these issues places the blame on the students of color instead of on institutional and systemic inequalities due to American ideals based around meritocracy. However, through a CRT and LatCrit lens, students of color can be seen as holders and creators of knowledge who have the potential to transform schools into

places where the experiences of all individuals are acknowledged, taught, and cherished.²⁸

LATINO STUDENTS AT TUFTS UNIVERSITY: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Latino/a students have had a presence at Tufts University for many decades. While they may not be the biggest ethnic group on campus, they are still an integral part of the student body that has managed to establish a presence despite being such a small minority on campus. Nowadays, Latino/a students may find support and resources at the Latino Center, La Casa, or through various programs established to support them while they are at Tufts. Latino/a students who were at Tufts before the late 1980s did not have any of these resources available to them, making it significantly harder to find their place and succeed at Tufts. It is important to note that Latino/a student enrollment at Tufts has remained steady since 2002, with not much growth in numbers since then. Considering the fact that the Latino/a population in the United States has been rising exponentially in the past decades one has to wonder, why hasn't Tufts' Latino/a enrollment risen as well?

REPRESENTATION OF LATINOS AT TUFTS UNIVERSITY



As seen in the chart above, enrollment of Latino/a students at Tufts has never increased past 8% since 2002. While enrollment numbers could be lower, they are certainly not as high as the numbers at several peer-institutions that are comparable to Tufts. It is unclear whether the admissions office has a recruitment strategy tailored to attract Latino/a students particularly, but these numbers showcase that perhaps a strategy is needed in order to increase enrollment. The admissions office has a Diversity Council where students and administrators get together and discuss diversity statistics but it is unclear whether they plan for diversity initiatives. Additionally, the admissions office hosts an overnight program called Voices of Tufts Diversity Experiences where prospective high school students are exposed to the diversity at Tufts. The admissions office describes it as “vast diversity” however, it is important to be critical of this because the numbers indicate that diversity might not be as vast as it is painted to be. Participants of this program experience life at Tufts by staying in a residential dorm with an undergraduate student, attending lectures, eating in the dining halls, and watching a student-led showcase by several on-campus performance groups. This program is not specifically tailored towards Latino/a students, but it does accept several of them every year. The admissions office also employs a small number of students to serve as diversity interns. These interns work with the admissions office to plan on-campus programming, create web content, and provide other opportunities for prospective students to learn about the many facets of diversity at Tufts. Again, it is important to be critical and ask the question of just how many facets of diversity there are at Tufts because the quantitative data could show perhaps there are not as many “facets” as the admissions office advertises.

THE LATINO CENTER: A HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Founded in 1993, the Latino Center represents a home away from home for many Latino/a students during their time at Tufts.²⁹ Originally known as the Hispanic American center, its primary objective was to provide a supportive environment for students and to foster pride in the Latino culture among the Tufts students body. Today, the Latino Center continues to build on this legacy by actively working to build strong and vibrant Latino communities where students, faculty, and staff feel valued and supported and service as University wide resource.³⁰ The Latino Center develops programming throughout the year that is open to all Tufts students, not just Latino/a students. It also coordinates campus activities in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month annually in October, including film festivals, student art exhibits, musical programs, and forums on issues affecting the Latino community. Additionally, it provides Latino/a students with educational and career resources as well as individualized student advising that focuses on personal, academic, and leadership development. The Latino Center is one of five campus centers that serve as a resource for all students interested in social. The Center staff collaborates with other departments, programs, faculty, and alumni to form an active network that ensures interests and needs of Tufts Latino communities are effectively addressed.³¹ Since its founding and until 2016, the Latino Center was directed by Ruben Salinas Stern. Since his retirement in 2016, the center is now directed by Julian Cancino.

INITIATIVES AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR LATINO STUDENTS

In addition to the Latino Center, there are various programs and initiatives set in place in order to support Latino/a students at Tufts University. Sponsored by the Latino Center, the Latino Peer Leader (LPL) program was established in 1994 to provide support and advice to first-year Latino/a students.³² Since then, between 10-15 Latino/a students are selected each year by the Latino Center staff to serve as leaders for the incoming class. Their primary task is to serve as a resource for new students and help them acclimate to their new lives at Tufts. Peer leaders (PLs) provide guidance, facilitate connections to on campus resources and groups, and serve as a friendly face throughout a student's first year at Tufts. Through their work, peer leaders serve as community leaders, role models, and ambassadors of the Latino Center to the broader Tufts community. Participating in the program is not mandatory for incoming students, however, all incoming Latino/a students receive an invitation to participate via email. At the discretion of the PLs, they may also choose to host social events with all their mentees in order to facilitate social relationships and friendships amongst the new students. PLs are also tasked with planning of beginning of semester activities hosted by the Latino Center such as an open house during orientation week, a welcome back barbecue, a community trip where students travel to Jamaica Plain, and a two-day retreat where students travel to Thompson Island to enjoy leadership and team-building programming.

In addition to the Latino Peer Leader program, students choosing to connect to Latino culture may choose to live in La Casa Latina, one of several special interest housing options available at Tufts. La Casa Latina's mission is to provide a housing environment dedicated to the immersion and exposure of Latino culture for all residents. This is done through programming that current residents plan which often allows for non-residents to attend if they wish to do so. While it is not a requirement to be a Latino/a student to apply to live in La Casa Latina, the majority of residents identify as Latino/a.

Out of the wide variety of student groups present at Tufts, there are a few that are geared specifically towards Latino/a students and their culture. Founded in 1989, the Association of Latin American Students (ALAS) is a student-run organization whose mission is to bring together all students who identify as Latino/a and students who may not identify as such but are interested in learning more about Latino/a culture. ALAS's primary goal is to meet the needs of the Latino student population at Tufts as well as providing an arena for intellectual discourse on issues facing the Latino community at large. This organization is led by an executive board composed of students who are elected to those positions by their peers. The organization meets regularly on a weekly basis and hosts events throughout the semester where all Tufts students are invited. In addition to ALAS, Latino/a may choose to join the Tufts Minority Association of Pre-Health Students (MAPS) or the Tufts Society of Latino Engineers and Scientists (SOLES). MAPS was established as a resource to guide first-generation, minority, or low-income students through their pre-health career journeys and to provide career opportunities in the health and medical fields. SOLES is a chapter from a national society that supports

Latino/a students who aspire to become engineers or scientists. While SOLES is geared towards Latino/a students, any student who wishes to do so may choose to join.

While it may seem that there are plenty of resources and support available for Latino/a students at Tufts it should be important to note that the lack of Latino representation on campus can sometimes feel isolating for many students. The fact that enrollment of Latinos is so low often creates experiences where students feel out of place. Such as being the only Latino/a sitting in class or being one out of four students of color in a classroom. Additionally, the lack of socioeconomic diversity at Tufts is another source of isolation for Latino/a students seeing as many of them come from middle or low-income families and a vast majority are the first in their family to attend university. While Tufts has done a good job at setting up resources and initiatives for Latino/a students, it must recognize it must do more because setting up a student center and a few programming is not enough to showcase a commitment towards its Latino student population.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: HOW CAN TUFTS IMPROVE ITS LATINO ENROLLMENT?

In order to truly be an innovative university, Tufts must commit towards improving its enrollment numbers for all ethnic groups not just Latino/a students. When compared to peer institutions, Tufts' enrollment numbers fare on the lower side of the spectrum and that is problematic because it is not providing opportunities for all students regardless of their race or ethnicity. In order to truly be an entrepreneurial university, enrollment numbers for all minorities at Tufts should be higher because that is one way to ensure that Tufts is on the path towards providing better opportunities and upward mobility for minority students. One way in which Tufts could achieve this is by increasing their financial aid budget and beginning to move towards need-blind admissions policies. The fact that Tufts uses a need-aware admissions policy excludes students on the lower income spectrum that cannot afford to pay for a Tufts education. As sociology theories have shown, the majority of these low-income students tend to also be minority students which means that by being need-aware Tufts is stratifying its admissions process in order to benefit those who are wealthy or white. While it is a financial challenge to become a need-blind school, there is an endowment industry in American higher education that could make it possible. As Sol Gittleman wrote in his book *An Entrepreneurial University: The Transformation of Tufts* an overwhelming number of American universities engage in fundraising campaigns that have almost become an industry of their own.³³ Perhaps with Tufts' new Brighter World campaign we will begin to see more inclusion in the admissions and enrollment of minority students but only time will tell.

Endnotes

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2. Quintana, Meta-Analysis of Latino Students Adjustment in Higher Education, 155.
3. Quintana, Meta-Analysis of Latino Students Adjustment in Higher Education, 156.
4. Solórzano, Educational Inequities and Latina/o Undergraduate Students in the United States: A Critical Race Analysis of Their Educational Progress, 276.
5. Solórzano, Educational Inequities and Latina/o Undergraduate Students in the United States: A Critical Race Analysis of Their Educational Progress, 273.
6. This figure was taken from the Tufts University website and the specific link is listed on the bibliography below. It is important to note there are definitely international students that identify as Latina/o but Tufts does not break that down into specific numbers and instead considers all international students under the same percentage and separately from the other ethnicity percentages.
7. This is based on the Hispanic Association of Universities and Colleges (HACU) definition of a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI).
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14. Labaree, A perfect mess: the unlikely ascendancy of American higher education, 5.
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10. IN THE WORDS OF DRAKE, “KEEP THE FAMILY CLOSE”: LEGACY PREFERENCE IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

By Whitney Miller

It is no secret that applicants with lineage to elite institutions often enjoy greater consideration in the admissions process.¹ Consequently, the preferential treatment of legacies has been dubbed “affirmative action for whites,”² “affirmative action for the rich,”³ and “the largest affirmative action program in American higher education.”⁴ Until recent years, however, the legacy advantage has not been subject to the same controversy as traditional affirmative action programs that target underrepresented individuals. These programs are justified by the diversity and remedial rationales in that they promote the social good by supporting minorities and increasing diversity.⁵ Conversely, affirmative action treatment of legacies violates both rationales and impedes the social good. Legacy preference undermines the concept of merit, it creates social hegemony and inequality on campus, and it reinforces practices that favor the market over democracy. The affirmative action treatment of legacies in admissions must then be regarded as not only inappropriate but also dangerous. Higher education represents a beacon of enlightenment and progress, towards which elite institutions cannot move if they continue favor tradition over change. Legacies then constitute one piece of the puzzle in redefining what the admissions process, and further, what the values of higher education should represent in the 21st century.

Merit Redefined

Scholarship widely accepts the origins of the legacy advantage as post-WWI America.⁶ Due to the influx of Eastern European immigrants, schools established Jewish quotas to maintain their white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant student body. Admissions took on newfound importance as schools redefined merit in order to justify admissions decisions that would satisfy their quotas. When Harvard University announced that it would emphasize “character, personality”⁷ in admissions, legacy status became a “fine distinction” that gave an applicant leverage after the “coarse sort” of individuals had been completed.⁸ For up until the 1920s, Harvard admitted any white male applicant who passed its subject examinations.⁹ This might be closer to the contemporary notion of academic merit, whereby one gains admission based on the quality of demonstrated skill or performance. Legacy preference signaled the shift to a biased admissions process requiring essays, letters of recommendation, and demonstrated leadership potential.¹⁰

The “Jewish problem” provided the framework for admissions to redefine merit, which, “at a given moment expresses underlying power relations.”¹¹ The contemporary reason for the preference of legacy status over academic merit is that it boosts alumni donations.¹² For example, research suggests that being a legacy is equivalent to adding an extra 160 points to one’s SAT score.¹³ This is despite the fact that legacy applicants often hold the “lowest levels of pre-college academic skills and ability”¹⁴ and yet are more likely to have afforded private education and test prep.¹⁵ By the principles of the remedial rationale, affirmative action programs help equalize the playing field for students who

have not had these privileges. If affirmative action for legacies is also to provide a social good that can be justified by the remedial rationale, “alumni children would need to be held to a *higher* standard, not a lower one.”¹⁶ This is because legacy policies continue to favor those who are already advantaged by the system. They produce an effect counter to that of contemporary affirmative action programs seeking to establish the social good, for they are “based on pedigree rather than merit.”¹⁷ Natasha Warikoo importantly notes that academic merit, then, must be “calibrated” in order to account for an applicant’s relative opportunities.¹⁸ Colleges may come closer towards achieving a social good by applying calibrated evaluations of merit to legacies who should theoretically demonstrate higher test scores and grades, thereby equalizing the playing field.

Separation versus Integration

Given that legacy advantage denies the social good encompassed by the remedial rationale, so too does it prevent the social good expounded by the diversity rationale. The diversity rationale suggests that differences in race, religion, ethnicity, gender, skills, etc., benefit the “collective merit”¹⁹ of the student body by exposing them to diverse backgrounds and perspectives that will benefit them in the future. However, by the principles of the social reproduction thesis, legacies maintain the social composition of the “constituencies who controlled elite colleges and universities before the expansion of American higher education.”²⁰ For example, they descend primarily from wealthier families with household incomes triple that of their peers whose parents hold no degrees.²¹ Moreover, legacies are more likely to be white, US citizens, and Protestant, thus having “not only an abundance of economic capital but also a wealth of social and cultural capital”²² due to their elevated socioeconomic status.

The legacy advantage extends beyond admissions. At Brown University, alumni children receive free college counseling.²³ At the University of Notre Dame, legacies are granted leniency with school policies and receive distinct housing.²⁴ They are considered the bearers of tradition and “often become friends...because they have a little more in common.”²⁵ Thus, the distinct social and cultural capital of legacies can separate them from the rest of their student body. Warikoo describes the “integration imperative” in relation to the diversity rationale and affirmative action, which is the belief among students that diversity benefits everyone only through interacting with one another.²⁶ How can legacies square with this integration when they are seemingly separated from their peers during admissions through to matriculation? Students may endorse affirmative action on the basis of the diversity rationale that it contributes to the collective merit, but legacies do the opposite. They typically represent a homogenous group of white privilege, perpetuating the historical inequalities that affirmative action tries to neutralize and diminishing the diversity from which everyone can benefit. It is with this in mind that one Notre Dame reject explained that the institution is “missing out on a lot of good students...the whole school in general will be affected by that.”²⁷ The affirmative action treatment of legacies then cannot be justified by the diversity rationale either, which suggests that the social good is achieved when everyone benefits.

Democracy versus the Market

If affirmative action programs are justified in their creation of the social good through either the remedial or diversity rationale, which legacy programs violate, why do they still exist? The most prevalent defense from colleges today is that it helps secure alum donations and better the quality of their institution, thus enhancing the social good. However, this is a belief that encourages schools to favor the market over democracy, ultimately “striking at the heart of American notions of equal opportunity and upward mobility.”²⁸ For example, private donations at the University of Virginia are deemed necessary for “maintaining the quality of the institution.”²⁹ This can encompass new buildings or centers on campus that have been financed by alum. At the University of Notre Dame, admitting legacies helps secure internships from alumni.³⁰ In turn, these opportunities become available to the rest of the student body. Further, administration at Notre Dame claims that “alumni donations underwrite financial aid for needy students.”³¹ Coming from households with medians above the national average, legacy applicants are also less likely to require financial aid, thereby allowing the school to spend money in other sectors. This financial benefit of legacies helps colleges raise their rank and reputation in the market of higher education. For improving facilities and opportunities attracts students with higher test scores and GPAs as well as renowned faculty. Legacies then may function as a trade-off that schools are prepared to make in order to become more competitive in the market.

However, it is in this vein that the “commitment to alumni children is also at odds with...academic aspirations.”³² In succumbing to the impulses of the market, institutions of higher education undermine the principles of democracy upon which they were founded as ways for “vulnerable groups...to achieve greater prosperity.”³³ This is exemplified by the way in which legacy preference reinforces historical socioeconomic privilege. In doing so, the affirmative action program for legacies is “counter to intergenerational social mobility”³⁴ and denies the democratic value of equality professed by the American Dream.³⁵ Where, then, is the social good? Legacy preference may even contradict efforts to improve market standing. This is because the legacy trade-off encourages schools to accept applicants that typically have lower academic credentials. Perhaps most compelling for these elite institutions is that they would flourish without legacy preference: “alumni might give less money to their own alma maters – but more to their children’s.”³⁶ New research on the legacy advantage paired with the Trump administration’s current investigation into affirmative action might help revive the legacy issue in admissions. But until then, college admissions may well still abide by the words of Drake in his 2016 song: “Keep the Family Close.”

A Light on the Hill or An Entrepreneurial University?

Tufts University is a small, private liberal arts college straddling the neighborhoods of Medford and Somerville in Massachusetts. It has been termed an “entrepreneurial university”³⁷ by former Provost Sol Gittleman whose book published in 2004 shares the same name. Founder Charles Tufts also dubbed the school a “light on the hill,”³⁸ referencing its position in the United States as a beacon of academic

enlightenment. This chapter has so far demonstrated how affirmative action treatment of legacies favors the market over democracy by violating the remedial and diversity rationales, ultimately denying a social good. At Tufts, the tension between democracy and the market is no more perfectly captured than in its two nicknames. However, the extent to which Tufts models the qualities of an entrepreneurial university will determine whether it, too, leverages legacies as a means of promoting money over the mission.

The lack of available information on legacy treatment at Tufts reaffirms the notion that legacy preference is an admissions trade-off to be kept secret for otherwise contradicting the values of higher education. However, in 2012 Director of Admissions Susan Ardizzoni broke the silence: “What I can tell you is that when we look at students that have legacy with parents, we will look at those students very closely.”³⁹ At Tufts, legacy applies to both undergraduate and graduate schools and encompasses parents, siblings, and grandparents.⁴⁰ By contrast, Columbia only considers the children of alumni⁴¹ and Penn places the greatest weight on legacy status during its Early Decision rounds.⁴² Tufts legacies also note their own experiences of being invited to distinct matriculation ceremonies upon arrival and receiving personalized letters after applying.⁴³ These findings are in line with the experiences of previously mentioned legacy students at Notre Dame and Brown, whose family connections distinguished their experiences from admissions to their arrival on campus.

