The TEAM Initiative:
Tufts Effectiveness in Administrative Management

November 2014	Update on the Implementation of TEAM Projects

TEAM is a university-wide initiative designed to ensure Tufts administration supports the university's core academic mission to the greatest degree possible. TEAM's goal is to reduce the collective effort we currently commit to common and sharable administrative work. This is a critical step toward ensuring a sustainable balance between Tufts' aspirations and its resources.

TEAM Origins

TEAM grew out of the understanding that in order to remain sustainable, Tufts needed to utilize its limited resources more effectively. Across the country, higher education is facing unprecedented financial challenges, and Tufts is no exception. The following facts illustrate this point:

- Expense growth has exceeded revenue growth most years since 2008, which, combined with one-time investments in systems and TEAM implementation, resulted in a projected deficit in FY15.
- The largest percentage of our revenue comes from tuition.
- The demand for financial aid is growing.
- Providing educational opportunities to talented students, regardless of their financial background, is core to Tufts' mission.
- Our endowment per student is among the lowest compared to that of our peers.

The total estimated cost of the TEAM initiative is $23 million. Once implemented, the projects that comprise TEAM will save the university an estimated $15 million each year.

Opportunities of TEAM

Tufts chose to take a deliberate, thoughtful approach to reversing the trend of expenses exceeding revenues. Rather than imposing across-the-board cuts, TEAM has identified the ways we can contain costs and minimize red tape. Money saved within schools will remain part of those schools' budgets, where it can support the kind of innovative, strategic projects that typify Tufts' tradition of excellence.

TEAM opportunities include:
- Remove administrative inefficiencies and contain costs.
- Reduce the time Tufts staff and faculty spend on basic administrative tasks.
- Provide a consistently high standard of service across all three campuses.
- Enable faculty and staff to focus on their core jobs and think strategically about the direction of their teams and departments.

The Phases of TEAM

TEAM Timeline

Identify Opportunities	Assess Opportunities	Detailed Design	Implementation Planning	Implementation	Continuous Review
December 2012	March 2013	May 2013	Dec. 2013 – Jun. 2014	July 2014	Jan. 2016 – beyond

Phase One: Assessment (December 2012 – April 2013)

TEAM got started with a comprehensive assessment of all administrative services at Tufts. The information gathered through surveys and open forums confirmed that the distributed and overly complex nature of administrative processes strain valuable faculty and staff time. If we can reduce the demands of administrative tasks, more time can be spent on strategic thinking and innovation.

Phases Two and Three: Design and Planning (May 2013 – June 2014)

The subsequent design and planning stages focused on restructuring administrative processes in a way that makes sense for Tufts, uses our resources efficiently and reduces red tape. Working groups were formed to address inefficiencies and make recommendations for improvement in Finance, IT, Human Resources, Web Services, Sourcing and Procurement, Advancement, Research Administration and Operations.

Phase Four: Implementation (July 2014 – ongoing)

The final stage, implementation of specific initiatives that support the working groups' recommendations, started in July 2014. Over the coming months, we will introduce new administrative processes in a deliberate, phased approach. Below is an update of the progress that has been made in several core areas.

TEAM Projects at-a-Glance

Area	Project	Purpose
Human Resources & Finance	*Tufts Support Services (TSS)*	Offer a simple, efficient way to complete many administrative human resources and finance tasks. Reduce red tape and free up HR's time to support employee and organizational development.
Research Administration	*Change Collaborative for Research Administration*	Provide excellent research support to investigators in attracting external funding and complying with pre- and post-award requirements.
Information Technology	*IT Integration*	Integrate IT staff and resources, improve service delivery and support, enhance how Tufts faculty, staff and students use IT. Introduce tools to enable online learning.
Procurement	*Strategic Sourcing*	Introduce rigorous procurement standards, maximize Tufts' purchasing power and secure the best pricing. Spend less while still being responsive to the need for equipment and services.
Budgeting	*The Budget Center*	Introduce a consistent, university-wide approach to budgeting that will better inform decision makers in the schools and central divisions.
Advancement	*Advancement Effectiveness*	Maximize the time fundraisers spend building relationships with prospective donors to ensure a successful capital campaign.

Progress to Date
Visit the TEAM website for the most up-to-date information.

Human Resources and Finance
Challenges: Duplicative efforts, many of which involve outmoded paper forms, detract from Tufts' core mission of teaching, research and public service. The human resources (HR) department receives almost 4,000 general questions about policies and procedures every month.

Tufts Support Services (TSS) is a new organization that will offer a simple, efficient way for Tufts faculty, staff and student employees to complete many administrative human resources and finance tasks. By managing administrative tasks through a specialized center, TSS will reduce red tape and streamline many necessary processes. It will also free up HR's time to support employees in training and development, support managers in strategic decisions about organizational design, and improve our ability to recruit and retain excellent people.

Current Status:
- TSS will launch on all three campuses in December.
- A list of the services TSS will offer is posted online.
- TSS continues to fill open positions and training is underway for those hired.
- TSS leaders will provide an overview and answer questions at education sessions on all three campuses in early December.
- Tufts staff and faculty will be able to contact TSS via the TSS website, email, phone, fax, interoffice mail, U.S. postal service or in person.
- Many processes will have self-service options available through the TSS website. TSS staff and "How to" guides will be available for anyone who needs information or assistance.

