# The TEAM Initiative:
## Tufts Effectiveness in Administrative Management

| May 2014 | Update to the February 2014 Progress Report |
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Over the past few months, the TEAM Initiative has continued to make progress on its path to improving administrative effectiveness at Tufts. Our working teams have focused on translating last year's assessment and strategic work into more detailed plans, validating previously proposed process and system improvements, and implementing new systems and more effective work approaches.

Input from across the Tufts community continues to guide our work. We are sincerely grateful for your time, candor, and care in discussing and deliberating the many aspects of TEAM with us. Conversations with you this semester have helped us to better understand how administrative changes may affect you, and how you and your departments feel about change. TEAM is better able to calibrate how process and technology improvements should be implemented by understanding your expectations for administrative service delivery and your requests for further involvement in the work of TEAM.

The intent of this update is to share progress on work to date and to answer some of the questions asked in the many discussions with the Tufts community since the publication of the February 2014 TEAM Progress Report.

## YOUR MOST COMMON QUESTIONS

February's TEAM Progress Report generated important questions that we were able to discuss as we visited with faculty and staff across Tufts' three campuses:

**Faculty expressed concern about staff job security, staff morale, and staff retention, asking, "What can we do to reassure staff about their job security and improve staff morale?"**

We discussed the reality that large, complex initiatives take time to assess, plan, and implement; as a result, it is often not possible to define proposed changes in enough detail to satisfy all questions at the beginning and middle of the initiative. We will be in a position to provide more details as future changes are further defined, and we will continue to provide opportunity for faculty and staff to be informed and involved.

From the outset, our goal has been to match the excellent faculty and students at Tufts with excellent administrative support. Positive staff morale is critical to our long-term success. Morale can be complicated by many factors, including the uncertainty of the detailed changes in work. TEAM believes morale can be positively impacted by the success of administration in improving its support of our core academic mission.

One area of concern is the development of a new support services organization. As we build this new way to undertake administrative and transactional work that is now carried out in many different areas of the university, some of the work currently performed in multiple units will be conducted more centrally. In partnership with the Provost's Office, academic units will make decisions about how to use the resulting local flexibility to best meet core academic priorities. While work will change, school and academic departments will continue to require administrative support.

We will maintain Tufts' commitment to treating our employees with deep respect, integrity, honesty, and appreciation by offering training and development opportunities for staff—not only to support changes in work process but to also provide opportunities for individual staff to advance professionally. This was one of the key messages staff expressed in their responses to the Excellence at Work Survey.

## How will we preserve collegial models at the department and program levels?

We have heard the importance of personal relationships and the deep connection our staff feel to the important academic work of our schools and departments. We agree with the need to balance culture and efficiency. The support services organization will fall under a collaborative oversight model and will be responsible to all of us. We have begun to work with administrative and school leaders to learn how to design a decision-making structure that will assure the best possible service with the appropriate level of resource investment.

As a result, the support services organization is not a centralization of services, but a collaboratively managed organization that enthusiastically provides support for services that can be collectively managed. Some examples are:

- *Accounts payable transactions:* You will not need to spend time interacting with vendors; the support services organization will be able to do that on your behalf.
- *Interdepartmental requisitions (IDRs):* Requests that are currently paper based and hard to track will be managed electronically and monitored more efficiently.
- *Benefits questions:* If you have a question about a benefits change, you will be able to call one number for the right answer, rather than having to hunt for the right contact.

This new organization will always be responsible for, and accountable for delivering quality services so that faculty and staff are supported in their work. Its staff will be integrally connected to the university mission, in service to the needs of faculty and students.

## How will decisions be made on adopting new work approaches?

With the guidance of the Provost's Office, schools and academic departments will be able to develop plans to restructure staffing that allow them to best support Tufts' mission of teaching, learning, and research in their areas. New processes and systems will apply across the university and will lead to changes in how, and sometimes by whom work is accomplished, but the central administration will not unilaterally make changes in school or academic department staff.

# CONTACT US

We welcome your continued input. Please consider sending your ideas, questions and concerns to us via an online Feedback Form located on the TEAM website, http://go.tufts.edu/team.

# PROGRESS TO DATE

*Highlights of progress since February 2014:*

- **Actively recruiting for an Associate Vice Provost of Research Administration**

- **Actively defining how work will be organized and integrated as we streamline and combine pre- and post-award processes**

- **Implemented the first phase of a new research administration system that will next be expanded to directly assist faculty with proposal development**

- **Partially funded Bridge Professorships Program through procurement savings**

- **Actively preparing for the integration of Tufts' technology organization, starting July 1, 2014**

- **Began to survey classroom conditions to explore the need for facility and technology upgrades**

- **Piloting a 24 x 7 IT service desk for select areas to support to a broader launch this summer**

- **Implemented a new recruiting system, Taleo, to better support hiring managers**

- **Implemented Simplified Sign On for PeopleSoft, eServe, and Taleo**

- **Selected a new budgeting system after evaluation by the TEAM Budget System Advisory Committee**

- **Completed financial analysis and preliminary engineering/architecture on a new central energy plant for the Medford campus, incorporating cogeneration, central chilled water, and upgraded electrical transmission**

- **Selected a web-based management tool for capital projects**

- **Actively recruiting for the Director of Tufts Support Services**

- **Actively engaged in selecting a system for the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) technology**
  This system will support service representatives in Tufts Support Services as they provide information and track resolution of inquiries