The Four I’s

The extent to which Tufts pits democracy against the market, and thus the importance afforded to legacy status, rests on how it embodies the four qualities of the entrepreneurial university: independence, investment, imitation, and innovation.⁴⁴ This is because, by principle, the entrepreneurial university adapts to the market in order to remain competitive in the economy of higher education.⁴⁵ First, the power of the entrepreneurial university lies in its independence. American colleges like Tufts lack state governance and funding which forces them to “pursue any opportunity and cultivate any source of patronage.”⁴⁶ With respect to legacies, this independence allows schools to construct their own definitions of merit. At Wesleyan, when it is within the university’s own interests it may increase or decrease the number of legacy admits depending on the goal of the time such as donations or diversity.⁴⁷ Apparently, not much has changed since WWI. This tension of democracy versus the market is reflected in Tufts’ own mission statement as a “student-centered research university.” It contains the duality of being both “populist” and “elitist,”⁴⁸ concerned at once with its undergraduate experience and its faculty’s prestige. The consequence of straddling two extremes is “institutional stratification.”⁴⁹ Ultimately, the independence of the college prevails as a focus on funding is required in order to remain competitive. When median parent income at Tufts ranks eighth among 65 other elite institutions,⁵⁰ one can reason that legacies are leveraged as but one means of doing so even though historical inequalities are reproduced in the process. As with before, it is difficult to see the social good in this.

The independence of American colleges makes them reliant on private sources of investment. Previously mentioned scholarship confirms that legacy preference is typically justified by schools for their potential to boost alumni donations. At Tufts, Ardizzoni also admits that “certainly the financial part of [legacy status] is important.”⁵¹ Tufts recently launched its *Brighter World* campaign that seeks to raise \$1.5 billion.⁵² Its emphasis on alumni donations is underscored by the fact that the campaign is housed on Tufts’ “Alumni & Friends” webpage. Also noteworthy is the trend of increasing alumni giving and the fact that this constituted 49.7 percent of Tufts’ total donations in 2015-16.⁵³ The outward face of Tufts and its fundraiser represents an attempt to achieve the social good through bolstering research and global engagements.⁵⁴ Yet given that legacy preference is tied to alumni donations, their preferential treatment should play out no differently at Tufts especially in the context of its current campaign. This contrasts the inward face of the institution where the trade-off between money and merit takes place behind closed doors in admissions, undermining Tufts’ ability to promote the social good encompassed by traditional affirmative action programs.

A Jumbo-Sized Opportunity

At the end of the day, entrepreneurial universities are fierce imitators and “everybody wants to be Harvard.”⁵⁵ If this is true, it is significant that in 2003 Harvard admitted 36 percent of its legacy applicants compared to 11 percent of its entire applicant pool.⁵⁶ Tufts bears with it a history of imitation. It transformed into an entrepreneurial by embracing the PhD programs at German universities.⁵⁷ Today, Tufts is regarded as one of the “Little Ivies,” which suggests that it will not end its imitation or its preferential treatment of legacies – to whatever extent this may be – until the elite of the elite pave the way. Reverting to its history of imitating European institutions, however, would constitute a step forward: neither Oxford nor Cambridge offer a legacy advantage.⁵⁸

Innovation is another characteristic of the entrepreneurial university that holds the potential for Tufts to secure a social good through its legacy policy. In fact, Gittleman applauds the high-risk venture in Tufts’ history when Jean Mayer secured school funding with Schlossberg and Cassidy.⁵⁹ Given today’s political landscape where legacy preference “works to [the] advantage”⁶⁰ of politicians in power, the affirmative action treatment of legacies may not change without innovation. However, Tufts shows much promise: it boasts new facilities like the SEC and new bridge programs like BEST and BLAST. These initiatives promote the social good by championing academic exploration and support for underrepresented students. Perhaps, paradoxically, in order to redeem itself as a “light on the hill,” Tufts must follow in the steps of the entrepreneur Jean Mayer.

The Legacy of Legacies?

This chapter began by illustrating how the affirmative action treatment of legacies violates the remedial and diversity rationales, in turn denying a social good by favoring the market over democracy. It proceeded to examine how Tufts’ independence, investment, imitation, and innovation leverages legacies as a means of reinforcing a focus

on funding. Yet it is in being an entrepreneurial university that there exists potential for change. The end of this chapter, like that of Sol's book, remains forward-looking.

Endnotes

¹ Golden, "Enduring Legacies," *The price of admission: how America's ruling class buys its way into elite colleges – and who gets left outside the gates*, P. 121.

² Rawls, "College Legacy Admissions: Affirmative Action for Whites." *The New York Times*.

³ Kahlenberg, *Affirmative Action for the Rich: Legacy Preferences in College Admissions*.

⁴ Mullen and Kahlenberg, "The Largest Affirmative Action Program in American Higher Education."

⁵ Warikoo, "Merit and the Diversity Bargain," *The diversity bargain: and other dilemmas of race, admissions, and meritocracy at elite universities*, P. 89.

⁶ Karabel, "The 'Jewish Problem' at Yale and Princeton," *The chosen: the hidden history of admission and exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton*, P. 100.

⁷ Karabel, "The 'Jewish Problem' at Yale and Princeton," *The chosen: the hidden history of admission and exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton*, P. 115.

⁸ Stevens, *Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites*. He introduces the concept of coarse sort and fine distinction in his discussion of subjective factors that are used to evaluate applicants that meet the academic threshold.

⁹ Roithmayr, "How Whites Created Institutional Rules That Favored Them over Time," *How Everyday Choices Lock In White Advantage*, P. 70.

¹⁰ Karabel, "The 'Jewish Problem' at Yale and Princeton," *The chosen: the hidden history of admission and exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton*, P. 116.

¹¹ Karabel, "The 'Jewish Problem' at Yale and Princeton," *The chosen: the hidden history of admission and exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton*, P. 132.

¹² Golden, "Enduring Legacies," *The price of admission: how America's ruling class buys its way into elite colleges – and who gets left outside the gates*, P. 128.

¹³ Roithmayr, "How Whites Created Institutional Rules That Favored Them over Time," *How Everyday Choices Lock In White Advantage*, P. 76.

¹⁴ Martin and Spenner, "Capital Conversion and Accumulation: A Social Portrait of Legacies at an Elite University," P. 636.

¹⁵ Martin and Spenner, "Capital Conversion and Accumulation: A Social Portrait of Legacies at an Elite University," P. 635.

¹⁶ Golden, "Enduring Legacies," *The price of admission: how America's ruling class buys its way into elite colleges – and who gets left outside the gates*, P. 121.

¹⁷ Golden, "Enduring Legacies," *The price of admission: how America's ruling class buys its way into elite colleges – and who gets left outside the gates*, P. 118.

¹⁸ Warikoo, "Merit and the Diversity Bargain," *The diversity bargain: and other dilemmas of race, admissions, and meritocracy at elite universities*, P. 93.

¹⁹ Warikoo, "Merit and the Diversity Bargain," *The diversity bargain: and other dilemmas of race, admissions, and meritocracy at elite universities*, P. 93.

²⁰ Martin and Spenner, "Capital Conversion and Accumulation: A Social Portrait of Legacies at an Elite University," P. 636.

²¹ Martin and Spenner, "Capital Conversion and Accumulation: A Social Portrait of Legacies at an Elite University," P. 633.

²² Martin and Spenner, "Capital Conversion and Accumulation: A Social Portrait of Legacies at an Elite University," P. 633.

²³ Golden, "Enduring Legacies," *The price of admission: how America's ruling class buys its way into elite colleges – and who gets left outside the gates*, P. 123.

²⁴ Golden, "Enduring Legacies," *The price of admission: how America's ruling class buys its way into elite colleges – and who gets left outside the gates*, P. 135.

²⁵ Golden, "Enduring Legacies," *The price of admission: how America's ruling class buys its way into elite colleges – and who gets left outside the gates*, P. 138.

²⁶ Warikoo, "Merit and the Diversity Bargain," *The diversity bargain: and other dilemmas of race, admissions, and meritocracy at elite universities*, P. 104.

²⁷ Golden, "Enduring Legacies," *The price of admission: how America's ruling class buys its way into elite colleges – and who gets left outside the gates*, P. 144.

- ²⁸ Golden, "Enduring Legacies," *The price of admission: how America's ruling class buys its way into elite colleges – and who gets left outside the gates*, P. 118.
- ²⁹ Golden, "Enduring Legacies," *The price of admission: how America's ruling class buys its way into elite colleges – and who gets left outside the gates*, P. 123.
- ³⁰ Golden, "Recruiting the Rich," *The price of admission: how America's ruling class buys its way into elite colleges – and who gets left outside the gates*, P. 61.
- ³¹ Golden, "Enduring Legacies," *The price of admission: how America's ruling class buys its way into elite colleges – and who gets left outside the gates*, P. 132.
- ³² Golden, "Enduring Legacies," *The price of admission: how America's ruling class buys its way into elite colleges – and who gets left outside the gates*, P. 132.
- ³³ Ladewski, "Preserving a Racial Hierarchy: A Legal Analysis of the Disparate Racial Impact of Legacy Preferences in University Admissions," P. 578.
- ³⁴ Ladewski, "Preserving a Racial Hierarchy: A Legal Analysis of the Disparate Racial Impact of Legacy Preferences in University Admissions," P. 578.
- ³⁵ Ladewski, "Preserving a Racial Hierarchy: A Legal Analysis of the Disparate Racial Impact of Legacy Preferences in University Admissions," P. 578.
- ³⁶ Golden, "Enduring Legacies," *The price of admission: how America's ruling class buys its way into elite colleges – and who gets left outside the gates*, P. 126.
- ³⁷ Gittleman, *An Entrepreneurial University: the Transformation of Tufts, 1976-2002*.
- ³⁸ Miller, "Charles Tufts," *Light on the hill: a history of Tufts College, 1852-1952*, P. 48.
- ³⁹ Luna, "Should Legacy Matter?" *The Tufts Daily*.
- ⁴⁰ Labaree, "A System without a Plan," *A Perfect Mess*, P. 1.
- ⁴¹ Columbia University in the City of New York, "Columbia Undergraduate Admissions," *Frequently Asked Questions*.
- ⁴² The University of Pennsylvania, "Early Decision and Regular Decision," *Penn Admissions*.
- ⁴³ These experiences were shared in the confidence of the classroom and were not officially provided by the Office of Admissions.
- ⁴⁴ Class notes, 09/27/17.
- ⁴⁵ Labaree, "A System without a Plan," *A Perfect Mess*, P. 5.
- ⁴⁶ Labaree, "A System without a Plan," *A Perfect Mess*, P. 1.
- ⁴⁷ Steinberg, "Considered Without Prejudice," *The gatekeepers inside the admissions process of a premier college*, Pp. 100-101.
- ⁴⁸ Labaree, "A System without a Plan," *A Perfect Mess*, P. 14.
- ⁴⁹ Labaree, "A System without a Plan," *A Perfect Mess*, P. 5.
- ⁵⁰ The New York Times, "Economic Diversity and Student Outcomes at Tufts," *The New York Times*.
- ⁵¹ Luna, "Should Legacy Matter?" *The Tufts Daily*.
- ⁵² Tufts University, "Brighter World," *Tufts Alumni*.
- ⁵³ Tufts University, "Fact Book," *Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation*.
- ⁵⁴ Tufts University, "Brighter World," *Tufts Alumni*.
- ⁵⁵ Labaree, "A System without a Plan," *A Perfect Mess*, P. 13.
- ⁵⁶ Roithmayr, "How Whites Created Institutional Rules That Favored Them over Time," *How Everyday Choices Lock In White Advantage*, P. 76.
- ⁵⁷ Gittleman, "Tufts and the New American University," *An Entrepreneurial University: the Transformation of Tufts, 1976-2002*, P. 3.
- ⁵⁸ Golden, "Enduring Legacies," *The price of admission: how America's ruling class buys its way into elite colleges – and who gets left outside the gates*, P. 125.
- ⁵⁹ Gittleman, "The Coming of Jean Mayer," *An Entrepreneurial University: the Transformation of Tufts, 1976-2002*, P. 22.
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11. NEOLIBERALISM'S WAR ON UNDERGRADUATE MENTAL HEALTH

By Rachel Wahlert

My narration of undergraduate mental health is born of my experience with higher education. I am embarking on my fourth and final year as a student at Tufts University. During my time here, "some things stayed the same; others changed".¹ Neoliberalism has affected my time at Tufts as it affects all higher education institutions.² Neoliberalism's advancement of efficiency and individualism ideals has affected university structures and undergraduate college careers³; this paper focuses on their effects on mental health. Because neoliberalism has contributed to the stigma in seeking mental health support as well as generated accessibility issues both in the past and present, students are likely to seek guidance from familiar relationships including family and friends rather than mental health services.^{4,5,6} Understanding these concerns is necessary as more students require mental health support in college than their predecessors⁷; by understanding the connection between neoliberalism and mental health, recommendations can be made to better mental health services. These recommendations must take into account the totality that neoliberalism affects mental health in higher education in order to provide the best mental health care to students.⁸ Furthermore, recommendations must be made as a collective to rebuff neoliberalism norms.⁹ Tufts is in the process of gaining understanding of the mental health needs of its students through the Mental Health Task Force¹⁰; this task force's recommendations is key in supporting students' needs through innovative broad range practices which neoliberalism does not support.¹¹

Students demonstrate an increasing need for mental health services in recent years, although university counseling systems have not grown proportionally to this need.¹² Universities, specifically Tufts University, have counseling centers in place to support students experiencing mental health emergencies, sexual assault, ADD/ADHD, sleeping issues, depression and bipolar disorder, relationship concerns, anxiety and stress, and eating concerns.¹³ Americans "aged 18-25 in 2016 who used any mental health services in the past year ... was higher than the percentages in most years between 2002-2015".¹⁴

Aspects of mental health can be traced back to neoliberalism. Neoliberalism defines success as being wealthy through self interest motives and disregarding others.¹⁵ ¹⁶ Parents propagate neoliberalism ideals as they raise their children; indeed parents want to raise successful children. When students are told to do their best it is understood that they mean that their child must be the absolute best.¹⁷ If a student fails academically, it is the fault of the student and not the institution. Children's greatest worries now are grades and college admittance which is hugely different than their predecessors.¹⁸ One student dictated, "Some people see health and happiness as more important than grades and college; I don't".¹⁹ Students prioritize their academics over their health. These values are taken to college and have major consequences.

Student Suffering through Mental Health Challenges "Alone"

College students balance the pressures of academics, social life, and personal critiques. Negative attributes that are specific to millennials consist of “being over scheduled, heavily monitored, and pressured to excel academically”.²⁰ The burden of stress is ubiquitous among college students. According to SAMHSA, 94 percent of students feel “overwhelmed by everything they had to do”.²¹ Even though this major issue affects millions of students, the stigma behind mental health further exacerbates negative mental health. Individualism promotes the idea of inadequacy within students; if they are not doing well, it is because of their own weaknesses. Students feel alone and isolated in their suffering and do not feel comfortable sharing their troubles.²² Deresiewicz describes this culture at Yale, “Everybody thinks that they’re the only one who’s suffering, so nobody says anything, so everybody suffers.”²³

Isolation is a major factor in stress tolerance specifically in millennial college students. As students leave their home lives for a new environment, they also leave behind coping mechanisms.²⁴ Stress coping mechanisms are employed to reduce stress. *Feeling supported* is considered to be the most effective factor for stress tolerance.²⁵ This support can come from family, friends and mentors and is seen as a protective factor.

This support system is not equally obtained. The socioeconomic status of students affects their feeling of belonging on campus. Indeed, low income students do not feel like they belong on their campuses in part because the majority of students are upper class.²⁶ Although low income students may have a strong work ethic, upper class students have higher grade point averages.²⁷ Overall, low income students reported a worse social and academic experience, a worse sense of belonging and a poorer view of their GPA compared to upper class students.²⁸ Without people to empathize with, students can be lonely and may not feel like they belong. Because low income students have less people to empathize with, perhaps they feel more isolated and thus suffer from more mental health issues. Support systems are important as the people you surround yourself with affect who you are.

Who Affects Mental Health?

Although schools provide mental health services, the majority of students seek help from friends and family.²⁹ These support systems are familiar and accessible; however, they may not be sufficient. Friends support one another but cannot offer the same consultations as professional counselors. Moreover, although parents may want to support their children, their assistance may do more harm. A study showcased that calling one’s mom negatively affected stress.³⁰ This incongruence is significant since although parents are no longer in the picture students continue to look for “validation, for connection, [and] (let’s not be shy of saying it) for parental figures...”.³¹ These parental figures may be professors, counselors, and other faculty. Counselors are usually spread too thin. Ratios as small as 1 counselor to 1,698 students showcase the lack of adequate counseling support for students.³³ This fact leads to more questions regarding the structure of mental health support systems in higher education.

Higher Education Mental Health Services

Mental health service guidelines were developed in the 1970s at the same time that neoliberalism was taking a stronger hold in the United States.^{33, 34} Before the 1970s, the development of counseling centers had been informal. The creation of these guidelines coincided with a time that neoliberalism pushed for standardization and efficiency.³⁵ Initially, many students paid separate fees for basic mental health care.³⁶ Although some schools did cover counseling services, they envisioned ways to cut costs through student fees and insurance.³⁷ Over the years student mental health needs have increased and universities lack the capacity to meet demands.