Research Administration
Challenges: Regulations that govern research have become increasingly complicated; demanding consistently applied practices, performance-level standards and continued education for research administrators. These demands impose a large administrative burden on research faculty and departments.

The Change Collaborative for Research Administration will provide excellent research support to investigators in attracting external funding and complying with pre- and post-award requirements.

Current Status:
- The Change Collaborative is in the process of hiring three to five department research administrators.
- These floating positions will provide schools and departments immediate support for pre- and post-award issues as they come up.
- The Change Collaborative will host a three-day workshop on pre- and post-award fundamentals in January 2015.
- The workshop will be presented by the National Council of University Research Administrators and open to all Tufts staff who work on pre- and post-award research administration.

Information Technology
Challenges: Tufts had numerous overlapping information technology (IT) services, provided by multiple organizational units across the university. Today's work and sophisticated technologies demand greater orchestration of IT resources and services.

Over the course of 2014, Tufts Technology Services (TTS) has worked to integrate IT staff and resources, improve service delivery and support, and enhance how Tufts faculty, staff and students use IT. Among other accomplishments, the group introduced new tools to enable online learning and established a foundation that many schools at Tufts can build on in the years ahead.

Current Status:

Supporting academic needs

- Built service capacity for Tufts researchers by refreshing the university's high-performance computing cluster and site-licensing key software packages.
- Advanced connected learning by supporting [Tufts Gordon Institute of Management](#) in launching its first blended course, "Business Analytics." This approach accommodates the needs of working students by augmenting reduced classroom time with online coursework.
- Developing models for capturing and preserving Tufts courses in a searchable database. This is the first step in creating a collection of Tufts teaching and reference materials. The first two courses to be captured are "Lectures on Isaac Newton" and "Globalization and Maritime Trade."
- Designed and producing Tufts' first experimental MOOC (massive open online course), "The Biology of Water and Health."

Supporting faculty and staff

- Created the IT Service Partner Program to establish lines of communication about schools' and divisions' evolving technology needs.
- Launched anytime IT support with a [24/7 IT Service Desk](#) and remote assistance that makes it possible for Tufts IT support specialists to assist faculty, staff and students without requiring them to bring their computers to a physical location.
- Implemented tools to facilitate online meetings and collaboration between faculty, staff and students in any number of locations.
- Expanded international access to IT with a secure, worldwide network service so that traveling staff and faculty can access the Internet and participating institutions' local network services.

Procurement

Challenges: The university's purchasing power and ability to secure competitive pricing was limited by the fact that the purchasing department needed tools and processes that would enable it to evolve from a transactions-based department to one that could make strategic purchases based on internal and market data analysis.

Strategic Sourcing is introducing rigorous procurement standards to maximize Tufts' purchasing power and secure the best possible pricing. By improving purchasing practices, we can spend less money while remaining responsive to equipment and service needs.

Current Status:

- Implemented a new spend-analytics tool to help identify savings opportunities and develop sourcing strategies.
- Increased productivity and efficiency in building maintenance and cleaning.
- Identified potential for saving 20% in building maintenance, repair and operating costs, such as light bulbs, filters and plumbing supplies.
- Worked with Boston-area colleges and universities to leverage shared purchasing power to negotiate a favorable contract to purchase lab consumables and equipment at a reduced cost.

- Saving money on lab consumables and equipment could free grant money up for other aspects of research.
- Renegotiated campus bookstore contract with Barnes & Noble. Additional fees will help support the TEAM initiative.

Budgeting
Challenges: More than 600 people are currently involved in the budget process, which is time-consuming and inefficient.

The Budget Center will introduce a consistent, university-wide approach to budgeting that will better inform decision makers in the schools and central divisions. The group has selected budgeting software to manage three areas of budgeting: operating, positions and grants. The new Budget Center and system are scheduled to launch next summer (2015).

Expected Benefits:
- Develop, track, forecast and manage budgets for schools, departments and divisions throughout the year.
- Facilitate budgeting and planning at the university level.
- Increase transparency and accuracy in budgeting processes.
- Support grant portfolio budgeting.
- Expand breadth and depth of analysis and incorporate strategic planning.
- Eliminate the need for shadow systems and the work it takes to maintain them.
- Free up staff time previously spent managing budgets and forecasts so schools, departments and divisions have more resources to focus on their core missions.

Advancement
Challenges: The university will undertake a $1 billion-plus campaign in the coming years. Fundraisers must maximize the time they spend building relationships with prospective donors rather than tending to administrative tasks.

The Advancement Effectiveness project started with a thorough review of fundraiser activity to identify opportunities for reducing time spent on administrative tasks. Moving administrative functions like human resources and technology support to central university offices will allow the division to have access to a greater array of services, and provide staff in those areas more opportunities for career growth.

Current Status:
- Expanded use of fundraising performance metrics.
- Reviewed and rebalanced fundraiser portfolios.
- Maximized focus of frontline staff on fundraising activity.
- Centralized local HR functions.
- Working with Tufts Technology Services (TTS) to centralize help desk and desktop support functions.

Contact TEAM

We appreciate the more than 700 people who have already shared insights with the TEAM project and continue to seek your input and advice.

You can email us at TEAM@tufts.edu, or share your thoughts anonymously through the online Community Input form.

We will continue to update you on TEAM progress via *Tufts Announcements* emails and on the TEAM website http://team.tufts.edu.