There are many consequences due to the lack of adequate mental health support. Some schools limit the number of counseling sessions students can attend on campus and shorten the length of sessions.³⁸ Waitlists for services are long and on campus counselors refer students off campus. After their time is up, only 50% of these students actually follow through with their referral.³⁹

Another trend in modern mental health care is the increasing use of medication. More students are coming into college using medication for mental health reasons. Moreover, students are seeking relief from their stresses through medication because of advertisements.⁴⁰ Students may also acquire drugs more often than counseling because they seek out help from physicians. Students seek out general health services because of the stigma surrounding mental health services.⁴¹ Medication provides a quick fix to assuage mental health issues in comparison to attending several counseling sessions. Indeed, “overscheduled” students that are “pressured to excel academically” have little time to spare.⁴² The efficient and competitive atmosphere of neoliberalism does not allow it. The atmosphere of busyness is prominent in many colleges and especially at Tufts University.

Tufts’ Environment

Tufts is a difficult school to be accepted into; the class of 2021 had an acceptance rate of 14.8%.⁴³ Tufts allegedly seeks for well rounded students and looks at applications in a “holistic” manner assuaging prospective students’ fears that their test scores are not the most important part of their application.⁴⁴ However, the average ACT score is 32 out of 36 and average SAT scores are also in a high range.⁴⁵ Similarly, Tufts alleges that applying students need not be the president of their high school clubs, but “of course... leadership roles demonstrate outstanding commitment to an activity.”⁴⁶ Admissions seeks students that will succeed at Tufts; class profiles showcase the results of this sieve-well rounded students from around the world the majority of whom do not require any financial aid.⁴⁷

The “typical” daily life of Tufts students is recorded on the admissions website and the busyness that neoliberalism supports is evident.⁴⁸ Days may start as early as 7:30AM and end past 11:00PM. Students attend two to three classes a day then attend club meetings. In between these obligations, students send emails, attend lectures, study, and go off campus. “Tufts creates a community of individuals”; and our community is often described as “quirky.”⁴⁹ These positive attributes however cannot mitigate the need for mental health support these quirky students require.

Undergraduate Mental Health at Tufts: Students & Services

The Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) at Tufts helps students through difficulties mentioned earlier. About 25% of Tufts students used CMHS services in the 2016-2017 academic year; there are barriers that may prevent more students from seeking help.⁵⁰ Many Tufts students (35% of those surveyed) said they did not have enough time to receive mental health services⁵¹; perhaps they prioritize grades over health as other students have stated. Another major factor is stigma; across the nation 47% of students somewhat agree that others will think less of a person that seeks mental health treatment.⁵² Perhaps at Tufts the perception is even greater because the student body is high achieving and considered successful on the whole. If students perceive classmates to be succeeding while they are not, these students may think of themselves as inadequate. Indeed neoliberalism dictates that your success is your personal responsibility and that if you work harder, you will be successful.⁵³ Since Tufts students do face mental health issues, Tufts has created structures to support its students.

CMHS offers group therapy as well as individual counseling to students. There are 15 counseling staff members that serve 11,489 undergraduate and graduate students.^{54,55} That's approximately 765 students per counselor. Additionally, there was a 25% increase in the number of students seeking care at CMHS between the 2015-2016 school year and the 2016-2017 school year.⁵⁶ Like other schools, Tufts counseling services are for short term purposes and should not be counted on for long term individual counseling. The average number of sessions students attend is 4 although many students only attend 1 session.⁵⁷ Unless there are acute circumstances where CMHS offers a student long term services, Tufts students are referred to off campus counseling. Again, only 50% of Tufts students follow through with referrals.⁵⁸ This may be because of difficulty in paying a co-pay, difficulty in finding a provider with one's insurance, and finding the time to go off campus to seek help.⁵⁹ There are also other outlets that students use to support their emotional well being.

Active Minds is an undergraduate student run organization that focuses on mental health issues. At Tufts, they work to reduce stigma through educational events and flyers around campus.⁶⁰ The organization acts as a bridge between students and administration. Active Minds has collaborated with Tufts administration regarding mental health leaves of absence, and they have collaborated with the Tufts police force regarding mental health crisis.⁶¹ Active Minds understands that mental health affects all aspects of campus life although neoliberalism's promotion for privatization may presume otherwise. As Active Minds has continually worked to create a better mental health atmosphere at Tufts, Tufts administration has also created a task force to assess current policies and make recommendations on how best to serve students' needs.

Tufts Mental Health Task Force

The Tufts Mental Health Task Force was launched in December of 2016 as administration observed and foresaw the growing need for mental health support.^{62, 63} President Tony Monaco recognized the growing demand for on campus counseling and

the complexity surrounding mental health. The task force at Tufts is three pronged to have “a holistic approach to strengthening our policies and practices, services and resources, and build a community to better support the mental health needs of our diverse student body.”⁶⁴

The three working groups include one for undergraduate students, another focusing on graduate and professional students, and lastly the models of care task group focusing on clinical services available on the Medford/Somerville campus.⁶⁵ As Tufts examines this issue thoroughly, it distinguishes itself from what neoliberalism would dictate. Indeed neoliberalism observes social responsibility as a pathology and it is in peoples’ best interest to take care of oneself and not others.⁶⁶ Through Tufts’ holistic task force, it reclaims civic ideals necessary to mitigate neoliberalisms’ effects and demonstrates the continued innovation that Tufts proves throughout its history.⁶⁷

Tufts Jean Mayer’s presidency determined Tufts path of entrepreneurship and innovation⁶⁸; the new task force continues Tufts’ innovation to look at issues in new ways that is different from the norm. When Tufts initiated the discussion surrounding mental health a few years ago, other schools were not keen on the subject matter.⁶⁹ Now, many schools are examining how best to provide students with mental health services and Tufts is a leader in this dialogue. The task force demonstrates that there are multiple players at work rather than just CMHS. Tufts task force is examining aspects of Tufts undergraduate campus including: Office of Equal Opportunity, Office of Campus Life, Tufts Police, athletics, the chaplaincy, and more.⁷⁰ By having a broad based intake of student life, the task force can address the totality of how mental health affects students’ experiences. Through numerous discussions and surveys, the task force will have recommendations at the end of the school year in 2018.

Because the students’ mental health needs are great and affect numerous aspects of life, it is important to have recommendations across a broad range of divisions. Recommendations may include partnerships with other campuses and local providers, informal phone-ins to refer students on what their next steps should be, using telemedicine practices, and many others.⁷¹ This collective effort builds on Tufts dedication to its students and separates itself in the business ideals that neoliberalism propogates. Although neoliberalism dictates that profit is the essence of all human relationships, Tufts is prioritizing its students over profit.⁷² Although most students are referred off campus by CMHS, students do not need to pay for counseling services at CMHS. Building from current resources and the task force’s understanding of the complexities of mental health, Tufts can develop new practices that best support students’ mental health through several broadrange practices.

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12. THE NEOLIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE: A PUBLIC GOOD IN A PRIVATE WORLD

by Ben Reytblat

Whether it be in the rhetoric of our political leaders, the practices of our business executives, or the lessons we learn in early childhood, the concept of neoliberalism is entrenched in our nation's identity. Every U.S. President since Ronald Reagan, for example, has argued that freedom in a *social* sense is married to freedom in an *economic* sense. Our leaders believed that a laissez-faire market propelled by competition would create the best products, services, and quality of life for its citizens.ⁱ Phrases like "personal responsibility" were devised to incentivize individualism and dis-incentivize failure. Under neoliberalism, success is attributed to hard work and drive; a citizen reliant on social support becomes *lazy* and *irresponsible*. Neoliberalism's fatal flaw is that it ignores privilege and historical oppression. Regardless of competition's motivating effects, it remains that socioeconomic success in life is mostly a product of circumstances at birth rather than drive or "personal responsibility." The market does not care about social mobility, or oppression, or the inherent disadvantages in the structure of our nation. The market cares about the bottom line. How does a system so removed from egalitarian democracy affect a public service that is premised around it?

Everyone Deserves an Education

It's no secret that the monolithic vehicle for social mobility in the United States is a college education. While the government provides compulsory k-12 schooling for all children, the financial burden of attending college disenfranchises millions of students from the opportunity. Equal access to education is meant to be democratizing. Informed citizens can make decisions that benefit both themselves and their communities. In practice, however, the "market-orientation of American higher education," as David Labaree puts it, is inherently undemocratic.ⁱⁱ A perpetual fight for financial resources forces colleges and universities to rely on economic arguments for their survival rather than altruistic ones. Creating value for the community, or future citizens of the community, is overshadowed by the overarching need to create value for the marketplace. Even measures that appear to be public goods, like increased diversity initiatives or research quotas, are almost entirely in place to exhibit a market-friendly image and bring more resources into the university. The democratization that does occur only occurs as a function of creating monetary value. Thus, as long as there is such an unequal distribution of resources, a requisite of the neoliberal ideology, democracy in higher education can never truly exist.

David Labaree outlines a few structural reasons that support these claims. Universities, especially private ones, rely heavily on tuition. At the end of the 20th century, tuition accounted for 28% of total revenue at private schools and 19% at public schools. Even public schools don't rely too much on government funding – receiving 90% of their funds from "donations, [the] endowment, research grants, and most important, student tuition." This reliance on tuition forces universities to cultivate a competitive image, submitting to increased privatization and constantly fighting to "attract and retain

students” and “adapt to changes in consumer demand.” Even the governance structure of the university is market-based. The board of trustees is made up of financially successful laypeople, few who have ties to academia. Perhaps the most compelling argument for why this structure values capital over the public good is that the faculty members, the people who do the actual educating, are purposefully kept weak and removed from the decision-making process. Education is consistently framed as a major component of our humanity, but the workers responsible for it are not evaluated by their contributions to the public good. Their labor is exploited, and they are kept at the bottom of the power structure, a vision that aligns closely with Karl Marx’s critiques of capitalism.ⁱⁱⁱ The president of the university functions like a CEO, responsible primarily for attracting donations, cultivating the university’s image, and above all else, creating as much market value as possible.

Creating Value

The market-based system fostering higher education did not come about because of a desire for efficiency or innovation. A university’s allegiance to the private sector exists almost entirely because of its will to remain solvent. Universities exist under the same neoliberal regime as every other sector – healthcare, manufacturing, real estate. For education, like everyone else, funding is a question of survival.

Elizabeth Popp Berman notes that in the early 1970s, academic scientists petitioning the government for funding often relied on altruistic arguments—that the pursuit of science was a noble cause in service of mankind.^{iv} By the 1980s, however, Berman had noticed a shift in the types of arguments college faculty were making to members of congress. While a focus on the public good was once useful, attitudes had shifted to the point where economic value was all that mattered to decision makers. Tulane president Sheldon Hackney used words like “economic growth,” “productivity,” and “investment,” when petitioning for science and technology funding in 1979. “Basic research, we believe, is an essential investment if we are going to retain our world markets and achieve continued growth without excessive inflation,” he said. Soon after, schools like Harvard and MIT began following suit. This was a language that the architects of American neoliberalism could understand.

Out of a desire to remain productive and profitable, universities are incentivized to improve every measurable metric. What was once a new and relatively undefined evaluation has recently become centralized under the rankings published by the U.S. News and World Report. Lani Guinier argues that these rankings have forced institutions to be admissions driven instead of mission driven.^v An admissions driven approach is used to secure a high ranking, with emphasis on standardized test scores, grades, and other indicators that the prospective students are *already* successful. Many admissions offices publish quantitative profiles of their new students, even before any of these students step foot on campus – a basic marketing tool to signal value.

Marketing plays an often subliminal, but monumental role in the neoliberal order. A school’s image is linked to the way that prospective students, donors, and peer institutions view the school. Universities with science, engineering, and technology programs, for example, will go out of their way to encourage and promote innovation

and entrepreneurial behavior. Schools will also often market their diversity – their racial diversity, geographic diversity, diversity of majors or academic interests. In 2017, the diversity rationale is a vital component of every college’s economic model. A lack of diversity in one area, for example, could raise enough suspicion to cripple an institution financially. Unfortunately, an institution in pursuit of financial success, primed to create value through competition, is structured to leave many behind.

Who Gets Left Behind?

David Labaree explains that the American system of higher education is one in which “institutions that are most accessible provide the least social benefit, and those that are the least accessible open the most doors.” He describes a stratification “with a markedly greater distance between the top and the bottom.” Neoliberalism ignores systematic privilege, which means that stratification and inequality is always perpetuated. The market is inherently undemocratic, because it is much easier for the privileged to attain *more* wealth than for the underprivileged or underrepresented to attain any wealth at all. This is partially why, Labaree argues, that older institutions like Harvard are so good at maintaining their value. Their longstanding wealth and connections continue to expand and multiply with each passing decade. Almost every school in the U.S. News and World Report Top 100 is at least a hundred years old.

Institutions’ high reliance on tuition leads nationwide tuition prices to rise almost every year. High tuition not only makes higher education inaccessible, but it shepherds those who do choose to take on the financial burden into careers that are consistent with market success. William Deresiewicz cites that 65% of students at elite universities are studying economics so that they could go into finance and consulting careers.^{vi} About half of Harvard graduates in 2007 went into those two fields. A volatile system based on harsh financial punishment for failure instead of an appreciation of academics for the public good is likely why Deresiewicz and Guinier describe students that are uncreative and risk averse.

Universities are also risk averse when choosing which students to accept. A student “primed to party,” as Elizabeth Armstrong and Laura Hamilton put it, is a less risky investment than a student “motivated for mobility.”^{vii} While one of the students is focused on academic or financial success, and the other on social success, the “motivated for mobility” student is still less likelier to graduate on time or be in careers comparable to the party pathway students. Students that don’t come from privileged backgrounds, or already have the academic success that Guinier recounts, are much easier to support and allocate resources for than students without support from their parents or the money to pay full tuition. Helping students achieve social mobility is often directly at odds with creating a market-friendly image for the school, especially when social mobility comes at the expense of a lower U.S. News and World Report ranking. In this way, institutions are a stratifying sieve.^{viii}

Even affirmative action, which is touted as an equalizer for minority students, is centered largely around the market-based diversity rationale rather than the remedial rationale. A racially diverse student body is both good for public image and good for

white, full-tuition paying consumers that envision a diverse campus as a vital component of their college education.

Some of the worst casualties of neoliberalism in higher education are faculty members. A century ago, colleges and universities were constantly hiring tenured professors. Nowadays, the amount of tenured faculty has decreased significantly, while the number of part-time faculty members continues to rise.^{ix} The faculty members that do get hired are given little bargaining power, little say on the board of trustees, and are in direct conflict with students for resources. For example, a faculty hire can be one less student that gets financial aid from the university. Many universities are now installing research quotas for full-time faculty and asserting intellectual property rights to everything discovered or invented using university property. Every faculty member and student is evaluated by the market value that they bring to the school, not their contributions as a citizen of the school community.

The Entrepreneurial University

The Tufts that Sol Gittleman describes in his book is one that is formed in the beginnings of a neoliberal world order.^x Jean Mayer's successes came not from his academic contributions or any positive community outreach. He was revered because he lifted the school out of its economic sinkhole. He procured funding for original projects, rigorously encouraged innovation, and instilled the school with a neoliberal, entrepreneurial mindset. In Gittleman's retrospective postscript, he references the major changes that neoliberalism brought to higher education in the last few decades. These changes include the introduction of corporate culture in administration, reliance on the endowment for resources and rankings, and the emergence of celebrity faculty members as a way of creating market value for the university. The changes that Gittleman mentions, in addition to some of the other effects of neoliberalism, namely – keeping the faculty weak and unable to bargain, an admissions and not mission driven approach, and investing in technology and entrepreneurship – are ways that Tufts creates financial value for itself. These endeavors, like many initiatives spurned out of neoliberal competition, are wholly undemocratic. They only serve to benefit those who are already in positions of power and wealth, while making it more difficult for underprivileged students and faculty to be heard.

One tension between Tufts' administrators and faculty members came to a head in September and October of 2017, when failed contract negotiations between administrators and part-time lecturers almost resulted in a school wide walkout.^{xi} The faculty member bargaining committee and the union that represents them (Service Employees International Union), have alleged that Tufts is refusing to honor wage increases that were promised in the last contract. Due to Tufts' budget shortfalls, the school is forced to ration and prioritize the resources they are left with. Paying workers reasonable wages is an altruistic good, unaligned with market principles. Because of neoliberalism, Tufts has to consider what creates the most value for them. They believe research creates value. New technology and engineering buildings create value. New celebrity faculty hires like Susan Landau create value. There is little market incentive to pay workers fairly.

Mission and Values

In reviewing Tufts' mission statement, the language is clearly not market-based. In fact, the words in the statement – “creation and application of knowledge” and “where creative scholars[...]distinguish themselves as active citizens of the world” – stress the environment that Tufts provides as an inherent public good. The school's focus on “active citizen[ship],” for example, is what scholars like Henry Giroux would cite as a crucial component of a democratized order.^{xii} In practice, however, Tufts' actions resemble the language of their value proposition a lot more closely than they resemble the language of their mission. Their value proposition is primarily about the importance of rationing “resources during a time of significant challenges in higher education.” Due to financial hardship, Tufts is forced to allocate resources strategically. Perhaps the most democratizing resource that Tufts has is its financial aid program. 34% of the class of 2021 received grant money from Tufts to attend college.^{xiii} This means that the remaining 66% percent have to make up the budget disparity.

According to a *New York Times* analysis of wealth inequality in higher education, 18.6% of undergraduates have a family income of more than \$630,000.^{xiv} That places them in the top 1% of earners. Only about a fifth of Tufts students, about 11.8%, represent the bottom 60% of earners. This indicates that Tufts is relying on a large number of wealthy students in order to be able to support the students on financial aid. Even though financial aid is framed as a component of the remedial rationale in higher education, neoliberalism forces admissions offices to prioritize wealthy students. Without the financial contributions of the 1% – whether it be through tuition payments or alumni donations – Tufts would not be able to stay financially solvent or serve any of its social mobility functions. If the institution was more democratic, its socioeconomic breakdown would better reflect the make-up of the nation. Instead, its data serves as a stand-in for the type of people that benefit from the free market – the already wealthy.

Racial disparities in admissions practices are another contentious issue that has affected the Tufts community in recent years. In November of 2016, activist leaders at Tufts coordinated a walk-out on behalf of African American students at the school.^{xv} The “three-percent movement” was dedicated to increasing the number of black students admitted from three percent to a number that more accurately reflected the racial proportions of the population. In addition, students requested “increased funding for the Africana Center and an increase in the number of black professors hired.” The low number of African American students admitted to Tufts indicates a philosophy more consistent with the diversity rationale rather than the remedial rationale. Instead of viewing education as a public good that should be accessible to as many worthy people as possible, Tufts is forced to view its recruitment efforts as a function of increasing its market value. An admissions season that increases Tufts acceptance rate or moves the average SAT score down might end up hurting Tufts in the U.S. News and World Report rankings, leading to less donations, less applications, and less resources to allocate.

The neoliberal system is one that exists in every school and every industry. The United States is a capitalist nation that relegates competition to the free market as frequently as possible. Tufts, as a multi-billion dollar American enterprise, is forced to

exist within that system and make decisions that secure their place at the top. Projects like the new Science and Engineering complex and groundbreaking research have landed Tufts on the Nature Index Innovation ranking for 2017.^{xvi} Despite a socially active student body, Tufts' administrators are working every day in a system that forces them to make strategic market decisions at every turn.

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- i Reagan, Inaugural Address 1981
- ii Labaree, *A Perfect Mess*
- iii Marx, *Capital*
- iv Berman, *Creating the Market University*
- v Guinier, *The Tyranny of the Meritocracy*
- vi Deresiewicz, *Excellent Sheep*
- vii Armstrong and Hamilton, *Paying for the Party*
- viii Stevens, *Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites*
- ix Slaughter and Rhoades, *The Neo-Liberal University*
- x Gittleman, *An Entrepreneurial University*
- xi Katz, *The Tufts Daily*
- xii Giroux, *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education*
- xiii Tufts Office of Undergraduate Admissions
- xiv Aisch, Buchanan, Cox, and Quealy, *The New York Times*
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13. THE REMEDIAL RATIONALE: A REMEDY FOR SOME, A POISON FOR OTHERS By: Samantha Watson

Higher education as a system has evolved immensely since Sol Gittleman wrote *"An Entrepreneurial University."*ⁱ The book tells the tale of Gittleman's eyewitness account of the transformations of higher education from 1976-2002, predominantly at Tufts University. Gittleman tackles a plethora of topics including neoliberalism, elitism, and civility to name a few. However, one important topic he glossed over was the remedial rationale. The remedial rationale is understood as the ideology that "in light of historical oppression, a diversity of students is not intended to enhance everyone's learning, but to maximize the opportunities and outcomes for members of historically oppressed groups. This demands redistribution of resources and power."ⁱⁱ This ideology is in constant competition with the diversity rationale to be at the forefront of the diversity missions at many institutions of higher education. The diversity rationale is the ideology that "diversity of students ensures integration and even celebration across campuses, which enhances everyone's learning. This emphasizes recognition of identity."ⁱⁱⁱ Both of these ideologies are not new but have become more prominent as more schools have begun to prioritize the creation of diverse cohorts on their campuses. Using a critical race theory lens I will argue that while the remedial rationale prioritizes the needs of diverse individuals from historically oppressed backgrounds, it also fosters elitism and inferiority within those same communities since only the highest achieving students with access to these resources are able to attend elite universities.

Brown vs. Board of Education

The infamous Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board* set the precedent for the remedial rationale. *Brown v. Board* was the court case that overturned the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision and desegregated public schools, declaring the laws that established "separate but equal" public schools for black and white students unconstitutional. This decision laid the foundation for affirmative action and allowed for the movement of more diverse recruiting in higher education to take place. Previous to this decision, black and white students were legally mandated to attend separate schools solely based on the color of their skin. While these schools were separate they were definitely not equal. Many of the black only schools had limited resources, outdated technology, and were located in dilapidated buildings. The white only schools had brand new textbooks, the latest technology, and only the best for their students. The intentions of *Brown v. Board* may have been to integrate, however, it has failed to equally educate black students. In Derrick Bell's article he argues that despite *Brown v. Board* being passed, many lower class white families were unhappy and supported "the maintenance of a status quo that will preserve superior educational opportunities and facilities for whites at the expense of blacks. As one commentator has suggested, "It is implausible to assume that school boards guilty of substantial violations in the past will take the interests of black school children to heart."^{iv} These laws continued to perpetuate the long history of racism and prejudice against

people of color, which has systematically prevented many of them from achieving their full potentials.

Due to the setbacks most marginalized groups have faced, many believe that reparations are in order. This is where the remedial rationale comes into play. The remedial rationale's entire premise is that when a school is admitting "diverse" students it should be to maximize the learning of those from the oppressed groups rather than everyone, especially those who identify with the oppressor. This has the best interest of the student in mind, and acknowledges that they may not have the best test scores or grades due to a variety of factors including their neighborhood growing up, socioeconomic status, and systematic racism that they could have faced. This goes hand in hand with the transformation thesis which essentially argues that institutes of higher education should be used as vehicles for upward mobility especially by historically oppressed groups. However; this upward mobility can become a way to stratify people from historically marginalized backgrounds. Tara Yosso argues that "students of color remain severely underrepresented in historically white colleges and universities, and the few granted access to these institutions often suffer racial discrimination on and around campus."^v This means that only the best of the best minorities are allowed to attend elite institutions which can be discouraging to other minorities who lack the necessary resources and support necessary to achieve that status. This has become more prominent as affirmative action has come to the forefront of college admissions.

Affirmative Action

Despite being in effect for years, affirmative action has become a hot topic surrounding higher education. It originally began as a way to help keep Protestant white men as the dominant demographic in elite institutions, however; throughout the years it has evolved into a way to bring in diverse students into the homogenous environments that elite institutions typically foster. While affirmative action has a plethora of benefits for marginalized communities, it can become problematic because it immediately sets white students as the norm and students of color and other diverse backgrounds as outsiders. This then puts them on show for the white students to examine and enrich their own learning, while neglecting the fact that the students of color need more support than their white counterparts in their transition into higher education especially at elite institutions.

In Mitchell Stevens book, he mentions that "a racially varied student body is now an important index of institutional quality among colleges and universities in America."^{vi} This questions the prerogative a school might have in admitting students of diverse backgrounds. However, despite the intentions, the remedial rationale encourages affirmative action by implying that it is only right to rectify the wrongs of the past which still inhibit many students of color today. Despite this many white people feel as if their chances of getting into elite institutions have declined or have been inhibited due to these affirmative action policies. Therefore, today there is much debate and confusion on what is affirmative action, who does it help, and who does it hinder. However; without affirmative action underrepresented populations would continue to lack access to one of

the most powerful vehicles of upward mobility, therefore not fulfilling the remedial rationale nor diversity rationale.

Bridge Programs

In recent years the most direct way in which we have witnessed the remedial rationale at work is through bridge programs. Bridge programs typically connect exceptionally bright students from underrepresented backgrounds that lack the means necessary to access elite higher education and assists them in reaching their potential. A lot of bridge programs were founded in order to bridge the educational gap many high school students face when going to college. Many of these programs were also founded with the mission to diversify higher education with talented students of color. Students from bridge programs attribute to a large percentage of the racial and socioeconomic diversity at our nation's leading institutions. Bridge programs have become vehicles that allow many students, most of which are first-generation to gain the confidence to be successful in college. They have widened the accessibility of college and elite universities to a broader network of people. In a study reported by Engle, Bermeo, and O'Brien "135 first generation students who had previously participated in bridge programs indicated that it was important to establish trusting relationships with the bridge program staff; receive information about applying for college and financial aid; address their content area weaknesses; hear from other first-generation students who had been successful in college; receive career and academic counseling. In addition, the students felt it was critical that the bridge programs involve their parents in the process in order to eliminate the concerns that parents of first generation students often have."^{vii} This goes to show not only how helpful bridge programs can be but also how unstandardized high school education can be depending on your neighborhood.

Most of the diversity recruiting for elite institutions is accomplished through trusted bridge programs which is why so many universities and colleges are eager to partner with them, so that they can fulfill their diversity missions each year. Due to affirmative action and a university's diversity index becoming a marker of how elite said institution is, many universities have resorted to course sorts while disguising them as fine distinctions. In the *Grutter v. Bollinger* and *Gratz v. Bollinger* cases argue that there is a significant difference between fine distinctions and course sorts.^{viii} Course sorts are categorical distinctions of people while fine distinctions is a more holistic process. The remedial rationale supports both in a way because while it argues that people from marginalized backgrounds should be assisted throughout the higher education process it requires institutions to check off boxes for intellectual, racial, geographical, and socioeconomic diversity for its students. Which is what partnering with bridge programs and other similar kinds of program encourage.

The remedial rationale affects higher education as a system in a plethora of ways. Thus far we have examined a few throughout this chapter including *Brown v. Board*, affirmative action, and bridge programs. However, the question that remains is how does this play out in an actual university rather than some figurative and abstract idea of one?

In the second part of this chapter we will examine how the remedial rationale comes to exist on the Tufts University campus.

The first part of this chapter discussed the remedial rationale, its history, and how it takes shape in higher education as a whole. However, in order to contextualize this ideology, we are going to look at how it applies to student life and admissions at Tufts University. Tufts University's mission as said by President Anthony Monaco in his inaugural address says "Diversity remains one of Tufts' proudest traditions, a defining characteristic of this university. This tradition promotes excellence, advances social mobility, and allows our students to become true leaders."^{ix} In this address President Monaco aligns Tufts values with the remedial rationale by saying that they institution wants to promote social mobility and an overall transformative experience. As an institution Tufts University predominantly emphasizes diversity through the remedial rationale by working with bridge programs and by the formation of the group of six.

Bridge Programs and Elitism at Tufts

Tufts accepts many students from a variety of outside bridge programs, the most popular being Questbridge. Questbridge is a bridge program that recruits low-income first generation students who are a part of the top tier of their classes and matches their finalists to one of their partner schools and continues helping them throughout the college process by providing a network of support and resources for them to take advantage of. Many of the low income and first generation students of color come to Tufts through Questbridge and other similar programs. Tufts also has their own versions of bridge programs referred to as BLAST or Bridge to Liberal Arts Success at Tufts and BEST or Bridge to Engineering Success at Tufts. Both of these programs are six week residential programs in which students accepted to them have to come to Tufts the summer before their first year in order to get acquainted with Tufts and the rigor of its curriculum. "The purpose of the program is to support, develop, and retain students who may be first in their family to attend a four-year college, and/or have attended an under resourced high school and/or have been affiliated with a college access agency."^x These programs assist students with the transition to college that could prove to be extremely difficult without it. It allows certain students to adjust to college life before the immediate pressures of both academic and social life truly come into play, which has proved very beneficial to a smoother adjustment.

While these programs are helpful and transformative they are also exclusive. Only a handful of lucky high school students can be afforded this opportunity of a lifetime to be matched to their dream school or adjust to it before the majority of their class steps on campus. Then in addition to this, these students are given more resources than the others that are in similar positions as them, which despite whatever their background prior to college may be, lends a sense of privilege and elitism to students that come to college through bridge programs rather than the more traditional route. It can also make the other students who lack the same resources feel inferior, a sense of not belonging, and

makes it more difficult for them to find ways to receive professional guidance for their careers post-graduation.

Group of Six

One way Tufts promotes the remedial rationale is through the Group of Six. The Group of Six consists of six on campus centers: The Africana Center, Asian American Center, International Center, Latino Center, LGBT Center, and the Women's center. All of which foster safe spaces where students can think about their social identities and the potential intersectionality among them free from judgement. All the centers are staffed with people that students can go to for assistance and support. They provide various resources and events for all students to attend and learn from. The Group of Six encourages the remedial rationale because while many of them are supposedly open to all, they are solely occupied by students that heavily identify with that particular social identity. In some cases, this promotes a sense of solidarity amongst each group. However; it has also fostered an environment where people are able to solely interact with people of similar identities creating a mild sense of hostility and miscommunication for those who do not identify with a particular group. Many of the students that live or spend copious amounts of time in their respective centers typically end up having similar views, and when someone shares an opposing opinion it can be difficult to create an open and safe forum for diversity of thought to blossom.

The Group of Six is a staple on this campus and a much needed oasis for certain marginalized groups of people. However; if an individual has difficulties finding their place within them or the larger Tufts population it can leave them feeling alienated from their peers. The Group of Six caters to the needs of a certain type of person that identifies with each house and can potentially isolate others that don't necessarily share the same views. The remedial rationale contributes to this sentiment on campus by prompting the six group to become safe havens for people who want to separate themselves from the sometimes overwhelming lack of diversity on campus.

Throughout this chapter we have examined the remedial rationale and its benefits and drawbacks as it is used to maneuver diversity in higher education and at Tufts University. The remedial rationale may place its emphasis on using college as a method of reparations for marginalized groups, but it can also hinder those who are unable to attain the necessary resources or programs to help them fulfill the remedial rationale. It provides a starting point for the work that needs to be done in order to make college more accessible for people of color, marginalized backgrounds, and low socio-economic status. As of right now only a select few from these identities are able to attend college, much less elite ones; and there needs to be a larger push to standardize education from early on so that more people can have the opportunity to not only remedy their past but transform their futures.

End Notes:

- ⁱ Sol Gittleman, *An Entrepreneurial University*
- ⁱⁱ Tara Yosso, "From Jim Crow to Affirmative Action and Back Again: A Critical Race Discussion of Racialized Rationales and Access to Higher Education" pg. 7
- ⁱⁱⁱ Tara Yosso, "From Jim Crow to Affirmative Action and Back Again: A Critical Race Discussion of Racialized Rationales and Access to Higher Education" pg. 8
- ^{iv} Derrick Bell, "Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma"
- ^v Tara Yosso, "From Jim Crow to Affirmative Action and Back Again: A Critical Race Discussion of Racialized Rationales and Access to Higher Education" pg. 1
- ^{vi} Mitchell Stevens, "Creating a Class: Race," pg. 143
- ^{vii} April Ring. (2016) *Norco College's Summer Advantage Program: Leading Change to Increase College Readiness*. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 40:7, pages 589-596.
- ^{viii} Grutter & Gratz, "A Critical Analysis,"
- ^{ix} Anthony Monaco, "Diversity and Inclusion at Tufts"
- ^x Tufts University, "Bridge to Liberal Arts Success at Tufts"

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14. A LOOK AT UNIVERSITY SEXUAL ASSAULT POLICIES: HOW NON-COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LEGISLATION AND INADEQUATE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FUEL STUDENT ACTIVISM

By Zoe Gregorace

Even at Tufts, a small, private research university located in Medford, MA, student activism serves as a strategy to confront the administration and spread awareness of the issue on campus. Almost a decade ago, the report of a single sexual assault case in 2008 marked the beginning of a very important period in Tufts history. After the Office of Civil Rights publically announced their accusation, the Tufts administration became infamous for its incomprehensive and noncompliant sexual assault policies. Faced with this predicament, the administration was held accountable and was expected to follow through in implementing revisions in compliance with Title IX policy. Matter of fact, the accusation against Tufts was long overdue, for students had been expressing condemnation of policies before government involvement. For the most part, students wanted the administration to develop clear procedures, ensure fair treatment of the individual reporting a case and increase educational programming about sexual assault and misconduct. In their efforts to bring about effective, widespread change, student participation in policy reform constitutes their identity development as engaged citizens. While the pressure to comply with Title IX fueled administrative efforts of policy reform, the restoration of a sense of security on campus and the development of more effective education motivated students to be proactive members within the Tufts community and beyond.

Tufts Sexual Assault Policy: The Continuation of a Hostile Environment

Though the pattern of noncompliance among universities nationwide emphasizes the need to reform, flaws in Tufts policy warranted federal surveillance and notoriety. One case in particular unveiled the inherent inequities of the school's policies and procedures. A student by the name of Wagatwe Wanjuki reported sexual violence to the administration in 2008 and says that, "they did not go forward with anything".¹ Years later, the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) found that Tufts University was not compliant with Title IX policy in April of 2014. A letter addressing President Monaco revealed how, "the original complaint alleged that the University discriminated against a Student on the basis of sex by failing to take prompt and equitable steps to investigate and respond to the Student's report that she was sexually assaulted."² Tufts administration initially revoked the agreement to remedy the violation, increasing speculation by the OCR and students. While Tufts was committed to following the "preponderance" standard before the publication of Obama's guidelines in 2011, university policy failed to uphold the integrity of Title IX which supports the equal treatment of individuals regardless of sex.

The violation ultimately demonstrated the university's failure to prioritize student safety. Since Tufts only responds to written complaints, the administration refused to

begin an investigation until six months after Wagatwe initially reported her case. Tufts' ineffective procedures were especially detrimental to Wagatwe's sense of safety on campus because the accused lived in her residence hall and attended the same weekly seminars as her. The OCR letter addressed this issue describing how, "the university allowed for the continuation of a hostile environment."³ The arrangement of alternating attendance between the two students was not enough, emphasizing how Tufts failed to "provide effective interim measures to minimize the burden on complainants."³ By asking her to leave the university indefinitely before the fall semester of 2010, this disgraceful action demonstrates violation of Title IX, "depriving the student of an equal opportunity to participate".⁴ The grossly unfair treatment of Wagatwe and inactivity of the administration in response to her initial report perpetuates the issue of sexual assault. The system failed Wagatwe in two crucial ways: One, by not punishing the accused or holding him accountable and two, failing to offer support, making her feel uncomfortable on campus. Tufts' decision to remove the victim from campus reveals how its policies do not ensure the protection of complainants nor the safety of its student body.

Tufts Takes Action: But is it Enough?

Beginning in 2011, Tufts gradually worked on improving their procedures in handling reports and offering educational efforts to increase awareness of sexual assault and misconduct on campus. After not having a permanent Title IX coordinator for two years, the university hired Jill Zellmer in November of 2011. In addition to being the Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity, Zellmer's role as Coordinator is essential for providing students training that educates them about Title IX, the reporting process and the course of investigation involved in the Tufts Sexual Misconduct Adjudication Process (SMAP).⁵ While this promising change initiated the development of new programs designed to provide information about sexual assault and Title IX, the Tufts administration still lacked equitable policies. After the OCR announced Tufts violation in 2014, Tufts began to look into reform despite initially revoking the agreement suggesting specific policy revisions. Although the Coordinator attempted to spread awareness through programming, the OCR encouraged Tufts to focus more intently on providing easily accessible information about Title IX as well as useful resources on and off campus for students and faculty. In addition, one major revision included in the agreement advised Tufts to "provide a grievance procedure that ensures prompt and equitable resolution of sexual assault and harassment allegations."⁶ Unlike the earlier procedure that overlooked Wagatwe's complaint for more than six months, this policy complies with Title IX, holding the administration accountable for beginning an investigation in a timely fashion as well as promoting fair treatment of the complainant. Although these revisions satisfy the OCR agreement and compliance with Title IX, more extensive efforts of reform relied on student involvement.

Students Take Action

Prior to the OCR accusing Tufts for violating Title IX, student concern regarding incomprehensive policy and procedures paved the way for the Tufts Sexual Misconduct Prevention Task Force. In the spring of 2013, two years after Tufts hired a new Title IX

coordinator, students published an open letter to the administration in the *Tufts Daily*. This letter listed key issues such as a “lack of access to the policy, process and resources; lack of institutional support for survivors’ healing; lack of extended support infrastructure and a lack of student body education.”⁷ Representative of students’ continued advocacy for effective policy changes, Tony Monaco responded to the letter by creating the Task Force; a diverse group of individuals comprised of undergraduate students, the Title IX coordinator and university faculty members.⁸ Aiming to “Improve transparency and communication” and “Develop extensive educational programs devoting substantial new resources to address the urgent issue of sexual misconduct”, the group was determined to revamp Tufts’ sexual assault policies.⁸ As chairperson, Monaco’s recruitment of students, which constituted 1/3 of the group, depicted the innovative efforts of the administration. The involvement of students in the reform process gives them agency to advocate for victim protection while shaping their identities as productive members of the campus community and exercising democratic equality. Given the ubiquity of sexual assault on college campuses, it is probable that participating students have dealt with sexual assault in some capacity. Rather than depending on administrators who have vicariously dealt with the issue on campus, the inclusion of students in policy reform will most likely result in new policies that prioritize student safety on campus. Whether they have experienced sexual assault themselves or know someone who has, the ability of students to relate their earnest perspectives is valuable to the mission of the Task Force in contributing to the greater public good. After two years of hard work, the Task Force’s final report was published in 2016, summarizing their accomplishments. While the group made improvements to Tufts SMAP and developed appropriate disciplinary guidelines, its most notable undertaking was increasing sexual assault education. In response to student concerns regarding the lack of education, the Task Force successfully supplemented the OEO efforts to increase awareness and educational programming by creating a Center for Awareness, Resources and Education (CARE) and reorganizing the OEO website to ensure accessibility to pertinent information on university procedures and practical resources. Although this impressive work involved the collaboration of students and administrators, the time and energy spent by the six students was truly a testament to the impact of student voice. The Task Force acknowledges that there is always more to be done however, their work shows great potential for the future of Tufts sexual assault policy and the increased sense of security among students on campus.

Student Advocacy for Access to Education: KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Even though the administration has focused on improving its policies since 2011, student desire for better educational programming remains persistent. In addition to the previously mentioned accomplishments of the Task Force, the group introduced the first ever university-wide student survey on sexual misconduct called the Tufts Attitudes About Sexual Conduct Survey (TASCS). The collection of information allowed the group to gage the prevalence of the issue on campus and use it to improve preventative measures. Based on the 2017 TASCS results, frequently made suggestions for how Tufts could do a better job of educating its students on sexual misconduct included continuous

education efforts throughout each school year, improvement of orientation programming and mandatory attendance of prevention workshops.⁹ The Tufts administration proves lax in their efforts to increase awareness of sexual assault by failing to provide easily accessible information. This demand for better programming supports Giroux's view of education as necessary for social change and relates to Gittleman's blaming of higher education for perpetuating the ignorance of our nation's youth. Not educating students about plaguing social issues depicts universities inability to produce socially aware individuals and prepare their students to dive into the real world. Sol puts it best: "...unless we reformed our educational system, Americans would remain buried in ignorance."¹⁰ In the context of sexual assault, ignorance constitutes unawareness of the issue as well as complacency with inequitable university policy. As a vehicle of social change, education can abolish ignorance and promote student action to revolutionize school policy. While these survey responses clearly reflect student dissatisfaction with Tufts' actions thus far, the continuous asking for educational programs suggests something bigger than that. After depending on the administration to make some serious changes that demonstrated their commitment to the issue of sexual assault on Tufts' campus, students appear unfulfilled. This tension reveals that perhaps thorough resolution relies on student action rather than institutional efforts.

Wagatwe Takes a Stand

Although Wagatwe was expelled from Tufts almost a decade ago, she was able to take her own experience and transform it into something positive. As founder of a campus anti-rape organization called Survivors Eradicating Rape Culture (SERP) and co-organizer of Know Your IX's ED Act NOW campaign, her work is mainly focused on eliminating sexual violence on college campuses, and in the grand scheme of things, eliciting social change when it comes to sexual assault. The harsh reality is that faulty university policy, which perpetuates inequality, has the potential to taint students' understanding of Title IX and perspective on sexual assault. Bringing attention to the issue on a larger scale, via the creation of an organization or social media postings, Wagatwe's activism has gained momentum in the public sphere, outside the gates of university campuses. Her most recent project includes "Just Say Sorry"; an Internet movement geared toward exposing flawed university policies and confronting administrations nationwide about taking responsibility for their failure to support sexual assault victims. In launching the campaign, Wagatwe and her co-organizer Kamilah Willingham write, "there is one huge step that every college and university can take that would not only demonstrate their commitment to their students, but have a potentially tremendous impact on survivors' healing and their administration's culture."¹¹ The campaign strives to increase awareness of unjust policy while demanding apologies from universities for the immense harm they have caused survivors. Along with Annie E. Clark, Andrea Pino and the other outspoken individuals who have dedicated their time to advocate for policy reform and equality, Wagatwe's work demonstrates how one person can have so much power, fighting for a cause they truly believe in.

At Tufts University, the friction between students and administration resulting from incomprehensive and inequitable sexual assault policies illuminates the attentiveness of the student body to important social issues. In response to the OCR agreement, the actions of the Tufts administration focused on Title IX compliance however, these measures were not enough to satisfy students. Although students advocated for accessible information concerning the school's policies and procedures, they ultimately wanted to feel safe on campus again. President Monaco presented an opportunity for students to participate in the decision-making process regarding policy revision and the development of training programs to educate students and faculty. While student involvement in the Tufts Sexual Misconduct Prevention Task Force represented their valiant efforts to stand up for the good of the entire student community, the fight still goes on. This past fall semester, students gathered outside Ballou Hall rallying for Title IX compliance after DeVos announced the recent modifications of the Obama-era guidelines. Consistency of student efforts in maintaining the constructive changes to Tufts policy is keeping administrators accountable. In addition, these examples of student activism highlight the struggle for equitable treatment of students who report cases of sexual assault as well as the resurgence of perceived campus safety. In conjunction with Wagatwe's work as a feminist activist, student efforts at Tufts echo the national sentiment of discontent with university policy. While student activism at Tufts expresses the frustration with inadequate education and unfairness, every participant is setting an example for those who face similar oppression under their own university administration as well as bringing light to sexual assault as a pervasive societal issue that requires demands administrative attention.

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² United States Department of Education Office For Civil Rights Region I. 2014. Resolution Letter for Complaint No. 01-10-2089. Pp. 1. Boston, MA.

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**15. EXCLUSION OF TRANSGENDER STUDENTS
IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
THE FAILURE OF INSTITUTIONAL POWER AND THE MYTH OF
COLLEGIATE IDENTITY EXPLORATION
By Arianna Burnham**

College is often touted as a place where students can develop a sense of self independent of the customs and expectations of their upbringings. However, the ostensible autonomy and liberation associated with higher education unfortunately does not always extend to students from minority groups, who face prejudice and obstacles within educational institutions. In particular, students who identify as transgender struggle to navigate the waters of higher education given certain institutional barriers failing to recognize their identities. This reflects more widespread transphobic sentiments in the U.S. sociopolitical climate of today, and particularly that of the past two decades, during which transgender visibility has increased in American culture.¹ Prior to the 21st century, only one state included transgender people in their anti-discriminatory policies while more than 20 states currently do so,² and in 2015, Obama became the first President to discuss transgender people in a State of the Union Address.³ Certain positive political changes regarding the protections of transgender people have trickled down to American universities and, in some cases, schools themselves have provided an impetus for more widespread reform, as universities hold a unique power to validate and legitimize certain knowledge and identities. However, the struggles trans students face on college campuses have far from disappeared. Transgender students must grapple with policies that fail to fully recognize their identities, lack of adequate resources and certain exclusionary and discriminatory spaces and sentiments on their campuses, despite the creation of LGBTQ centers on college campuses and the establishment of anti-discriminatory policies of recent decades. Such publicized and strategic moves work to provide a more positive and progressive image of a school, rather than bring about total transgender awareness and acceptance in all university domains, rendering a college education emotionally taxing and rife with obstacles for many trans students.

The Bathroom Issue

A first key issue relevant to transgender college students is bathroom choice, which can sound trivial but actually has the power to delegitimize a student's identity and engender pain and distress for trans students. Though bathrooms typically represent such a private domain, the polarizing discussion of bathroom choice has forced the restroom domain into a public one for trans people. Given the power of institutional settings, university "policies such as restroom designations... can penalize students who do not fit the gender binary, further segregating them."⁴ This issue first garnered national attention in 2013 when a transgender high school student filed a complaint against her Illinois school district for restricting her access to the girls' locker room. In December, 2015, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) of the Department of Education (DoEd) found the district in violation of Title IX, marking the first official recognition of a violation of Title

IX relating to the rights of transgender students.⁵ Title IX, a 1972 amendment of the Higher Education Act of 1965, prohibits sex-based discrimination in federally funded educational institutions.⁶ In 2014, the DoEd under the Obama administration put out a document clarifying that “Title IX’s sex discrimination prohibition extends to claims of discrimination based on gender identity or failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity.”⁷ This groundbreaking provision has helped to reject many bills proposed by conservative state governments that discriminate against transgender people, such as the infamous North Carolina bathroom bill. This bill, which held that people must use the bathrooms in state government buildings and public schools and universities that align with their sex given at birth, was eventually repealed in early 2017, offering a win for the transgender community.⁸ However, policy change is unfortunately not enough in itself to fully alleviate the burdens of being transgender in institutional settings. It is still the case for transgender students that “using bathrooms and locker rooms presents a major source of anxiety... [especially] where having to undress and shower in front of others may ‘out’ them as transgender.”⁹ The issue of bathroom choice is uniquely important to trans students because, as defined by the temple metaphor of higher education, colleges and universities serve to legitimate certain knowledge and beliefs and deem specific forms of information or intelligence either socially prestigious or trivial.¹⁰ Colleges and universities thus have the stature and authority to designate the extent to which marginalized identities are either included in or pushed out of the mainstream in their institutional settings.

Sports

An interesting additional layer to the North Carolina bathroom debate is the role collegiate athletics played in the bill’s repeal. The North Carolina Legislature ultimately vetoed the bill in part due to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)’s boycott of North Carolina. The chance of additional tournaments being pulled from North Carolina’s sporting venues, particularly as the UNC Chapel Hill basketball team was set to compete in the esteemed Final Four, was too great a financial and reputational risk, and thus led to the overturning of the bill.¹¹ This presents an interesting tension between political inclinations towards the rights of marginalized college students versus the money college programs can bring to a state. Fortunately, in this case, the two motivations fortuitously converged to shut down the bill.

While the NCAA’s decision to withhold competitions from North Carolina was a positive action in support of the trans community, its official policies on transgender student-athletes reveal a more nuanced take on the matter. In a 2011 handbook titled “NCAA Inclusion of Transgender Student-Athletes,” the NCAA holds that “Athletics programs are...integral parts of the college experience. All students... deserve access to [their] benefits.”¹² Despite this publicized advocacy for trans participation in the “benefi[cial]” domain of collegiate athletics, its official rules are not so explicitly inclusive and welcoming. The organization holds that male trans students who have received testosterone treatment for “diagnosed Gender Identity Disorder” may compete on a men’s team, but cannot compete on a women’s team without classifying the team as “mixed.” Female trans students may continue to compete on a men’s team, but can only

participate on a women's team without changing the status to "mixed" if they have been treated with testosterone suppression medication for at least one year.¹³ While this policy makes steps in the right direction, it still serves to other transgender students and render their identities illegitimate or impermanent.

Additionally, the requirement of hormonal treatment for playing eligibility is socioeconomically exclusionary, as not everyone can gain access to expensive and intensive medical treatment. This also provides an economic burden for transgender student-athletes additional to the financial strain that comes just with participation in sports. Moreover, sports constitute a domain of college life in which physicality is especially important, which serves to display and reproduce qualities of affluence that help bolster physical strength and appearance.¹⁴ Such a central focus on the body makes athletics a particularly sensitive subject for many trans people who are uncomfortable in their own bodies, or are going through bodily changes from treatment and surgery. Moreover, because college is considered by society to be a welcoming space for young people to explore their identities and interests, such tangible exclusion is especially damaging for young trans people.

Administration & Policy

Many university administrations do not work to ensure that their campuses are effectively serving the needs of transgender students or that campus officials and students are informed about the rights of transgender students, further isolating them from the campus community. Only 414 of the 4,850 colleges and universities in America discuss gender identity/expression in their non-discrimination policies.¹⁵ Additionally, only 81 offer gender-inclusive housing and 15 provide health coverage for hormone therapy.¹⁶ While these numbers reflect an increase in transgender protections on college campuses from past decades, trans students are still not provided with a fully safe and welcoming environment. Additionally, the importance of the domain of education makes its sanctions even more weighty, tangibly delegitimizing trans experiences through official policy and institutional barriers, upholding the aforementioned temple metaphor.¹⁷ With such a great degree of power to designate different belief systems as positive or negative, it is important that universities spread strong messages advocating for the equal and fair treatment of transgender students.

Further, even spaces and programming dedicated to minority inclusion often become internally exclusionary, as many transgender students do not feel fully welcome in LGBT spaces on campus, which often center solely on sexual orientation.¹⁸ While LGBT centers can provide welcoming safe spaces for many students, some of their pitfalls reveal issues with transgender representation, as "most institutions provide little-to-no transgender-specific programming or services."¹⁹ However, if separate spaces are created for transgender students and LGB students, so as to ensure full attention to the needs of both groups, some integration is likely beneficial. Since "education also is a terrain on which different social groups compete for power and recognition,"²⁰ a sense of cooperation between groups of oppressed people could work to avoid this aspect of competition and status-seeking.

However, exclusionary fallbacks of certain minority safe spaces or programming are unfortunately not important to many campus administrations, because the college can still show off its LGBT center (and others alike) to outsiders, offering an outward sense of progressiveness or inclusion. While more than 200 U.S. schools have LGBT centers, only eight are considered by the College Equality Index to be “trans-friendly,” meaning their non-discrimination statements include clauses about sexual orientation and gender identity, and they have gender neutral bathrooms and housing.²¹ Such a disparity between front-stage inclusionary practices versus more covert failures to fully protect and serve trans students speaks to the market-oriented nature of higher education that commodifies and incentivizes integrative spaces on campus, with the intention of attracting applicants and their money. In a larger context, “higher education matters only to the extent that it... drives economic growth, innovation and transformation... Under this economic model... there is no time to talk about advancing social justice... [or] cultivating social responsibility.”²² By this model, the purpose of LGBT centers are less about true integration of minorities and more about bolstering the outward image of the school, as is probable in regards to the insufficient inclusion of transgender students in campus safe spaces.

Tufts’ Social Mission

In the eyes of Charles Tufts in the 1840s, the college stood as a light atop a hill, a beacon of hope and inspiration for its surrounding communities.²³ As the landscape of higher education has significantly transformed in the century and a half since, Tufts has followed suit. Tufts officially became a research university in 1954, saw dramatic metamorphosis under the leadership of John Mayer²⁴, and now prides itself as a competitive, global institution centered on innovation and progress – but its original motto ‘Pax et Lux,’ translated to ‘Peace and Light,’ still remains.²⁵ Tufts’ commitment to providing illumination and support for people continues to exist today in the university’s attention to its responsibility of social justice and civil action, and this is evident starting with the people it most openly serves: its students. In particular, those students who are historically oppressed by major institutions such as colleges and universities. In the past two decades, as visibility of both transgender people and transphobia has become more salient, colleges and universities have been given the opportunity to pave the way for the integration and acceptance of people of all gender identities and with varying modes of expression. While many institutions across America have failed to provide comprehensive and effective support for their transgender students, Tufts has, at this point in time, proven mostly successful in granting proper institutional accommodations, in the form of campus infrastructure and anti-discrimination policies. Though Tufts has outdone many of its national counterparts in terms of adequately serving its trans students, and is recognized as one of the most LGBTQ friendly universities, there is still room for more comprehensive changes and increased connection and cohesion between the student body and the administration.

Campus Places & Programming

While there has not always been a distinct place for the collaboration of and discussion among trans students on Tufts' campus, the past 20 years have finally seen the enhancement of spaces dedicated to the protection of trans students, although many of these spaces exist primarily for the LGB community. In 1972, The Tufts Gay Community formed, which was the first Tufts organization dedicated to LGB issues.²⁶ However, the organization focused exclusively on sexual orientation, and the inclusion of transgender issues did not come to the group until 1997, when it was renamed The Tufts Transgender Lesbian Gay Bisexual Collective (TTLGBC).²⁷ In 1992, the LGBT community was finally able to establish a space on campus in the form of the LGBT center, which uses the Medford campus' Bolles House to provide resources and programming.²⁸ While this center, and related organizations, has provided invaluable support for the LGBT community, protecting transgender rights is generally seen as secondary to its focus on marginalized sexual orientations. In a 2011 Tufts Daily article, then LGBT center Director Tom Bourdon explained the unfortunate distinction between the inclusion of LGB individuals versus trans individuals, with the widely-held sentiment of "'us first, then you,' because the assumption has been that the world is going to be ready to accept a gay identity before it's ready to accept a trans identity."²⁹ While the LGB and trans communities do have in common the marginalization of their sexual and/or gender identities, there exist unique struggles and experiences for each.

Housing

In 2011, then university President Lawrence Bacow published a letter encouraging the support of the Tufts LGBT community following multiple suicides of LGBT people in the previous year, and asking the LGBT community for recommendations for improved accommodations.³⁰ In response, Students Advocating for Gender Equality (SAGE) submitted a proposal, "Recommendations for Gender Neutral Housing at Tufts," which focused on the need for safer and more inclusive housing options for transgender students in particular.³¹ This strong advocacy for transgender rights was a positive shift for the Tufts trans community, whose visibility and acknowledge has fortunately been increasing in the past two decades.

As the SAGE proposal indicates, housing is a major issue for many transgender students, as it is a domain of university life in which gender plays a prominent and very visible role. The traditional organization of student housing on campus is essentially predicated upon normative definitions of gender, which can cause significant stress and confusion for transgender students. This ascribes further importance to one's legal gender, using institutional procedures to promulgate the idea of gender as binary and permanent. After many proposals and much discussion between the LGBT community and the administration, Tufts has made improvements to their housing policy, that better accommodate transgender students, through initiatives such as the SAGE proposal and the Tufts Community Union (TCU) Senate's 2013 resolution calling for a more straightforward and accommodating housing process for trans students.³² John Kelly, the 2013 TCU Senate LGBT Representative and co-author of this resolution, explained in a Tufts Daily article that complicated and discriminatory housing rules can lead trans

students to feel “ghettoized into the worst dorms on campus or pigeonholed into living situations which are not ideal and may hamper their growth as an individual and also in an academic setting... being forced to room with someone of a gender that you don’t identify with can be really hurtful for these students.”³³ A student’s housing situation can play a very influential role in their personal and academic life, and this is particularly true for trans students, who may face added anxiety and obstacles related to their non-binary gender expression, on which much of collegiate housing is based. The Tufts student life website currently has a section on the housing page of its student life website called “Information for Transgender Students: Open Housing Policy,” which states that “Residential Life and... the LGBT Center will work with students who identify as transgender to accommodate the student’s housing needs. Tufts... [doesn’t] use gender as a determining factor for housing arrangements, and students are free to create living situations that work for them.”³⁴ While this explanation appears very accommodating on the surface, there is some nuance to it, as this policy does not extend to first-year students, who must request a single room if they do not want to room with someone of the same legal gender.³⁵ This unfortunately serves to other trans students, as first-year trans students are not given the opportunity to experience living with a roommate, as almost all other Tufts first-years do, because of their non-binary gender expression.

Administration & policy

Fortunately, the Tufts Administration has made other progressive moves to advocate for the transgender community. In September, 2015 President Anthony Monaco published a letter he addressed to Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker urging him to support the passage of legislature entitled “An Act Relative to Gender Identity and Non-discrimination.”³⁶ In the letter he referenced Tufts’ place on the *Campus Pride* list of top 25 LGBTQ-friendly schools, and Tufts’ 2005 decision to include gender expression and identity in their official non-discrimination statement, which many universities still fail to do.³⁷ While sometimes institutions’ large, publicized acts of support for marginalized communities appear as superficial moves to fabricate a front of progressiveness, Tufts’ revised non-discrimination policy and clear advocacy of legislation regarding tangible protections of transgender people demonstrate Tufts’ commitment to serving its trans community and proudly presenting that to the public. President Monaco’s letter is especially important because a university president occupies a distinctly powerful place in the modern world of higher education that is essentially equivalent to the position of CEO, as the latter half of the 20th century saw how “the American university bought into [this part of] corporate culture that was totally alien to its tradition.”³⁸ Because the president holds such an important, and money-centered, role in universities, their beliefs and public statements subsequently hold a great deal of weight. President Monaco’s outward support of trans rights is thus all the more significant and instrumental in making the support of trans identities official.

Other positive administrative actions include allowing students to select their desired gender pronouns on Tufts’ administrative student portal, so that students’ preferred gender pronouns can be officially recognized by the university.³⁹ In particular, including the pronoun option “they/them,” commonly used by non-binary people, is an

important step in affirming the legitimacy of marginalized trans identities. Additionally, in 2013 Tufts became the 37th American university to adopt a health insurance plan that includes services for transgender people, ranging from transgender specific counseling, to gender affirmation surgery and hormone treatment.⁴⁰ Offering tangible services to transgender students to provide them more comfort in their own bodies, at more affordable prices, is a very effective administrative decision that further validates the identities of trans people and their chose to affirm the sexuality they are most comfortable with.

Conclusion

While Tufts has admirably been a leader in the transgender advocacy movement in higher education, and significant strides have been made towards the effective inclusion of transgender people in American society, strong political action and full social integration must occur before people of all gender identities and expressions are treated equally. In the 1840s, the first president of Tufts, Hosea Ballou, remarked, "For if Tufts College is to be a source of illumination, as a beacon standing on a hill, where its light cannot be hidden, its influence will naturally work like all light; it will be diffusive."⁴¹ As Mr. Ballou envisioned, institutions of higher education occupy a unique place in the fabric of American society because they are places that both generate and legitimate beliefs and standards of behavior, and thus have the ability to generate true, widespread change.

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3. Ibid.
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5. Hirschfield and Apuzzo, "U.S. Directs Public Schools to Allow Transgender Access to Restrooms."
6. "Questions and Answers on Title IX and Sexual Violence."
7. Ibid, 5.
8. Berman and Phillips, "North Carolina governor signs bill repealing and replacing transgender bathroom law amid criticism."
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18. Schneider, "Where do we Belong? Addressing the Needs of Transgender Students in Higher Education."
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24. Gittleman, *An Entrepreneurial University: The Transformation of Tufts, 1976-2002*.
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29. Reese, "In face of serious misconceptions, transgender community perseveres to find a voice."
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Rea, "Senate works for transgender housing."
33. Ibid.
34. "Tufts Student Life: Housing Selection Policies."
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36. Monaco, "Letter in Support of Massachusetts Transgender Non-Discrimination Legislation."
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16. THE \$1.4 TRILLION QUESTION: COLLEGE TUITION, STUDENT DEBT, AND THE DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF NEOLIBERALISM

By Sam Zinn

Colleges and universities in the United States are more expensive and selective than they have ever been. With tuition rates at some of the nation's most prestigious institutions of higher learning approaching \$70,000 per year (a number well above the median American household income), students and families from every corner of the country are struggling to keep up.^{1 2} The rapid advance of automation has impacted the job market in such a way that a college degree has become a prerequisite for an increasing number of fields, making the foregoing of a postsecondary education an unrealistic and incredibly limiting option for many. As a result, millions of students each year are left with little choice but to take out enormous student loans in order to subsidize their educations, which often leave them in crippling debt for decades to come. As is so often the case, these astronomical tuition prices, and the debt they create, disproportionately impact low income and minority groups, and serve to perpetuate a vicious cycle of socioeconomic inequality that is becoming more and more difficult to escape as a result of unchecked neoliberalism and a false meritocracy, as demonstrated by the case of Tufts University.

Neoliberalism

Rising tuition rates at need-aware institutions like Tufts University have led to unprecedented stratification. While those who follow the neoliberal ideology would argue that such inequity is simply a natural byproduct of the free market, they seem to be ignorant of the fact that this is an issue not of supply and demand, but rather of a blatant lack of opportunity and a grossly and historically uneven playing field.

In the words of Giroux, "Like most neoliberal models of education, higher education matters only to the extent that it promotes national prosperity and drives economic growth, innovation, and transformation."³ The irony here, which seems to be lost on neoliberals, is that by encouraging increased tuition prices, they are contributing to a crisis that serves to limit the objectives they are so keen on promoting. By helping to create a generation of students crippled by student debt, they are allowing fewer people to participate in the economy, which will ultimately stunt growth. This incredibly flawed model is the direct result of the corporatization of the American higher education system:

At the heart of the American model of university governance is an independent board of trustees, dominated not by government officials or academics but by laypersons. This board serves as a buffer between university and state, a counterweight to the influence of the faculty, a conduit to the real world of practical pursuits in a market society, and a source of donations. The board appoints the president, who,

in the American system, is a remarkably strong figure posed against a relatively weak faculty.⁴

Student Debt

The United States is currently in a student debt crisis. Student debt totals nationwide are in excess of 1.4 trillion dollars - a number that will only continue to rise as tuition rates continue to increase across the board for students attending America's colleges and universities⁵.

While the recent boom in student debt over the past twenty or so years is the result of a wide variety of factors, perhaps the most destructive of these was the government's decision to allow private lending companies to enter the student loan market in the 1990s.⁶ On the surface, this appeared to be part of a good faith effort to make student loans more accessible than ever before, thus continuing on the trend of "college for all." However, in reality, this loosening of regulations has done more harm than good insofar as that it has allowed for more predatory loaning and stricter repayment policies that severely limit young people's ability to invest in themselves and their futures. Those who are forced to take out the largest student loans in order to attend an institution of higher learning are often the ones that are least likely to end up graduating at all, let alone on time. Per Rachel Dwyer, Laura McCloud, and Randy Hodson, "debt increases the likelihood of dropping out and often delays college completion, especially for the most disadvantaged students."⁷ These unfortunate situations occur far too often, and result in something of a "double jeopardy," in which students must leave their college or university early in order to begin making the money to pay off their gargantuan debt, without having any of the benefit of a college degree that would likely allow them to successfully seek out a more lucrative source of income.

The continued privatization of postsecondary education tuition funding has meant that public funding, i.e. grants, has decreased significantly, even as enrollment in four-year colleges and universities has gone up. As Landry and Neubauer write, "public sector funding for higher education declined from US \$88.8 billion in 2008 to US \$81.3 billion in 2012, despite an increase in enrolment (measured by the number of full-time equivalent students [FTES]) by 15.6% over that period."⁸ According to Steinbaum, the reasoning behind this decrease in public funding can be explained by a lack of foresight on the state level and an overemphasis on short term budgetary concerns. He characterizes this misguided way of thinking: "Because college was seen as a good investment in future earnings, state legislatures averse to tax increases saw no problem in shifting education expenditures from their budgets to individual students as demand for higher education rose."⁹ This trend has been highly problematic because, while privately funded student loans are often more easily accessible than publicly funded grants, they are also far more demanding on students and ultimately tend to be more discouraging when it comes to graduation. As Dwyer, McCloud, and Hodson explain in their research, "The most consistent result is that grants appear to be much more effective than loans in encouraging persistence and graduation."¹⁰ While it seems clear that grants are far superior to loans from private companies in terms of success and retention within institutions of higher learning, this is unfortunately not reflected in the breakdown of the

kinds of financial aid packages that are actually being made available to students in need. In the words of Landry and Neubauer, "Only 43% of students with financial aid needs (as defined by the federal government) receive federal financial aid in the form of grants. Furthermore, roughly 25% of students who receive aid in the form of work-study grants come from families whose annual income is greater than \$80,000." ¹¹ Not only are federal grants underfunded and inaccessible, but a significant portion of them are not even going to those most in need. This discouraging trend is true not only of individual federal grants, but also of the distribution of government funding in higher education more generally. In fact, "Research suggests that merit-based aid programs award aid disproportionately to affluent, white students who would have attended college even without financial assistance." ¹²

Another major component of this issue is the fact that the most elite colleges and universities, such as those that make up the Ivy League, receive a disproportionate amount of federal funding even though they tend to have the largest endowments (sometimes in the tens of billions of dollars) and the greatest proportions of affluent students. As Lani Guinier describes, "Colleges such as the 'Big Three' - Yale, Harvard, and Princeton (but not limited to these three by any means) - offer enormous opportunity to a few, while largely avoiding their obligation to the many by taking an increasingly scarce public reservoir of riches and making it available primarily to those who can pay." ¹³ As is so typically the case in a neoliberal society, the guise of providing the best opportunities for innovation is used to cover up the fact that the rich are simply getting richer. Money that could so easily be going to fund educational opportunities for students from working class backgrounds is instead being recycled among the nation's elite under the precipice of economic and technological advancement.

The current system of tuition in higher education puts low-income students and families in the unenviable position of taking on what is often a "lose-lose proposition" - either forego a college education and severely limit any chance of achieving upward mobility or attend college and accrue massive amounts of debt, which will restrict your ability to ever graduate and/or put you in a financial hole so deep you may never be able to get out of it.

Tuition and Neoliberalism at Tufts

At Tufts, the turn towards neoliberalism began in earnest with the coming of President Jean Mayer. Praised as an innovator by many, including Tufts legend Sol Gittelman, Mayer helped to pioneer the concept of the university as a corporation designed to invest and be invested in. While this strategy undoubtedly increased the university's prestige and its endowment, it has ultimately come at the cost of opportunities for upward mobility for all but the most fortunate.

The effects of Mayer's work, both positive and negative, are still felt at Tufts today. While the university has consistently climbed in the ranks of cachet and exclusivity, its tuition prices have also increased dramatically. Over the past ten years alone, the total annual costs of an undergraduate education at Tufts (tuition combined with room and board and the health service and activities fees) have climbed by over \$21,000 - an increase that is well above the rate of inflation. ¹⁴ These increased rates are a

direct result of the unrestrained neoliberalism that has become the dominant global ideology over the course of the last few decades. The hundreds of millions of dollars in extra tuition income that Tufts has accrued has been eaten up by two primary sources - excessive spending on STEM departments and facilities, i.e. "innovation," and the covering of losses from questionable investments, chief among them being the Ponzi scheme orchestrated by Bernie Madoff that was exposed during the 2008 financial crisis.

Tufts' neoliberally driven corporate structure is as alive and well today as it has ever been. While technically a non-profit organization, Tufts, like so many of its peer institutions, now functions as what is essentially a corporation:

University presidents are now viewed as CEOs, faculty as entrepreneurs, and students as consumers. In some universities, college deans are shifting their focus beyond the campus in order to take on 'the fundraising, strategic planning, and partner-seeking duties that were once the bailiwick of the university president.' Academic leadership is now defined in part through the ability to partner with corporate donors. In fact, deans are increasingly viewed as the heads of complex business, and their job performance is rated according to their fundraising capacity.¹⁵

One needs to look no further for evidence of this corporatization and overemphasis on fundraising than the campaign that President Anthony Monaco launched just month. Lauded as the "most ambitious fundraising campaign in [Tufts] history," the initiative aims to raise \$1.5 billion for the Tufts endowment. The press release is rife with neoliberal buzzwords and phrases like "innovation" and "global impact," with the mention of a financial aid initiative as little more than a footnote.¹⁶

Loans and Grants at Tufts

The trends surrounding student loans and federal grants at Tufts University are generally not in keeping with the previously mentioned national averages. Whereas an estimated 43% of students in need of financial assistance nationwide receive federal grants, at Tufts only 4% did for the 2015/2016 school year (most recent available data). Comparatively, a full 16% of Tufts students were forced to take out student loans during the same academic period. (It is worth noting, however, that these trends have seen a slight reversal in the past five years, with student loans representing a gradually decreasing percentage of total aid and federal grants increasing, if only marginally).^{17 18} One explanation for this massive disparity between Tufts' data and the national average is that as an elite institution with an endowment well over a billion dollars, Tufts can afford to provide financial aid for the majority of their students in need, as opposed to the students having to seek outside funding. However, Tufts elite status also means that it has a much higher proportion of wealthy students than the typical college or university, and so fewer of them are in need of aid in the first place.

Unlike institutions like Harvard or Yale, Tufts is need-aware, and therefore simply does not accept many of the potential students whose families are least able to subsidize a college education on their own. Of the 1,919 students to whom Tufts did provide some form of need-based aid in the 2016 fiscal year, the vast majority of them (64%) had family incomes that were above the average household income in the United States.^{19 20} While this is certainly indicative of how disproportionately expensive privatized higher education, it also shows that most of Tufts' available resources are not going to those experiencing the most financial hardship, i.e. families living near, at, or below the poverty line. This last statistic is perhaps the most blatant example of neoliberalism's destructive powers at work, as it seems clear that the more socioeconomic privilege one has, the more likely Tufts is to provide the necessary assistance.

The Myth of Meritocracy

One of the most powerful and destructive tools used by neoliberalism to continually strengthen its grip on higher education is its maintaining of the myth that we live in a meritocracy. By tirelessly perpetuating the false narrative that success in the twenty-first century is the direct and exclusive result of merit, dedication, and hard work, as opposed to opportunity, neoliberals perpetuate a seemingly endless cycle of oppression. This "great lie" permeates every facet of our society and serves to disadvantage and devalue the socially disenfranchised from the moment that they are born.

The opportunities for advancement and upward mobility that have become nonexistent without a college degree are denied to our country's non-elite long before they reach college age. As Guinier explains in her discussion of affirmative action, "Thus, affirmative action has evolved in many (but not all) colleges to merely mimic elite-sponsored admissions practices that transform wealth into merit, encourage over-reliance on pseudoscientific measures of excellence, and convert admission into an entitlement without social obligation."²¹ The "merit" she writes of here is in reference to the undue value that is assigned to standardized testing, which has been proven to have minimal correlation with academic success, and maximal correlation with socioeconomic status. This brazen injustice and backwards pathology of a decidedly neoliberal worldview and power structure.

Conclusion

By embracing neoliberalism, Tufts has all but extinguished the "light on the hill" and replaced it with a dollar sign. For all its supposed good faith efforts to support socioeconomic diversity and inclusion, Tufts, along with countless colleges and universities like it, is part of the problem. The university's sky high tuition prices and general perpetuation of the neoliberal ideology are a direct contributor to the student debt crisis that has financially devastated millions. It is imperative for Tufts and its peers to change in order to establish the crucial American institution that is higher education as a social and public good.

¹ Emmie Martin, "The 50 Most Expensive Colleges in America."

² US Census Bureau.

³ Henry Giroux, *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education*, 58-59.

⁴ Labaree, 8.

⁵ Federal Reserve Economic Data.

⁶ Rachel E. Dwyer, Laura McCloud, and Randy Hodson, "Debt and Graduation from American Universities."

⁷ Dwyer et al.

⁸ Lynette Landry and Deane Neubauer, "The role of the government in providing access to higher education: the case of government-sponsored financial aid in the US," 2015.

⁹ Marshall Steinbaum, "A Brown v. Board of Higher Ed."

¹⁰ Dwyer et al.

¹¹ Landry and Neubauer.

¹² James D. Geiser, "Financial Aid Through a Bourdieu-Ian Lens: Inequality Perpetuated or an Opportunity for Change?"

¹³ Lani Guinier, *Tyranny of the Meritocracy*, 9.

¹⁴ Tufts University Fact Book 2016-2017.

¹⁵ ." Henry Giroux, *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education*, 59.

¹⁶ Patrick Collins, "Launching Most Ambitious Fundraising Campaign In Its History, Tufts University Seeks to Raise \$1.5 Billion."

¹⁷ Landry and Neubauer.

¹⁸ Tufts University Fact Book 2016-2017.

¹⁹ Tufts University Fact Book 2016-2017.

²⁰ Us Census Bureau.

²¹ Lani Guinier, *Tyranny of the Meritocracy*, 23.

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17. UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: REAFFIRMING MERITOCRACY AND REDEFINING DIVERSITY AND REMEDIAL RATIONALES

By Emily Sim

In 2012, the Obama administration announced an executive order that provided young undocumented people with relief from immigration enforcement and deportation proceedings. The program, called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), thrust undocumented immigrants to the front stage of national politics. In the wake of DACA, a slew of elite, private universities began to announce their support for considering undocumented students as domestic applicants in the admissions process and codified their ability to receive grant based financial aid.¹ Historically, the legal status of undocumented students disenfranchised them from accessing higher education. Because the undocumented community is largely low-income, receiving financial aid is imperative to attending college. However, their immigration status bars them from accessing federal aid.² Public institutions are subject to state jurisdiction regarding whether students qualify for in-state tuition regardless of immigration status.³ On the other hand, private institutions have greater control over their policies because their operation does not solely depend on federal and state funding. When undocumented youth became front and center of political attention, their narratives created an opportune platform for higher education institutions to take a political stance.

It is important to question why undocumented students were chosen by colleges to dedicate their resources to rather than other marginalized groups. The unequal focus is evident in the sheer number of admissions pages that are specifically dedicated to undocumented students. From walking them through financial aid policies to providing specific contacts in the administration to speak to, the effort put into the curation of resources is apparent.⁴ This starkly contrasts with the search results of "Native student admissions." Academic programs on Native Studies are the first to show, then student advocacy groups, and then a handful of university pages that are dedicated to resources and access.⁵ The sharp contrast in visibility of recruitment efforts begs the question: Why are the DREAMers, young undocumented students who have assimilated into American society, prioritized by the universities?⁶ Why have undocumented students become the poster children for the kind of social justice that universities are eager to support?

In reality, the number of undocumented youth whose lives are affected by the new admissions policies is few and far between. Those who are able to dream of attending elite, private institutions inevitably participate in the race to gain acceptance, reinforcing the neoliberal value of meritocracy. Further, the intentional inclusion of undocumented students contributes to the ongoing tension between the diversity and remedial rationales. Because the undocumented identity is intersectional with race and class, the lived experiences of undocumented students are not singular. The complexity of the undocumented identity reveals the shortcomings of both frameworks and expose areas of reconsideration. This chapter analyzes how the undocumented identity at once

reinforces and undermines the fundamental underpinnings of college admissions today: meritocracy and affirmative action.

Support for DREAMers: A Reaffirmation of Meritocracy

Universities were able to rally behind DREAMers without much opposition because of how their narratives align with American ideals of individualism and meritocracy. The notion of individualism is perceived as a crucial component in achieving the American Dream and also is the linchpin to sustaining the neoliberalism that impacts higher education today. Even their moniker, DREAMers, allude to the public perception of these students as individuals who work hard despite their limitations. Young people persevering through a difficult immigration situation – adjusting to a new culture, staying in school, taking on jobs to support their family – exemplifies the American Dream narrative that people on all sides of the political spectrum can support. The academic success of the DREAMers reaffirms the notion of meritocracy. Furthermore, the new admissions policies of elite institutions only grant access to the most high-performing undocumented students. The achievement gap between the College-Goers and Early Exiters is undeniable, and the College-Goers who would consider applying to these elite institutions would have participated in the testocracy.⁷⁸ The pool of new potential applicants does not disrupt the selectivity of the admissions; the status quo of meritocracy is maintained. Then, the choice to adopt progressive admissions policies was not a difficult decision.

Politically, tides had turned to cast DREAMers in a positive light because of DACA and criminalization of older generations of undocumented immigrants who are blue-collar workers and manual laborers. Institutionally, the admission standards would be unaffected and demographic of the DREAMers would contribute to the diversity statistics. Universities recognized that investing in undocumented students is low risk and yields high return. At once bolstering positive publicity and flaunting progressive policies, supporting undocumented students became a trend in higher education. Ultimately, admitting undocumented students parallel the reasoning behind recruiting legacies, athletes, and students from surrounding communities. It is a rearticulation of affirmative action, and colleges are utilizing undocumented students as another proxy to supply diversity into their campus.

Undermining the Diversity Rationale

Undocumented students are oddly situated in the affirmative action debate due to the legal complexity of their status and amalgam of nationalities that compose the identity. Because most undocumented students are people of color, they contribute to the diversity of the college campus. The diversity rationale justifies affirmative action by expecting students from marginalized communities to perform emotional labor. The champions of this framework claim that diversity leads to dynamic classroom discussions, which fosters cross-racial understanding.⁹ However, undocumented students are unable to contribute to the discourse that the diversity rationale envisions, because of the inevitable danger that comes with divulging their status to others. The very nature of their status detracts from their ability to participate in the “collective

merit” that stems from having a diverse student body.¹⁰ When colleges accept a cohort of undocumented students, there must be recognition of how the visibility of the undocumented identity is inextricably linked to the students’ safety. Then, the agency of sharing their lived experiences, which is the currency that defines their value to the college, is placed on the undocumented students. The choice of sharing is not existent when the diversity rationale is applied to race-based affirmative action, but emerges in the case of undocumented students. Because of this shift in power, undocumented students do not fit into the purpose of the diversity rationale.

Failure of the Remedial Rationale to Address Intersectionality

On the other hand, to consider the admission of undocumented students using the remedial rationale, the intersectionality of race and legal status must be deeply considered. The remedial rationale uses affirmative action as reparations for historical and current oppression of marginalized identities.¹¹ Currently, the remedial rationale is used to justify race-based affirmative action. When this framework is attached to admitting undocumented students, the intentionality behind admitting students of specific racial groups is lost. A goal of the remedial rationale is to provide role models for minorities in specific communities, and using the undocumented identity as an umbrella to overlook the different ethnic communities that exist under it is irresponsible.¹²

Being undocumented has a distinct impact on students of different racial groups. For instance, the lived experiences of a Mexican undocumented student will be different from a Chinese or Ethiopian undocumented student. The consequences of being a Mexican undocumented immigrant is more far-reaching because of the widely accepted racialized construction of the undocumented identity in the United States. Pérez Huber raises the notion of racist nativism and how it has historically impacted people of color, but in the context of undocumented immigration, Latinos more so than any other group.¹³ The microaggressions that undocumented Latino students receive from teachers and peers are emotionally painful and the youth internalize the meaning of being an undocumented Mexican immigrant.¹⁴ Racial nativism is rooted in White supremacy but also the lack of visibility of other undocumented nationalities. The brunt of the stigma and stereotypes ultimately fall on undocumented Latino youth and affect their motivation to stay in school. Combined with the growing spatial isolation in Latino communities leading to worse school systems, the environment in which many Latino undocumented students grow up is damaging to students’ sense of self and impacts how many students choose to pursue higher education.¹⁵

For many undocumented non-Latino students, their lived experience is riddled by the shame and silence in their own communities. Irene, an undocumented Filipino student, discusses the cultural stigma among Filipinos about being undocumented, “it is shameful, and kept secret... [and] because of this stigma, [she] did not even consider coming out to her counselor.”¹⁶ Irene’s narrative is dissimilar to many Latino undocumented students’ experiences, where many were mentored throughout the process of college applications and job searches because they were open about their status. This difference is echoed by Rosalba, one of the College-Goers that Gonzalez interviewed, who states “being undocumented, it’s not about what you know, it’s who

you know.”¹⁷ The scorn that non-Latino communities view undocumented people with reinforces the shame that many undocumented youth feel and further invisibilizes these students. Not only is that harmful to the students because they are not willing to seek help to receive the resources they need, but their silence reinforces the dominant narrative of undocumented immigration as a Latino issue. The stigma ultimately impacts the chances of Asian, Black, Arab, and European undocumented students receiving the support and resources they need to be able to consider higher education as an option.

Currently, the remedial rationale views the undocumented community as primarily defined by their immigration status, rather than explore the impacts of students’ racial identity on how their undocumented identity is understood and performed. By simplifying the issue, the remedial rationale does a disservice to the undocumented Latino students, who face more microaggressions from White America and are likely to be attending bad public schools. It also trivializes the issues that non-Latino undocumented students face by hiding their identity and not reaching out for help. In this way, undocumented students are unable to clearly fit into the remedial rationale as well.

Tufts’ Support for Undocumented Students

In 2015, Tufts University announced that it would “proactively and openly” recruit undocumented students.¹⁸ The public statement of support was a big step for Tufts, because a number of private universities that have larger endowments continue to turn a blind eye to undocumented admissions. As one of the first universities to give legitimacy to the movement to support DREAMers in higher education, Tufts has distinguished itself as a leader. Blogs that are precursor to rankings such as “Top 20 Most Undocumented Friendly Colleges” rave about Tufts’ commitment to undocumented students and rightfully give Tufts bragging rights about its progressive politics.¹⁹

Tufts’ support for undocumented students is a step toward immigrant justice, but is still inextricably linked with how DREAMers’ narratives fall in line with meritocracy. Moreover, the integration of undocumented students into campus showcases how inescapable the diversity rationale is for minority students in a predominantly White institution. Further, an investigation of resources and support that Tufts provide an insight into how it strives to meet the promises of the remedial rationale. However, the lack of consideration regarding intersectionality with sexual orientation, gender identity, and race, underscore a dangerous pitfall of championing the remedial rationale without a deeper understanding of the undocumented identity.

The Cost of Public Institutional Support

With increasingly divergent political interests on campus, Tufts administration usually refrains from making statements of support for specific social movements. Any political messages that have been sent to the larger community have been reactionary, such as when hate crimes are committed targeting marginalized students on campus.²⁰ In these letters, the racist and homophobic acts are often neutralized as “incidents,” “investigations,” and “violation of community values.”²¹ There have been no visible,

proactive efforts by President Monaco to write firm, political statements of support using his platform, except when it comes to DACA and undocumented students.

Since the announcement of Tufts' new policies, President Monaco has dedicated four messages from the Office of the President advocating for undocumented students. Two are written in the wake of the 2016 election and two are responses to the repeal of DACA in 2017.²² The sheer number of messages that are sent out to the campus community allude to Tufts' commitment to allyship. From denouncing the Trump administration to signing onto a lawsuit demanding DACA be reinstated, the front that Tufts adopts with this issue is nothing but political. However, Tufts stands complicit in reinforcing the archetype of a "good undocumented immigrant" by supporting the most Americanized population of the undocumented community, whose narratives have a strong undercurrent of blamelessness, assimilation, and a record of high achievement.

The language that President Monaco uses in these letters aligns with the national rhetoric surrounding DREAMers. He justifies Tufts' institutional support because "[undocumented students] have distinguished themselves academically and contributed positively to their communities."²³ Defining DREAMers as productive members of society and therefore worthy of support, is a dangerous characterization that casts shame to the rest of the undocumented community. This rhetoric implies that migrant workers and manual laborers are "bad undocumented immigrants" and further reinforces the power dynamic that exists within the undocumented community already. Further, naming DREAMers as "high-achieving students who have earned a place at Tufts" illustrates how Tufts is unable to escape the meritocracy that is the crux of its elitism.²⁴ By supporting the DREAMers based on their demonstrated merit, Tufts acts as a microcosm of the larger system of higher education that defines students' worth based on their output.

Tufts makes its intention of supporting only the promising, upwardly bound youth crystal clear in its deafening silence regarding other issues in undocumented immigration. When the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans (DAPA) implementation did not come to fruition in 2014, President Monaco did not write a statement. Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is in danger of being repealed every day under the Trump administration, yet no letter of support has been sent out. DAPA, TPS, and DACA all serve the undocumented community with equal impacts, but only the high-achieving youth are supported. Tufts sends a message consistent with the rest of America, that those who are worthy of embracing are the ones who are the furthest away from the stereotype of undocumented immigrants.

Inevitably Contributing to Collective Merit

The distinguishing characteristic of undocumented students in the diversity rationale is the power they have over choosing to share their narratives. Despite the objective of the framework to increase the diversity of thought on a college campus through the emotional labor of minority students, the very nature of their legal status kept undocumented students not subject to this expectation. At Tufts, their narratives inevitably seeped into campus life and different social circles because of the safe campus atmosphere regarding immigration issues. In fact, because of the openness that their legal

status was met with on campus, undocumented students willingly shared their stories with pre-orientation groups, residence halls, and close friends.²⁵

Tufts successfully constructed a supportive environment for undocumented students by placing the issue at the forefront of the Tufts community's priorities. The common reading book for the Class of 2020 was centered on the narratives of undocumented youth.²⁶ Not only did the selection underscore the gravity of Tufts' commitment to following through with their new admissions policy, it also removed some weight of the emotional labor off the undocumented students on campus. Instead of undocumented students being urged to share their experiences for the sake of increasing collective merit, the common reading itself served as the informant of their narratives. Furthermore, President Monaco's open support of DACA and undocumented students allowed the issues that DREAMers face to not be forgotten. Mario, an undocumented student at Tufts echoes this sentiment that "the statement to support [DACA students] to the entire university... truly shows how much they are willing to stand with us."

Successes and Shortcomings in the Remedial Rationale

With undocumented students, Tufts has recognized that merely granting their acceptance into higher education is not enough. It acknowledged the specialized support and resources that it lacked for DREAMers to properly adjust to campus life. In an effort to support needs of undocumented students, the administration created the Undocumented Student Task Force to enhance student experiences on campus.²⁷ Since the inception of the task force, support spaces and networks have emerged on campus. Office for Student Success and Advising (OSSA) runs the "Dreamer's Seminar" to provide the cohort of first year undocumented students with a social network and academic support.²⁸ A mental health support group open to only undocumented students emerged with the acceptance of Class of 2020.²⁹ Preexisting groups, such as the Latino Center and United for Immigrant Justice, also shifted gears into actively rallying behind the undocumented student community through programming and activism.³⁰ By institutionalizing support programs and hiring administrative staff, Tufts has proactively met the needs of the undocumented students with the limited resources it has.

The support networks that have emerged are successful in considering the undocumented identity in isolation. Many of these systems fail to recognize the complexity of the undocumented identity and do not yet provide a platform for considering the intersection of the undocumented identity with racial identity. Speaking solely in terms of visibility, consider the identities of students that are interviewed by *The Tufts Daily* and *The Observer* in articles relating to undocumented student issues. There is an overwhelming majority of Latino identifying students.³¹ Furthermore, out of the Group of Six centers, the Latino Center is the only center that heavily programs around undocumented immigrant justice. This aligns with the perception reinforced by the media that undocumented immigration is a Latino issue. However, the cohorts that have been admitted into Tufts are racially diverse, ranging from Black, Latino, Asian, and White undocumented students. Despite the surprising amount of different nationalities, two Asian American students who participated in the "Dreamer's Seminar" last year

commented that there were no guided discussions about the diversity of the cohort during their meetings.³² Further, the lack of other Group of Six centers interest in supporting the undocumented students in their communities glosses over the impact of intersectionality. The unintentional erasure of non-Latino identifying students' narratives from private discussions to the public eye only further marginalizes students in an undocumented identity that already struggles to be seen.

Moving Forward with Advocacy at Tufts and Beyond

The effort to support undocumented students is rife with tensions and contradictions between how DREAMers at once advance and debunk the diversity and remedial rationales. Tufts has made substantial headway with its intentional effort to fulfill the diversity rationale's promise. However, more consideration must be given to the racial diversity within the undocumented immigrant community to give the proper support that students need. Without acknowledging intersectionality, undocumented students' distinct histories and narratives cannot be honored.

Currently, higher education institutions attempt to grant the transformation thesis to undocumented youth contingent on their display of merit. However, the underlying meritocracy that drives elite institutions does not aid the larger populations of the undocumented community. Instead, there must be a concerted effort by these institutions to urge policy makers in their states to grant undocumented students financial aid to state schools and community colleges. A step toward true immigrant justice is to make higher education at all levels accessible for as many undocumented students as possible, regardless of their participation in the testocracy.

Endnotes

¹Blogs such as College Greenlight have a list of colleges that accept undocumented students as domestic students.

² See Diaz-Strong 108.

³ As of February 2011, only 10 states—California, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin—have policies that allow students who attend and graduate from in-state high schools to qualify for in-state tuition regardless of immigration status (Diaz-Strong 109).

⁴ Upon searching undocumented admissions policies for every Ivy League school, each school had a dedicated page for undocumented students.

⁵ Only Yale University had a page dedicated for Native students, specifically referring to the undergraduate admissions recruiter who is Native.

⁶ Refers originally to the population impacted by the DREAM Act, which was blocked by the U.S. Senate in 2011. Now, the term points to undocumented youth at large.

⁷ See Gonzalez, especially chapter 2, for an in depth study between the two populations.

⁸ See Guinier chapter 3 for a discussion on testocratic merit.

⁹ See Yosso et al 8 for a definition of diversity rationale

¹⁰ See Warikoo 96.

¹¹ Yosso et al 8 discusses the remedial rationale and its goals.

¹² See Yosso et al 8.

¹³ See Pérez Huber 81.

¹⁴ See Pérez Huber 89 for examples of racist nativist perceptions held by teachers and professors.

¹⁵ Latino students in California attend schools that are 84% nonwhite and where three-fourths of the students are poor (Gonzalez 37).

¹⁶ See Chan 29.

¹⁷ See Gonzalez 46, where Rosalba refers to the amount of mentors and support systems that she sought out throughout her educational career.

¹⁸ See Schworm for reporting of the changed admissions policy.

¹⁹ See the importance of these “boutique characteristic” rankings in Gittleman 311-312.

²⁰ See list of messages on Office of the President. Not many titles contain political implications unless they are responding to Tufts Community Union resolutions and larger politically charged events (e.g. 2016 Election, Boston Marathon bombing, Charlottesville). No mention of hate crimes is explicit in the titles. They are all framed as “incidents” and “investigations” violating community values.

²¹ Monaco “An Incident Violating Our Community Values” has language denouncing racism on campus, but does not explicitly state that in the title.

²² See November 16, 2016, November 30, 2017, September 5, 2017, and September 6, 2017 letters from the Office of the President site.

²³ See Monaco “Supporting and Protecting Our Undocumented and DACA Students” for the full letter supporting DACA students.

²⁴ See Monaco “Supporting and Protecting Our Undocumented and DACA Students.”

²⁵ Gathered from an informal interview with a group of undocumented students on campus. All of them had told their close friends on Tufts' campus, even if they had not told their friends at home about their status.

²⁶ The Common Reading Book for 2016-2017 school year was *Lives In Limbo: Undocumented and Coming of Age in America* by Roberto Gonzalez

²⁷ There is no concrete evidence of the Undocumented Student Task Force on any Tufts websites, but is mentioned in the following Observer Article.

<http://tuftsoobserver.org/undocumented-students-at-tufts/>

²⁸ See Knox and Newman, "Students with undocumented status share fears, calls for action" for reference from First Year Advisor Margot Cardamone regarding the Dreamer's seminar.

²⁹ Due to confidentiality of the members of the program, it is not advertised anywhere. This is from personal knowledge of participation in the mental health support group.

³⁰ See Knox and Newman, "Students with undocumented status share fears, calls for action" for support from Julián Cancino, director of the Latino Center.

³¹ See two investigative articles from Knox and Newman.

³² Information received from personal interviews with the only two Asian American students in the undocumented student cohort of Class of 2020.

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18. WHITENESS, MULTICULTURALISM, AND THE SMOOTH-FUNCTIONING OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

By Aminata Dieng

Higher education is positioned as an arbiter, which either grants or bars entry to other institutions that may offer forms of recognition, power, and privilege. Furthermore, access to academia is widely understood to be a consequence of multiple factors, including cultural values, socioeconomic status, ability, and geography. The most controversial of all possible influences remains race, as well as its relevance. However, this question is only ever explored when considering certain prospects, students who already fit into racialized, or “multicultural” categories (Black, Non-White Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander and Native American). In many instances, race is sidestepped as a consideration when evaluating white prospects of higher education, further asserting Whiteness as the most pervasive, inarticulate and invisible norm. In this chapter, I will argue that despite the legacy of targeted reforms, the longstanding relationship between higher education and Whiteness remains that of camaraderie; higher education is only able to cohere itself through the active centering of Whiteness on all fronts, beginning with admissions.

A discussion of Whiteness must be presupposed by understanding that it cannot be reduced to essentializing the identities of individual white people; Whiteness is not casserole at an office potluck or Bon Jovi. One of the more limited understandings of Whiteness is paleness, or the absence of hue. All these understandings fail to articulate the structural consequences of its simultaneous presence and invisibility, too arresting to be boiled down to a color. This distinction makes absolutely necessary the capitalization of the ‘W’ in Whiteness, so as to imply its agency in being a culture, a power bloc, and a process. It is, most devastatingly, a deep-seated strategy of authority leveraged to facilitate violence against the larger global community¹. Albeit a socially produced phenomenon, Whiteness is the structuring moment through which most, if not, all, of American institutions were founded, and higher education remains no exception. Colleges and universities occupy a very powerful position in American society as they are consistently assumed to be one of the few centers of legitimate knowledge production. Historically, however the gatekeepers of learning have been white and male (Yancy, 2005).

The university is to the Enlightened Man what the prison cell is to the warden, and knowledge is the prisoner. The transformation thesis supports that higher education is a class gateway, or path for a student to elevate their social position, but there still remains many rings to jump through. Those rings require far more acrobatics when complicating the identity of the student by racializing them. College and social stratification have historically remained intimately linked to rigid racial lines, and who passes through the doors of higher education foreshadows power in American society.

The Evolution of Race-Conscious Admissions

The most infant form of affirmative action was created to prevent the crowding out of White, Protestant males from elite institutions. The establishment of America’s first

Office of Admissions at Columbia University in 1910 was a direct attempt at rectifying an admissions process that yielded too many Jewish students (Karabel, 2005, p. 129). This event operates at two levels: firstly, it demonstrates that Whiteness always produces and legitimizes methods to maintaining itself in the current hegemonic project, and it, secondly, speaks to the malleability of Whiteness as a construction. Whiteness has always been contingent, shifting, and historically located; though considered as belonging to a class of "inferior whites", Jewish folks were subject to contextual racialization. New admissions practices included evaluating the applicants for character, merit, and other subjectively qualified factors that were difficult to standardize, and therefore less contestable (Karabel, 2005, p. 132). The definitions of whiteness have the possibility of shifting to facilitate dispossession and accommodate the demands of social change.

Over the course of the last century, the bureaucracy of the admissions offices had been confronted at the federal level, developing a substantial archive on race-conscious admissions. In the 2003 case of *Grutter v. Bollinger*, the conclusion brought forth by the Supreme Court was that the University of Michigan law school had made unconstitutional use of race during its admissions process. Race was looked at in a mechanical way, using one standard criteria and filtering black applicants into a pool of their own. Instead, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote, on behalf of a narrow majority, that universities may only use racial consideration in a flexible manner, or as a "plus" factor when evaluating prospective students as individuals (Stevens, 2007, p.184); this would mean to not look at every applicant in terms of their race, but looking at race in terms of every applicant. Aside from its symbolic gesture, this tautological ruling does very little to explain a new way for admissions committees to regard race as a mere aspect of an applicant, like whether they took Advanced Placement classes or not. Under a framework of admissions designed to accommodate white applicants, race has the luxury of being minimized, and because

the dominant norms of whiteness are not visible to them, whites are free to see themselves as "individuals," rather than as members of a culture. Individualism in turn becomes part of white resistance to perceiving whiteness and indeed to being placed in the category "white" at all. (Mahoney, 1997, p. 331)

The ability to dissociate from any racial identity is one souvenir of white privilege. Whiteness, in all of its fluid definitions, also operates as an absence, or non-identity. Where people of color are attached to the stereotypes and biases of their race, Whiteness is considered to be a neutral condition that simultaneously retains all positive representations². Discussions of merit are largely framed around individual circumstances. Attributes like integrity, thrift, and hard work are all strong indicators of a successful student, but race is seldom a factor in this projection. Narratives of non-white students that gain admittance to elite institutions are laden with these descriptors and portrayed as a credits to their race. The circulation of these stories are necessary for maintaining a ruse of inclusivity in higher education.

The opportunity cost of admitting a low-income white applicant is admitting a low-income non-white applicant; both would be expensive for a university to matriculate, considering the financial aid a school could anticipate shelling out. However, only one of those prospective students would be counted toward the school's multicultural percentages (Stevens, 2007, p. 183). Diversity, now valued as an index of institutional prestige, is sought out before creating a campus where students of color might prosper. A mother can give birth, but lack the capacity to provide enrichment to the child beyond fundamental necessities, like food and shelter. This is much like institutions attempting to recruit non-white students haplessly, while lacking structures designed to support them once they are on campus. The threshold of a positive college experience for a black student might be very low. If the instances of outward racial discrimination he faced were minimized and he walks in graduation, this student has had a good four years. This begs the questions of who institutional diversity actually serves.

Diversity and Deliberative Democracy

The diversity rationale justifies that "students of color are admitted so that they can help White students become more racially tolerant, liven up class dialogue, and prepare White students for getting a job in a multicultural, global economy" (Yosso, Parker, Solórzano, & Lynn, 2004). In terms of making for more dynamic discussions, students of color's inherited and lived traumas are debated in classroom settings for the sake of their white peers enduring thought experiments. A professor might ask her students to map the pros and cons of colonialism, or consider where America might be today had the Confederacy championed the Civil War. White knowledge production is characterized through its ability to sanitize history, naturalizing entire populations as collateral in the American nation-building project; that is to say that everything that is, just *is*, and race had nothing to do with its becoming. Reimagining histories where slavery still exists, and other genres of oppression fan-fiction, only invites learning about the world out of the context of history. In the same vein; it is no longer a matter of free speech so much as is about making violent rhetoric as casual as possible, something you can agree to disagree upon. The message received is quite clear: non-white students make good props, only to help multicultural percentages on college's websites and arrive to class each day, braced to challenge every single devil's advocate.

These learning models, seeing to the development of more dynamic classroom discussions, can only confirm the flawed possibility of an objective, unbiased perspective. Donald Trump rejecting the rulings of a judge because his Mexican heritage produces an "absolute conflict" is simply the flip side of this same coin. To adopt a view from no where is to ask that Whiteness be the lens through which societal circumstances are viewed. In academia, "the white philosopher/author presumes to speak for all of 'us' without the slightest mention of his or her 'raced' identity" to explain the way that the world works and why it looks that way from his or her beacon (Yancy, 2005). Knowledge production removed from a personal existential context encourages the romanticization of the ruse of objectivity in higher education, democratic discussion, and all of its facets.

Every federal ruling that has contributed to the archive of race-conscious admissions has sought to standardize the way institutions look at racialized subjects. Most recently, *Fisher v. University of Texas* in 2013 revisited the the conversation of race's role in admissions practices. Though framed as a white woman falling victim to a system that prefers students of color, the case was truly about the entitlement to a system built to support her; The year that University of Texas offered provisional acceptance to forty-seven students with lower scores than Fisher: only five were Black or Latino, whereas forty-two were white (Palfrey, 2017). The premise of this case confirms that there is a level of intrusion when speaking about non-white folks occupying space in higher education. To be a student of color is to already be fugitive in academia, pushing back against centuries of disenfranchisement. The ongoing struggle between Whiteness and the machinations that seek to subvert its dominance is conflict that sees no proximate end.

The Ninety-Seven Percent

On November 18, 2015, approximately 200 students at Tufts University, participated in a walkout to demonstrate solidarity with the protests rippling through the campuses of other American universities that same fall semester. These demonstrations all similarly demanded that colleges do more to address specific instances, as well as cultures, of racism that exist on their campuses and in their policies. The organizers of Tufts's walkout identified themselves as #thethreepercent in a Facebook post released on the eve of the protest. This moniker is a, presumably, reference to the percentage supporting the number of black undergraduate students enrolled at Tufts. The crowd of students marched across the academic quad and stood post outside of historic Ballou Hall, literally taking up space on a campus that has, historically, made little room for those who exist at the margins.

At one point, the protesters marched from Barnum Hall and down to the campus center, reciting chants and calls to action. All this happened beside other students who just so happened to be there, either working on problems sets, or grabbing lunch with a friend. These other students, who, amid the apparent tensions, were able to continue about their daily lives business-as-usual-ly, were in the majority. Tufts's fall 2015 enrollment stood at nearly 5,500 undergraduate students. Basic arithmetic returns that 5,300 students either stayed in classes, dormitories, and other campus buildings instead of "walking out" that autumn day. This juxtapositioning will be crucial to unpacking the salience of Whiteness as a present absence on Tufts's campus. Tufts's Mayer Campus Center is considered to be a major hub for undergraduate activity and student life. Hosting Hillel sponsored raffles, mixers for LGBTQ-identified students, and the offices of Greek Life administrators on its top floor, this building serves as a literal crossroads of institutions that exist outside of Tufts. However, those protesting students, who entered this building reserved for studying, extracurriculars, and casual dining, ruptured its reactionary presence and forced Tufts to confront the bizarre dichotomy between the school's hyper-inclusion and, very obvious, lack thereof.

Many of the student protesters, a rather multiracial crowd, seemed to have choreographed wearing all-black outfits. Perhaps an act of solidarity with #thethreepercent, this still points to a very familiar fallout of Whiteness. Whiteness is

often circumvented in discussion of identity politics, majorly because of the lack of discourse surrounding the dominant culture. Take, for example, the practice of Black History Month and National Hispanic Heritage Month. The silent implication, in allotting blocks of time to actively celebrate these non-white accomplishments, milestones, and leaders in February and September, is that all of the other months should not be devoted to recognizing these histories. Privileging white histories and narratives remain normalized and the foundation by which normative knowledge is produced. In the same vein, these neglected histories and their cultural artifacts become inextricably tied to the race of the group from which the narrative emerged. The Blackness of Malcolm X and his writings largely obfuscates his insight on poverty, or his relationship to spirituality. This is all to say that the idea of race discussions only being the concern of those who are not white assumes Whiteness as removed, objective, and uninvolved, whereas people of color are posited as the necessary spearheads of any and every movement for racial justice.

There being any importance to the other 5,300 students who sat out from the walkout does imply that student activism is an effective and strategic vehicle of change; and, at Tufts, it is. The administration has hardly made sweeping changes without the push from students concerned with bettering the experiences of It was student activism that finally drove Tufts to giving the Africana Studies center all of the resources of a full academic department in 2012, despite its establishment during the Civil Rights Era in the previous century. The formation of #thethreepercent, as well as the organized walkout, was truly plural because its creation was invoked by numerous contributing factors, as well as the encouragement from previous wins through protest and demonstration.

In his book chronicling his time spent at Tufts, Professor Sol Gittleman notes that in a short piece published by *The Tufts Daily*, he urged any graduating student in search of the perfect career to consider becoming a professor at an American university. While charming to consider a career on the Hill, or any like institutions, the horizon of its possibility changes drastically when considering the current representation of non-white folks in academia. Returning to the concerns of #thethreepercent, a 2013 report released by Tufts's Council of Diversity reported that three-percent of male full-time faculty members were black and that three-percent of female full-time faculty members were black. Rather than proceeding to view higher education through the lens of colorblindness, a necessary shift will occur when Whiteness and its politics become a matter of discussion within the halls of power, especially classrooms, in the basement of Eaton Hall and beyond.

Endnotes

1. Ruth Frankenberg defines “whiteness” as the cumulative way that race shapes the lives of white people. *See* RUTH FRANKENBERG, *WHITE WOMEN RACE MATTERS: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF WHITENESS* 1 (1993).
2. Whiteness is often defined obliquely. For example, when a white person expresses beliefs that black people lack good moral judgment, it is implicated that they, the speaker, have good moral judgment as an inherent quality of their whiteness.

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